

**The face of the University of Pretoria:
A critical investigation of selected portraits in the UP Art Collection**

by

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SUMMARY AND KEY TERMS

Title of dissertation: The face of the University of Pretoria: A critical investigation of selected portraits in the UP Art Collection

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An institution's unique identity and culture can be constructed and communicated through the artworks (such as portraits) that it collects, commissions and inherits. As a representation, not only of the identity of the sitter portrayed, but also of various social types and stereotypes circulating in particular cultural contexts, a portrait is an especially powerful visual manifestation of the 'invisible' identity and culture an institution aims to establish and maintain. This dissertation explores what the portraits in the University of Pretoria's Art Collection reveal about this Institution's values, reputation, identity and culture. The research focuses on the official, commissioned portraits of University officials, as well as portraits in the Collection by Erich Mayer. The main aim of the study is to investigate the discourses that are articulated through the selected portraits by considering the various meanings they convey. Furthermore, this dissertation investigates the ways in which their explicit and implicit meanings might support or negate the University of Pretoria's envisioned institutional culture and identity. The study argues that artworks in the UP Art Collection that have contentious subject matter and histories need to be rehabilitated and renegotiated in creative, innovative ways, because artworks in the Collection are treasures that provide various benefits to the Institution.

Key terms: portraiture; institutional identity; institutional culture; representation; type; stereotype; iconology; Erich Mayer; University of Pretoria.

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I hereby declare that *The face of the University of Pretoria: A critical investigation of selected portraits in the UP Art Collection* is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Salomé le Roux
August 2017

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and aims of the study

When deciding on a research theme, it was clear that I wanted to do primary research on artworks that were local and relevant to my personal everyday environment. The most obvious artworks within this environment are in the University of Pretoria Art Collection (UP Art Collection).¹ It soon became apparent that very little information is available in the form of books, catalogues and journal articles dealing specifically with this important and extensive collection. Furthermore, it was not until I looked more deeply into the collection that I realised how large it really is,² and that much of the collection is not easily accessible.

Given the vastness of the UP Art Collection, for the purpose of this study, a decision was made to focus on the two-dimensional portraits in the collection. At the time this research was conducted there were 293 two-dimensional portraits in the Collection consisting of paintings, prints and drawings; more precisely, there were 293 items that were described as portraits in the catalogue or would generally be considered to be portraits according to De Kamper (2014). To clarify what is meant by this statement, it is necessary to comment on the overall inaccessibility of the collection to researchers by describing the process that was undertaken to obtain information on the artworks.

After failing to get more information on the artworks in the collection from the library, the next avenue to pursue was to meet with the curator of the collection,

¹ The UP Art Collection is managed by the Department of Museum and Arts Management under the guidance of Prof Theo van Wyk. The Department is responsible for the management of the art and heritage resources of the University of Pretoria (hereafter referred to as the University, Institution or UP), and for curating and governing the museums and their collections. It also aims to promote awareness of the art and heritage collections of the University.

² The UP Art Collection was initiated in the 1930s and, at the time of writing, contains 2760 paintings and graphic works, 830 sculptures and 50 ceramic pieces, by 390 painters and graphic artists, 80 sculptors and 25 potters. Although the collection predominantly comprises the work of the older, well-known South African artists, of late the acquirement of contemporary artworks has made the collection more representative of South African art (Museums & Collections: The University of Pretoria Art Collection [sa]:[sp]).

Gerard de Kamper. After informing him of my desire to do research on the collection, and especially the portraits, he gave me a PDF document with 315 portraits (for the sake of clarity, this document will be referred to as Group 1).³ However, the information available about these artworks was limited and incomplete.⁴

It was then necessary to create a new document containing only the images and available information of two-dimensional paintings, drawings or graphic works. The total number of two-dimensional portraits in Group 1 is 144. The next goal was to place each portrait into one of six categories.⁵ The categories that were decided on are: (1) formal portraits of office-bearers, (2) formal portraits of public or academic figures, (3) informal portraits of named sitters; (4) informal portraits of unnamed sitters, (5) self-portraits and (6) portraits of artists by other artists. The bulk of these portraits fell within the first two categories of sitters whose association with the University is in some or other formal capacity. However, when the categorisation of Group 1 was complete, it was clear that this group did not include all the portraits within the collection. When I returned to De Kamper, he informed me that Group 1 only included portraits that were labelled as such, either in the title or the description of the artwork.⁶ I was then given a second document (Group 2) of artworks that De Kamper considered to be portraits.⁷ Group 2 consists of 149 portraits. These were also divided into the decided upon six categories as was done with Group 1. In Group 2, there were no office-bearers (as compared to Group 1) and most (127 portraits) were in the fourth category

³ This document included not only two-dimensional portraits, but also portrait busts and non-traditional portrait sculptures, such as an eleven-piece sculpture of objects associated with a child entitled *Boy* (date unknown) by JZ Taljaart.

⁴ Even though, in most cases, some of the crucial information was documented, such as a visual reference, name of artist, name of sitter and current location, information such as date created, medium and dimensions have not yet been recorded and digitised. In addition, the recorded information cannot be taken as authoritative, because it is established that some of the information is incorrect. For example, the recorded permanent location of Figure 18 in Group 1 is incorrect.

⁵ These categories were chosen by the author and the supervisors.

⁶ He explained that the Department of Museum and Arts Management does not focus on classifying artworks according to genres, but places them in chronological order and/or according to artists.

⁷ He kindly sifted through every painting in the UP Art Collection and pick those that he considered to be portraits.

(informal portraits of unnamed sitters). The question arose whether the formal portraits of office-bearers and public or academic figures were considered to be more important to be labelled and categorised within the genre of portraiture, which contradicts the classification procedure of the Department of Museum and Arts Management, and what this form of categorisation reveals about the culture of the University.

The research question that the dissertation therefore wishes to answer is: What do the selected portraits in the UP Art Collection reveal about the University of Pretoria's institutional identity and culture, and how do they do this? In other words, is it possible to suggest that the selected portraits are a visual representation of the institutional identity and culture the University of Pretoria aims to establish and maintain?⁸ The research question is anticipating a moment where the full collection will be available in an open access online database.⁹ Brenda Schmahmann (2013:13) claims that universities are able to use their visual realm to explore what they are and what they aim to become.¹⁰ Likewise, Eric Margolis and Luc Pauwels (2011:6) argue that artworks provide a gateway to the culture of both the creator and the intended audience.¹¹

An institutional identity and culture can be constructed and communicated through the artworks (such as portraits) that are collected, commissioned and inherited by an institution. Identity is complex, multifaceted and always under construction, and the diverse portraits that are a part of the UP Art Collection are

⁸ The "face" of the University of Pretoria (as seen in the title of the dissertation) refers to the actual faces of the represented sitters seen in the selected portraits. It does not indicate that the dissertation is dealing with what is visible at 'face value', because the research delves deeper behind the mere surface of the artworks. In addition, the "faces" are not the face, or representation, of the University, because the artworks are not yet readily available in an online database. Once the artworks become accurately digitised and made public, they will become the face, or representation, of UP's identity and culture.

⁹ The dissertation speculates on the possible messages the artworks will communicate when they are publicly available.

¹⁰ She quotes Collings (in Schmahmann 2013:12), who argues that "art tells us something about what we think we are and what we think we could be ... [and] it is the way we ask questions about ourselves".

¹¹ The intended audience of the artworks in the UP Art Collection are the stakeholders of the University, including the students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors to the Institution in the future when the artworks are publicly available in an open access online database.

an articulation of the diversity, values and ideals the University strives for, and persuade viewers to associate with the Institution or not. The ethos, aims and values (as well as character) are the messages communicated to stakeholders that distinguish the Institution from other tertiary institutions in South Africa.

The intention of this dissertation is to investigate whether and in what ways the represented and implicit messages of the selected portraits in the UP Art Collection support or negate the University of Pretoria's institutional culture and identity. The purposes and uses of the portraits are explored – for example, do they memorialise individuals, reveal identities, boast about accomplishments, reflect on past discriminations, infer inclusivity or exclusivity, encourage achievements, describe an institution of equality, or reveal an institution of white, male, heterosexual intellectuals, as Schmahmann (2013:15) proposes?

1.2 Brief literature study

The literature used for this study can be divided into two categories. The first category includes literature on portraiture, as well as representation, the social type and stereotype, and identity. The second category involves literature on institutional identity and culture, and institutional transformation.

1.2.1 Literature on portraiture

In order to understand the genre of portraiture more clearly it is necessary to look at the history and current thinking regarding portraiture. In this study, seminal authors are consulted for the purpose of establishing an understanding of portraiture, namely, Joanna Woodall (1997), Max Friedländer (1963), Richard Brilliant (1991), Cynthia Freeland (2007), Norbert Schneider (1994), and Shearer West (2004). Both Woodall (1997) and Friedländer (1963) explore the development of the genre from pre-Renaissance to the twentieth century and discuss the relationship between portraiture and identity. Brilliant (1991) gives insight into alternative understandings of a represented identity within portraits and also addresses portraits of people in authority, which shed light on the formal portraits of office-bearers and public and academic figures in the UP Art

Collection. Freeland (2007) describes the aim of portraiture and the methods portraiture takes to accurately and faithfully show subjects and their identities. These theorists are supported by Patrick Maynard (2007), Ernst van Alphen (1997), Brenda Schmahmann (2013), Jeanne Joubert (1989), Jean Borgatti (1990), John Berger (1972, 2008) and Gillian Rose (2011, 2016). The seminal and supporting theorists are used throughout the study, beginning with the history and current thinking regarding portraiture, and including the discussions about the formal, official portraits of University office-bearers in Chapter Three, and the so-called ethnographic portraits in Chapter Four.

The discussion of portraiture is supported by notions that portraits are representations, reveal social types and stereotypes, and refer to the identity of the sitter. The literature on representation and on portraits as representations is based on the seminal theorist Stuart Hall's *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices* (1997).¹² The social type and stereotype is discussed by making continuous use of the theories of Brian Roberts (2011), Stuart Hall (1995; 1997), Orrin E Klapp (1954), Richard Dyer (2009), Richard Brilliant (1991), and Bharat Bhusan Mohanty (2005). In Chapter Four, which deals more directly with the social type and stereotype, the discussion of the Afrikaner type is supported by Federico Freschi (2011), Liese van der Watt (1998), Elizabeth Delmont (2001), Eunice Basson (2003), Jeanne van Eeden (2008) and Murray Schoonraad (1990). With regard to the concept of identity, a definition and two alternative understandings of the concept are reached by referring to the work of Phillip Gleason (1983), and Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper (2000), while alternative terms that authors and academics could use when dealing with identity are proposed.

1.2.2 Literature on institutional identity and culture

Institutional culture and identity are discussed in relation to the book by Schmahmann entitled *Picturing change: curating visual culture at post-apartheid*

¹² Hall's theories regarding representation are important in the study, which seeks to critically examine the hidden ideological meanings that are produced, disseminated and maintained in the artworks purchased for, donated to or inherited by the UP Art Collection.

universities (2013). This book is concerned with the negotiation of visual objects (sculptures, official portraits, insignia, and other artworks) found at various selected tertiary institutions in South Africa. It looks at culture, identity and power relations within these universities and how suggested values and ideals are encouraged to be associated with a specific institution because of the articulation of the culture and identity through images and visual objects. Schmahmann (2013) looks specifically at institutional culture and identity in the South African context, but in order to understand these concepts in a more general sense, the dissertation also draws on the work of various other scholars.

Institutional culture is discussed with reference to a journal article authored by Douglas Toma, Greg Dubrow and Matthew Hartley entitled *The uses of institutional culture: strengthening identification and building brand equity in higher education* (2005). The authors investigate the importance, function and uses of a culture in tertiary institutions and how institutional culture drives institutional identification and brand equity.¹³ Institutional identity is elaborated on by drawing on *An integrative approach to university visual identity and reputation* (2006) by Sue Alessandri, Sung-Un Yang and Dennis Kinsey. In addition, the discussion of the two concepts is supported by Ginger MacDonald (2013), Stuart Hall (1997), Maria Campbell and Niamh Hourigan (2008), as well as Lis Lange's ideas put forward in *Rethinking transformation and its knowledge(s): The case of South African higher education* (2014).

Information on the University of Pretoria's history and the people associated with the institution (for example, where information is missing with regard to the portraits) is mainly found in the invaluable series of books entitled *Ad Destinatum I-IV* (University of Pretoria 1960, Spies 1987, Bergh 1996, Van der Watt 2002). With regard to establishing the institution's culture and identity, the dissertation examines information that is readily available on the University's official website, particularly in terms of its vision, mission and values, University policies,

¹³ The culture of an institution is considered of utmost importance because it apparently creates a better student experience, teaching experience, and campus community, as well as encouraging external constituents to support the institution.

University management and governance, enterprises and principles, strategic plans, and a brief history of the University. The Department of Museum and Arts Management is also discussed through similar avenues, namely information found on the website as well as interviews with the curator of the collection, De Kamper. The discussion of the Department is substantiated by articles that directly deal with this division of the University and the UP Art Collection, namely *Collecting and curating: The university of Pretoria art collection* (2007) by De Kamper, the dissertation entitled *The art exhibitions held in the Macfayden Memorial Hall, 1931 to 1951* (1989) by Jeanne Joubert, *Collecting South African art in the 1930s: the role of Martin du Toit* (2008) by Jeanne van Eeden, as well as a book by Alex Duffey, *The art & heritage collections of the University of Pretoria* (2008).

1.3 Theoretical framework and methodologies

The study applies a multi-method approach which includes discourse analysis, visual rhetoric, compositional analysis and content analysis, because the social conditions and effects of visual images, that is, their cultural meanings and effects, make it impossible to rely on only one method when analysing the various ways in which the portraits in the UP Art Collection communicate specific ideas about the University of Pretoria's institutional identity and culture.

As the main aim of the study is to investigate the discourses articulated through the portraits in the UP Art Collection, the research conducted here makes use of a discourse analysis. As discourse is created by society, discourse analysis is concerned with discourse's social production and effect (Rose 2011:196).¹⁴ Discourse analysis consists of looking at sources with new eyes,¹⁵ immersing oneself in them, identifying important themes in the sources, scrutinising their effects of truth, noting their complexity and inconsistencies, looking at the visible

¹⁴ This includes looking at the "institutional location" of discourse that is filled with authority and power as well as the audience that is presumed by sources – in other words, the social context of discourses (Rose 2011:221).

¹⁵ This entails forgetting preconceptions one might have about the images in order to discover new insights and leads that the images reveal.

and the invisible, and paying attention to details (Rose 2011:220).¹⁶ This is precisely what is undertaken in this study, which attempts to identify themes in the UP Art Collection portraits and analyse the presented and suggested messages communicated to stakeholders, if or when they are readily available in an open access online database.

The discourse analysis is supported by the theory of visual rhetoric. Sonja Foss (2011:142) argues that the advent of the study of visual images within rhetorical studies owes much to the omnipresence and permanence of images and their influence on contemporary culture. She discusses the two uses of the term ‘visual rhetoric’, which means both a “visual object or artefact and a perspective on the study of visual data” (Foss 2011:143).¹⁷ In the matter of visual rhetoric as perspective, Foss (2011:145) states that it “is a critical-analytical tool or a way of approaching and analysing visual data that highlights the communicative dimensions of images”. She argues that this perspective highlights the rhetorical response to images rather than aesthetical responses. In other words, meaning is ascribed to the formal or stylistic elements and rhetoricians are interested in the effect of the elements on “lay viewers” (Foss 2008:306) such as the University stakeholders.¹⁸

¹⁶ This entails both a compositional interpretation and content analysis which assist in identifying important themes within a dataset – in this case the portraits – and between inferences that have been made (Rose 2011:210).

¹⁷ In the first usage, visual rhetoric is an object or artefact a person creates through the use of visual symbols for the purpose of communication (Foss 2008:304) – i.e., artworks such as portraits. The second definition is a theoretical viewpoint (or “perspective” in Foss’s terms), in which researchers and academics deal with visual images or visual datasets, which consists of the investigation of the symbolic or communicative aspects of visual objects or artefacts (Foss 2011:145) – the communicative aspects include identity and culture.

¹⁸ Foss (2008:307) argues that scholars of rhetoric generally focus on one or more of three areas, namely nature, function and evaluation. The first area, nature, looks at the components, qualities, and characteristics of visual objects, which is usually the initial step of the perspective, where rhetoricians identify two primary components, namely presented elements (physical features) and suggested elements (concepts, ideas, themes and allusions) that the audience is likely to infer. These two elements produce the primary communicative elements of an image and the meanings an image is prone to have for audiences (Foss 2011:145). The second area, function, deals with the communicative effects of visual rhetoric on audiences. This area is concerned with the actions communicated and discovering how images operate (Foss 2008:308). The final focus is evaluation and is concerned with the process of assessing visual objects. Most scholars tend to evaluate an image or visual object according to whether it achieves its intended function (Foss 2008:309).

This dissertation uses an inductive approach with exploration and explanation of selected portraits in the UP Art Collection. It is an investigation of the features of visual objects to generate rhetorical theory (Foss 2008:311). The focus of this approach is to look at “the qualities and functions of images to develop explanations of how visual symbols operate” (Foss 2011:149). Visual rhetoric does not suggest a concrete methodological approach, but leaves it to the researcher to incorporate his or her own views through a qualitative content analysis (Margolis & Pauwels 2011:13). Content analysis, however, limits itself to the depicted, while looking at the level of depiction – “the stylistic choices at the level of the execution and the characteristics of the medium” (Margolis & Pauwels 2011:13) – reveals relevant data about the norms and values of the image makers or their commissioning institutions. Thus, this dissertation uses discourse analysis and rhetorical theory as the overarching methodologies, supported by a compositional interpretation, content analysis and informal interviews.¹⁹

1.4 Overview of chapters

Chapter Two begins with the first aim of the dissertation, which is to establish what constitutes a portrait. Next, representation is discussed, because portraits are representations of meanings, language and culture, which symbolically stand for or represent concepts, ideas and feelings in the minds of members of a shared culture (Hall 1997:15). Following these two discussions, it is determined that portraits as representations simultaneously depict social types and/or stereotypes, and personal identity. Thus, the subsequent sections examine the type in the forms of social types and stereotypes, and how they are represented iconographically, as well as the concept of identity. The section on identity also proposes alternative concepts to identity that writers and academics can use when dealing with this ambiguous term. The chapter concludes with a theoretical look at institutional identity and culture, how these two concepts are revealed through institutional images, and how institutions could deal with ‘problematic’ images in their endeavour to transform institutional identity and culture.

¹⁹ Informal interviews are conducted with the curator of the collection, De Kamper, as well as Frikkie Eksteen, an artist whose portraits are included in the UP Art Collection.

The third chapter starts with a brief overview of the history of the University of Pretoria, along with why the University might have decided to create a lineage of their leadership in the form of painted commissioned portraits. The following section looks at the formal, official portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures (i.e. the University's leadership), introducing the section with a discussion of the portrait as a sign which communicates specific preferred qualities attached to the sitters and the Institution. This section is divided into four subsections, each one considering the discourses, visual rhetoric, and compositional and content elements of the selected portraits.²⁰ The chapter concludes by considering the Institution's identity and culture as it relates to the portraits discussed.

Chapter Four is divided into three sections. Section one briefly discusses selected portraits of political or cultural leaders of Afrikaner history. The following section considers the Afrikaner type, as revealed in the portraits of Mayer, beginning with a short biography of the artist, followed by a consideration of the representation of Afrikaner men, women and children, and Nationalist art. The section concludes with a discussion of selected artworks by Mayer that reveal the Afrikaner type. Chapter Four concludes with a debate about the contested future role and status of these portraits at the University, since they communicate identities and cultures that might be outdated. Despite their problematic status, I propose that these portraits ought to be renegotiated for academic, preservation, social and historic reasons.

²⁰ The subsections are: official commissioned portraits of office-bearers, portraits of female academics and public figures, portraits of black academics and public figures, and other academic and public figures.

CHAPTER TWO

PORTRAITURE AS REPRESENTATION OF TYPES AND IDENTITY

2.1 Introduction

The main focus of this dissertation is the two-dimensional portraits in the UP Art Collection. Thus, it is essential to start with a discussion of the genre of portraiture in art. The discussion in the first section of this chapter includes a history and overview of the genre, and the use of portraits by powerful commissioning bodies such as institutions and universities to establish and reinforce status, authority and power. The second section affirms that portraits are representations because they symbolically stand for or represent concepts, ideas and feelings. Thus, the section deals with Hall's (1997) seminal work on representation, meaning(s) and culture. The section concludes with a consideration of cultural objects, and portraits, social types and stereotypes as cultural objects.

Representation in the form of portraiture makes use of typing – whether it be social type or stereotype. The third section discusses these two concepts in relation to representation and their personal and group functions in culture. Thereafter, the social type and stereotype in portraiture are explored, as the types are portrayed iconographically by using written and visual codes. This leads to the subsection in which Erwin Panofsky's (1972) art historical methodology of iconology is discussed. His three levels of analysis are explained, after which the section concludes by linking iconology and iconographical signs with representation, meaning and culture, as well as the portraits discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

The fourth section focuses on the concept of identity and alternative terms that scholars and academics can use when dealing with this ambiguous concept. First, a definition is reached by looking at the uses of the concept, as well as two approaches to understanding identity. Subsequently, Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) alternative sets of terms and concepts when dealing with identity are proposed. The section also deals with the connections between portraiture and

identity, Woodall's (1997) dualist conception of identity in portraiture, and portraits' capacity to influence viewers' identities.

The final section of the chapter deals with institutional identity and culture. The essentialist and postmodern perspectives are described, before it is concluded that institutional identity has a retentive capacity. Thereafter, institutional culture is defined and an alternative definition is proposed based on Hall's (1997) definition of culture from a representational point of view. The section concludes with an exploration of Schmahmann's (2013) recommendations on what institutions in the South African context can do to change the discourses associated with artworks that have problematic pasts and connotations, which in turn would change their respective identities and cultures.

2.2 Portraiture

There is a long history of capturing the appearance of a person. Max Friedländer (1963:231) states that little was and is known of ancient portrait-painting apart from the busts, statues, herms, sarcophagi, wall paintings, mediaeval coats of arms, and Greek and Roman coins that have survived. The purpose of these images – which we call portraits – was either religious or, as an early form of propaganda, to disseminate the portrayed person's image (Maynard 2007:112). The emergence of the modern-day understanding of portraits, with the increase in their production in the fifteenth century, started with the 'awakening of personality', a feeling of selfhood and the 'discovery of man' during the Renaissance in Italy. Friedländer (1963:231) observes that one of the motivational forces for portraiture was the desire for fame and authority, and the simultaneous interest in and development of biographies. According to Brilliant (1991:7), one of the most important components of portraiture was the artist's intent to create a likeness of a specific person. In other words, it is not the recognisability of the likeness that is necessary, but rather the intention of the artist to create a portrait. Thus, whether or not the artist's skill and ability are adequate to enable recognition, the artist's intention to create a portrait is what classifies a portrait as such.

Friedländer (1963:235) traces the progress of portraiture from the profile on an ancient coin, to the front-view in mediaeval church painting, and to the three-quarter-profile achieved through foreshortening.¹ Initially it was men, especially princes and other prominent subjects, who were depicted because of the bias in favour of men as honourable and excellent. Between the Middle Ages and the seventeenth century,² the so-called “less sharp” physiognomy of the woman was portrayed (Schneider 1994:6) and, later, the child received recognition. Eventually every human being, despite their position, intellect or class, was deemed worthy to be represented in an image (Friedländer 1963:237).³

According to Friedländer (1963:259), the genre’s biggest change occurred in the nineteenth century, with a new atmosphere of seriousness and righteousness. Portraying the character and individual traits of a sitter was rendered more important than “pleasantness” or traits from position, profession or social class, which led to the creation of portraits that were critical or pessimistic, portraying individuals that appeared grave and unhappy (Friedländer 1963:259). Science, art and philosophy became entwined and artists were now influenced by leading thinkers and scholars, with the search for truth shared by artists (Friedländer 1963:260). Friedländer (1963:260) notes that the nineteenth-century portraitists in search of truth, tried to replicate the peculiarities of an individual, while simultaneously expressing their own subjectivity and uniqueness. When photography made its appearance in the 1820s, it became the dangerous rival of portrait-painting, as it held greater potential to capture the truth that eluded portrait painters (Friedländer 1963:262). For artists, being accurate reproducers

¹ He also describes the change from a focus on the face, to the inclusion of the shoulders, bust and hands, the half-figure “with talking hands”, the three-quarter length and finally the full-length figure (Friedländer 1963:236). He observes that the more the figure is visible as a whole, the more fixed they are in their position, profession and social class (Friedländer 1963:237).

² It is from this time period that the portrayal of a person was no longer dependent on their birth or divine occupation (Schneider 1994:6).

³ Friedländer (1963:238) notes that the inclusion of all individuals is because of an interest in the particularities of an individual and his or her unique objectiveness. He describes the term objective as “the apprehension of the individual phenomenon, and the ability to feel one’s way into the spiritual being of the personality in question ... hardly hindered at all by stylistic habit, formal ideals, the taste of the times or subjective emotions” (Friedländer 1963:239).

of the world around them became less crucial and they moved to a realm where the camera could not compete with them: the realm of “consciously subjective interpretation” (Friedländer 1963:262).⁴

This realm is where modern artists situated themselves. Different artistic periods and discourses, such as modernism and postmodernism, have in various ways problematised the tradition of mimetic portraiture of, for example, academics and public figures, especially in a series, as in the case of the University of Pretoria office bearers.⁵ The first discourse discussed here is modernism, when art and the new technologies of the camera and photography became entwined. From the nineteenth century, photography captured the objective external peculiarities of a sitter, while artistic interest in the internal qualities grew (Friedländer 1963:260). Schmahmann (2013:155) states that many modernist artists found mimetic portraits challenging, because modernist discourse argues against physiognomic ideas of a sitter’s personality or state of mind being linked to physical attributes. Modernism demands that artists express themselves and “abstract from or rework perceived reality” (Schmahmann 2013:155).⁶ Self-expression generally leads to the creation of artworks using non-representational colours and forms that reflect an interpretation of reality according to the artist’s prerogative (Joubert 1989:151). Consequently, modern artists were not interested in mimesis, but strove to reveal underlying meanings and “deeper realities” (Joubert 1989:152).

Whereas from a modern understanding of subjectivity, the self and its hidden truths are unified and coherent, from a postmodernist and poststructuralist perspective, the individual sitter does not possess an essential identity. Postmodernism is concerned with processes of ‘becoming’ and, as such, the

⁴ Friedländer (1963:262) observes that artists then struggled “to avoid reportage by means of periphrasis or aphoristic exaggeration of characteristic features”.

⁵ Two of the three influential art discourses, namely modernism and postmodernism, that span the period in which the UP Art Collection portraits were created are discussed in this chapter. The third, Afrikaner nationalism, is discussed in Chapter Four.

⁶ In the same vein, Joubert (1989:151) observes that modern art advocates that the artist’s interpretation of a subject (not mere reproduction) is crucial for self-expression.

identity of an individual is considered to be neither fixed nor stable, but multiple, fluctuating and fragmented (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:8). This problematises the creation of portraits because, according to postmodern thought, the identity of the individual would never again be the same as his identity in the static portrait. However, many postmodern artists have returned to mimetic representation. According to Shearer West (2004:205), they “playfully, ironically, or parodically” question the standard practices of identity markers, such as pose, expression and setting. It is precisely because these markers have a specific purpose that postmodernist artists question them.

As alluded to above, throughout the history of portraiture, two avenues for depiction were followed by artists who aimed to create a likeness. Friedländer (1963:246) states that the first, and earlier, is a mere copy of an individual with a physiognomic likeness of their particular external characteristics, including peculiarities and imperfections. This approach does not allow for artistic interpretation and freedom as it requires the exact copying of a sitter, which is why realistic and naturalistic tendencies are followed when employing this avenue.⁷ The second, which developed with the increased belief in the autonomy of the individual, focuses on the internal qualities, psychology or truth of a sitter, with the artist having more artistic freedom to interpret subjectively what they want to depict in the portrait.⁸ It was the identity, inner quality, and internal self of a person that was thought to validate his or her privileged position to be immortalised (Woodall 1997:6). The second avenue requires that the artist have some distinct insight into and knowledge of the identity of the sitter – thus, a heavy weight is placed on the artist’s shoulders to effectively and reliably express something about the sitter.

The two avenues, the external or internal depictions, are not mutually exclusive and the choice to focus on only one of the possibilities does not make a portrait

⁷ For example, Leonardo da Vinci’s *Ginevra de’ Benci* (1474/1478).

⁸ A good example of a modernist artwork that focuses on the second avenue is Pablo Picasso’s *Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler* (1910).

less artistic, unimpressive or inferior.⁹ However, according to Woodall (1997:16), the combination of the external and internal (i.e., the dualist identity) within an artwork would successfully elevate a mere portrait to the realm of art.¹⁰ Whereas if a portrait only depicted the exact, copied exterior of a sitter, without any “deeper” likeness, then it could be considered a craft. For example, before the fifteenth century, it is understood that portraits were meant to depict the external features of an individual accurately, and as such, Norbert Schneider (1994:20) questions whether too much attention has been paid to the possible psychological aspect of earlier portraits, because their purpose was not the same as in the twentieth century. Schneider (1994:9) observes that portraits from the earlier decades of the sixteenth century were more concerned with scrutinising the external features of an individual, while from the end of the sixteenth century the focus of portraiture was progressively more on inner states, the recreation of atmosphere, and the depiction of mental and moral attitudes.

The choice of avenue relies on the function of the portrait. These functions are relevant to this study, because they are exactly what the commissioned, formal and official portraits aim to achieve. Schneider (1994:28) argues that portraiture has three functions: representing, impressing and commemorating. The portrait *represents* the sitter's power and social prestige, and, through *impressing* the viewer, commands respect and admiration. The third function relates to preserving the likeness of a sitter in order to overcome the finality of death. The functions can be further understood through looking at what, according to Brilliant (1991:15), an artist attempts to represent in a portrait: firstly, “What do I (you, he, she, we, or they) look like?”, which implies visual resemblance, even if only to a degree. Brilliant's first aspect links with Schneider's (1994:28) first function, *representing*. Secondly, Brilliant (1991:15) states that an artist attempts to

⁹ Jean Borgatti (1990:37) states that the idea “[t]hat portraits depict specific individuals appears to be the only undisputed issue in the literature on portraiture, even though the means used to specify the image or the mode of depiction may vary according to culturally held conceptions of the person, ideas about individualism, and aesthetic preferences.”

¹⁰ A possible reason for this type of argument based on the concept of a dualist identity is that the subject is always embodied in the object, and the two identities are dependent on each other.

answer, “What am I (you, he, etc.) like?” This representation penetrates beyond the visual resemblance, and links with Schneider's (1994:28) second function, *impressing*. The third question probed by artists is “Who am I (you, he, etc)?”, described by social constructions, such as dress, manner, props and visual clues, or an essential characteristic. This links with Schneider's (1994:28) third function, *commemorating*.

It could be argued that the answers to these questions reflect the identity of a sitter, and Brilliant (1991:9) lists the following elements as forming part of an individual's identity: “a recognized or recognizable appearance; a given name that refers to no one else; a social, interactive function that can be defined; in context, an appropriate characterization; and a consciousness of the distinction between one's own person and another's, and of the possible relationship between them”. When *one or more* of these identity traits are recognised within a portrait, Brilliant (1991:9) believes a likeness has been created by the artist.¹¹ In other words, the traits, as identified by Brilliant (1991:9), are not the only aspects that make up or have the potential to reveal the identity of a sitter, but work as agents for the purpose of identification.¹²

Echoing Brilliant's (1991:9) elements for creating a likeness, Cynthia Freeland (2007:100) states that there are four ways in which a portrait can accurately and faithfully identify subjects, whether separately or in combination: by being an accurate likeness,¹³ by providing testimony of presence, by revealing psychological characterisations, or by capturing a person's essence. The first involves the execution of the key aspects of a sitter's distinguishable and recognisable physiognomy or external features.¹⁴ The second method, through a

¹¹ This is important for the discussion in Chapter Four, because, according to Brilliant (1991:9), the name of a sitter is not necessarily required to label or categorise an artwork of a person as a portrait. For example, an artwork by Christo Coetzee titled *Girl* (ca 1990) is a portrait of his late wife, Ferrie Binge-Coetzee (Christo Coetzee (1929–2000) Collection 2011).

¹² According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000:15), from the perspective of the portrait's viewer, these aspects are examples of external identifications. In other words, the sitter is revealed through the process of identifying and categorising, which is further discussed in section 2.5.

¹³ This refers to a likeness as described in the previous paragraph by Brilliant (1991:9), based on the identifications of Brubaker and Cooper (2000:16).

¹⁴ This method relates to the first avenue of depiction.

portrait of someone now deceased, establishes that the person was once present and is now made present again (Freeland 2007:101).¹⁵ Thirdly, psychological characterisations that can be depicted include the sitter's personality, emotions and attitudes. These characterisations rely on the expressive capabilities of the sitter, artist, or both. Lastly, a portrait can accurately and faithfully show a subject by depicting their unique, interiorised identity, inner quality or internal self.¹⁶ The four methods, whether alone or in combination, thereby refer to a specific individual.

Thus, a portrait has a "referential character" (Brilliant 1991:30) and affirms the existence of the specific historical person who wished to communicate their social standing as autonomous individuals.¹⁷ The "referential character" need not be in the form of mimesis or replication, but some form of external 'correctness' is required in order to attach the inner qualities and internal or subjective self to the specific represented person (Brilliant 1991:30). Without some degree of external correctness, the inner, subjective self of a person, unique to a single named body, would not be recognisable as belonging to a specific person – a pre-knowledge would be required. However, pre-knowledge of a sitter can be a disadvantage for the portraitist and the portrait.

Pre-knowledge is the first constraint on the portraitist and the portrait. Sitters, commissioning bodies and/or audiences can place requirement constraints on the portrait-making situation. Viewers have a certain perspective of the sitter, and if every viewer does not recognise their own ideas and perceptions about the sitter, the portrait is deemed inadequate. Woodall (1997:9), referring to Roland Barthes, states that "'likeness' has become elusive, and personal to the viewer rather than the sitter". The second negative influence is felt more directly by the

¹⁵ This relates to Woodall's (1997:8) "re-presentation", where the departed is made present again.

¹⁶ The third and fourth methods are in line with the second avenue of depiction. Freeland (2007:102) refers to this as the essence, the unique "air", or the demeanour of a sitter. It also links with Gleason's (1983:919) primordialist, Eriksonian or essentialist description of identity discussed in 2.5.

¹⁷ The required referential character is negotiable depending on the artistic period and the concept and understanding of identity.

portraitist. Friedländer (1963:232) observes that prior to modernism there was an aversion to portrait painting, because the artist could not give free rein to their own artistic individuality and approached the act with a sense of fawning attentiveness which goes against the grain of the artist's creativity. The artist's freedom, imagination and spirit are oppressed in favour of an accurate and objective rendering of the sitter, who can give judgement on the portraitist's artwork, because they believe that they know themselves better than the artist.

The next negative influence on the portraitist and portrait is the desire to avoid judgements of inadequacy. In order to sidestep this, Brilliant (1991:10) notes that most portraits are characterised by "a formal stillness, a heightened degree of self-composure that responds to the formality of the portrait-making situation". Portraits of office bearers and public figures, for instance, who occupy a major role in the public eye, are usually depicted at the pinnacle of their admirable roles – as serious men or women, worthy of respect. According to the conventions of portraiture, the sitter should, therefore, be identifiable as a person in the particular honourable role.¹⁸ In order to portray a 'universally' recognised individual, these portraits are constructed in this way, through iconographical signs, for an audience. Office bearers and public figures wish to 'put their best foot forward' and hide any personal or 'frowned upon' habits or mannerisms. In this way, a distinction is made between a public and private self (Brilliant 1991:89).

Another constraint on the portraitist and the portrait is the fact that portraits are often used by wealthy and powerful commissioning bodies. West (2004:71) states that these bodies aim to represent themselves to an audience through portraits and artworks. The emphasis of these portraits is not on the individual's likeness or personality, but their social role and type, and the principles for which they stand (West 2004:72). In this way, the sitter is given symbolic status, and

¹⁸ The concept of the sitter in a role links with Gleason's (1983:914, emphasis added) notion that "identity involves an interaction between the interior development of the individual personality ... and the growth of a sense of selfhood that arises from participating in society, internalizing its cultural norms, acquiring different statuses, and *playing different roles*". These roles are evident in individuals who are cast as certain social types and stereotypes, discussed in 2.4 below.

the sitter's individuality is almost entirely sacrificed in favour of the commissioning body's intent. The purpose of institutions commissioning portraits is to establish and reinforce their status, authority and power (West 2004:82). These portraits, therefore, through carefully chosen iconographical elements,¹⁹ not only display the superior wisdom, intelligence and importance of the sitter but, even more so, the established power of the institution (West 2004:87).²⁰

Ernst Van Alphen (2005:22) agrees that authority is attributed to the sitter of the portrait and experienced by viewers of portraits. Portraiture was considered to offer reassuring images of authority (West 2004:66). In other words, to some extent, it is assumed that people who have been portrayed have or, most often, had authority.²¹ Many viewers assume that a sitter must have been 'worthy' of being immortalised within an image, at least according to the values of a specific society. Van Alphen (2005:22) notes that the assumed 'real' authority is accepted because the portrait itself gives authority to the person represented. This means that representing authority is the purpose and effect of the portrait. With regard to official portraits, viewers are required to admire the portrayed, and not the portrait (Van Alphen 2005:22).²² Thus, in relation to commissioning bodies, viewers are supposed to be in awe of both the person and the institution to which they 'belong'. The institution receives credit for having an accomplished sitter as a part of their history, and is associated with the qualities connected to the sitter.

When commissioning official portraits of people in power or with authority, the capturing of the physiognomy of the sitter is very important as the portraits are meant to memorialise, commemorate and document. Along with physical attributes, official portraits ought to capture an air, mood or presence that people

¹⁹ The University of Pretoria's official portraits display the sitters according to formulas of behaviour, dress, and demeanour – specific signs that communicate their position. Maynard (2007:112) refers to this as "their recognizable social selves".

²⁰ When the sitter and the institution are recognised as "belonging" together, viewers of the artworks are made aware of and inspired to have a sense of belonging to the distinctive, bounded, solidary group. The portraits assert and encourage group identity or, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000:20) note, groupness.

²¹ As previously suggested, in the genre's history it was most often people with authority who 'sat' for their portrait.

²² This is another reason why artistic freedom is limited in the portraits of official office bearers.

in positions of authority generally do, or should, radiate. This means that the portrait, just as the person once did, should encourage and command respect, inspiration, commitment, achievement and success. The portrait *represents* these qualities or attributes. A portrait might achieve this through positive reinforcement to inspire viewers of the artworks to achieve the same metaphoric heights as the sitter. John Berger (2008:11) states that paintings, and in particular portraits, are a well from which viewers draw assumptions that influence their actions. Similarly, Rose (2011:2) observes that “different groups in a society will make sense of the world in different ways ... [and] these made meanings, or representations structure they [*sic*] way people behave – the way you and I behave – in our everyday lives.” For this reason, the official portraits, and, by implication, the institution itself becomes a point of reference for such mythical constructions.

Art, and in particular portraiture, as a representational language “use[s] signs and symbols ... to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings” (Hall 1997:1). Both the communicator and the recipient (i.e., the portrait artist and the viewer of the artwork) produce and create meanings. The condition is that the meanings must be plausible, even though they are neither fixed nor static. Because portraits are cultural objects that do not simply contain cultural meanings, the next section discusses portraits as made meanings and representations. I explore more closely the notion that meanings²³ are reached through members of a culture interacting, interpreting, making sense of and understanding people, objects and events, as well as their representations (Hall 1997:3).

2.3 Representation

This section deals primarily with Hall’s definition of representation, culture and meaning(s). According to Hall (1997:15), representation is a means of connecting meaning, language and culture – it is through representation, by the use of

²³ The plural use of the word indicates that cultural things never have a fixed, singular meaning that persists throughout time (Hall 1997:3).

different 'languages',²⁴ signs and images, that meanings which symbolically stand for or represent the concepts, ideas and feelings in our minds, are created and exchanged between members of a shared culture.

Hall (1997:19) defines representation as follows:

At the heart of the meaning process in culture, then, are two related 'systems of representation'. The first enables us to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences or a chain of equivalences between things – people, objects, events, abstract ideas, etc. – and our system of concepts, our conceptual maps. The second depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts. The relation between 'things', concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call 'representation'.

Thus, the first system is one of connection between things and our mental representations of these things. These mental or thought concepts and images stand for or "represent" the world around us, and enable us "to refer to things" both in and outside our minds (Hall 1997:17). The mental concepts, ideas and images are then "organized, arranged and classified into complex relations with one another", allowing a person to have composed ideas and thoughts (Hall 1997:17). A person then creates and exchanges meanings through the relationship of things in the world and his or her mental representations of them (Hall 1997:18). However, not every individual of a shared culture has the exact same conceptual maps. Yet, the conceptual maps need to be *similar* in order to communicate meaning, or "a shared culture of meanings" (Hall 1997:18).

For individuals to communicate their similar conceptual maps in a meaningful way, they need the second system of representation: a shared language.²⁵ Hall (1997:18) notes that "[o]ur shared conceptual map must be translated into a

²⁴ Hall does not restrict the term language to types of languages, for example, English, French, German, Japanese, etc., but also forms of language, for example, images, mass media, facial expressions, gestures, body language, music, and fashion. Hall (1997:19) defines a language as "[a]ny sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning".

²⁵ This shared language is once again not restricted to a specific language such as English.

common language, so that we can correlate our concepts and ideas with ... signs". Signs symbolise our conceptual maps and relations, and "together they make up the meaning-systems of our culture" (Hall 1997:18).²⁶ However, how are miscommunication and misunderstandings avoided? Individuals of a shared culture must have similar conceptual maps, similar conceptual relations, a shared language, and a similar way of interpreting the signs of a language.²⁷

According to Hall (1997:15), there are three approaches to understanding representation: the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approaches. For the purpose of this study, the constructionist approach is explored and employed.²⁸ The constructionist approach has two variants: the semiotic approach and the discursive approach (Hall 1997:15). The constructionist approach "acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language", but the individuals of a culture "*construct* meaning, using representational systems" (Hall 1997:25). The meanings attached to different signs, such as cultural objects (i.e., portraits), are constructed and it is because signs stand for, represent or signify concepts that they can be successfully used during communication.

The first variant of the constructionist approach is the semiotic approach. Hall (1997:6, emphasis in original) states that a semiotic approach to representation "is concerned with the *how* of representation, with how language produces meaning". The second variant, the discursive approach, examines "the *effects and consequences* of representation" (Hall 1997:6, emphasis in original). The second variant looks at both how languages and representations create, construct and produce meanings (i.e., the semiotic approach), and how the exchanged knowledge "connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or

²⁶ Hall (1997:19) states that in order to interpret signs, "we must have access to the two systems of representation discussed earlier: to a conceptual map which correlates the sheep in the field with the concept of a 'sheep'; and a language system which, in visual language, bears some resemblance to the real thing or 'looks like it' in some way."

²⁷ These individuals do not need to reach the exact same interpretations, however, because, according to Hall, meaning is never completely fixed.

²⁸ For a discussion of the first two approaches, refer to Hall (1997:24, 25).

constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practised and studied” (Hall 1997:6). The discursive approach also looks at how a form of language or meanings is used at particular times and places (Hall 1997:6).

It is therefore evident that representation involves the two concepts of meaning and culture. Hall (1997:1) states that “culture is about shared meanings”; meaning is circulated through the actual, material forms of languages as “representational system[s]”. Therefore, representation is essential for meaning to be produced, exchanged and interpreted. These meanings are, however, never fixed or static, but different meanings need to be plausible in a specific situation,²⁹ even if they are competing or contested (Hall 1997:9).³⁰

Central to the process of understanding meanings are codes. Hall (1997:21) states that “codes fix the relationships between concepts and signs ... [and] they stabilize meaning”. He observes that meaning is constructed and (to a degree) fixed by both the system of representation and the codes “which [set] up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language system in such a way that, every time we think of a tree, the code tells us to use the English word TREE” (Hall 1997:21). Codes are the keys to making speech, listening and translation possible. These processes allow meaning to pass from communicator to recipient effectively (Hall 1997:22).³¹

Returning to the notion that meaning is never static, it is because meaning is constructed by both the systems of representation and the codes used to connect concepts and signs, that multiple interpretations of the same cultural object, such as a portrait, are possible. Meaning is then never finally fixed because cultural,

²⁹ Different situations refer to changing cultural, linguistic and social conventions and norms.

³⁰ Different plausible meanings are possible because of various contexts, usages and historical circumstances – i.e., new situations (Hall 199:9). Hall (1997:11) also encourages readers to think of the interpretation and communication of meanings as a form of dialogue that is never absolute truth, but rather one translation of a cultural object (such as a portrait) that should recognise difference and power within the same cultural circuit.

³¹ Visual codes, or iconographical signs, employed by portraitists, such as activity, pose, manner and dress, work in the same manner.

linguistic and social conventions change over time (Hall 1997:23). Yet, as Hall (1997:23, emphasis in original) notes, “there must be *some* fixing of meaning in language, or we would never be able to understand one another.”³² This fixing of meaning is also the goal of a representational practice, “which intervenes in the many potential meanings of an image in an attempt to privilege one” (Hall 1997:228).³³

If portraiture is considered a form of language, as described above, then portraits are undoubtedly a “medium’ through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture” (Hall 1997:1). Creating a portrait is a practice or process of representation. Thus, portraits produce and circulate meanings. As a form of language, they have a specific function – they create and communicate meanings to viewers. They are, metaphorically, carriers of meaning and symbolise, “stand for or represent the meanings we wish to communicate” (Hall 1997:5). Portraits are also cultural objects, which, according to Hall (1997:3), produce and exchange meaning “whenever we express ourselves in, make use of, consume or appropriate” them. Furthermore, meanings expressed through and by cultural objects have the potential to establish and control personal and group behaviour and habits (Hall 1997:4). Therefore, they can be used by power structures to direct and control behaviour and ideas about others (Hall 1997:4).³⁴ Another way to think of the portrait is as a sign that signifies the “coder’s” (i.e., the portraitist’s and/or the sitter’s) “concepts, ideas and feelings in such a way as to enable others to ‘read’, decode or interpret their meaning” (Hall 1997:5).

Continuing from the discussion of meaning and culture, Hall (1997:2) states that, for the purpose of representation, culture should be understood “as a process, a

³² With regard to portraiture, the depicted social type and/or stereotype is one form of fixing meaning to aid interpretation and understanding.

³³ Hall (1997:228) encourages interpreters to reach the preferred meaning. One way of achieving this goal is to not only look at the portrait, for example, but also the caption or accompanying text, to select the preferred meaning from a multitude of plausible meanings.

³⁴ Yet, as stated earlier, meanings created, produced and exchanged by representations are never static nor fixed, even though hegemonic practices attempt to render them as such.

set of practices.”³⁵ He explains that culture is about “the production and the exchange of meanings ... between the members of a society or group” (Hall 1997:2), who make sense, understand and interpret these meanings in roughly similar ways. Culture is thus dependent on its members’ similarities and their shared “sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways” (Hall 1997:4).³⁶ Yet, in any culture, there are different representations, meanings and interpretations for any cultural object,³⁷ because culture is just as much about feelings, attachments and emotions as it is about concepts and ideas (Hall 1997:2). The effect is that cultural meanings “organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects” (Hall 1997:3).

However, cultural objects do not simply contain cultural meanings. Meanings are reached through members of a culture interacting, interpreting, making sense of and understanding people, objects and events (i.e., representations) (Hall 1997:3). When the members of a culture represent people and things,³⁸ they give them meanings. In other words, we give things meanings by constructing, interpreting and using representations in different ways (Hall 1997:3).

³⁵ Hall (1997:6) observes that culture is a “primary or ‘constitutive’ process ... in shaping social subjects and historical events”. He notes that culture has traditionally meant “the ‘best that has been thought and said’ in a society”. Thus, in the traditional sense of the word, it relates to the high culture of a group, society or nation (Hall 1997:2). In a more contemporary definition of the term, culture refers to “the widely distributed forms of popular music, publishing, art, design, literature, or the activities of leisure-time and entertainment, which make up the everyday lives of the majority of ‘ordinary people’” – these relate to the popular or mass culture of a group, society or nation. In a third sense of the term, Hall (1997:2) observes that when culture is explained according to a more social-science framework and in the anthropological sense, the term refers to both a distinctive “way of life” and “shared values” of a group, society or nation.

³⁶ Hall (1997:4) refers to the similarities as shared “cultural codes”, for example, linguistic codes, visual codes or body language.

³⁷ The reason for this is that representations are “shared cultural ‘space’” where peoples’ ideas, concepts, feelings and emotions converge. And although the members of a culture may share similar cultural codes, the codes are not identical.

³⁸ Hall (1997:3) refers to the representations of people and things as “the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them.”

Hall (1997:10) observes that we engage with cultural objects and their meanings because they “define what is ‘normal’, who belongs – and therefore who is excluded”, and reflect relations of power. We also engage with them owing to their potential to elicit “powerful feelings and emotions, of both a positive and negative kind” (Hall 1997:10). These cultural objects and their meanings – “the embodying of concepts, ideas and emotions in a symbolic form” (Hall 1997:10) – that are communicated and interpreted are called “the practices of representation” (Hall 1997:10). One practice of representation is social types and stereotypes, because they can be seen as cultural objects or constructs that embody and communicate mass concepts, ideas and emotions about a specific individual or group.

2.4 The social type and the stereotype

Brian Roberts (2011) observes that representation in the form of portraiture makes use of typing (social typing and stereotyping), by employing visual codes or signs such as activity, pose, manner and dress. Social types and stereotypes are representations that communicate meaning through the use of different languages such as fashion, gestures and body language. People’s shared meanings about types are created and exchanged between members of a shared culture.³⁹ Culture is thus dependent on its members’ similarities and their shared “sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways” (Hall 1997:4). Members’ similarities and shared conceptual maps and relations (such as social types and stereotypes) “organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects” (Hall 1997:3).⁴⁰

Social types are defined as collectively created representations of kinds of behaviour that are different to ordinary behaviour in everyday social life.⁴¹ Social

³⁹ For Hall (1997:1) “culture is about shared meanings”, so without shared meanings, such as social types and stereotypes, there would be no culture.

⁴⁰ As discussed below, these social practices, conducts and effects are the way a person is cast as a type, and the accompanying status, influence and treatment they receive.

⁴¹ Social types are part of the very fabric of social life, for example “in institutions, movements, political regimes, historical periods and everyday life” (Klapp 1954:56).

types are universally visible and “are truly collective in nature rather than the property of individual authors” (Klapp 1954:56). The different observed behaviours are then consensually reduced “to simple concepts, familiar to all” that indicate certain acceptable treatments of the observed social type (Klapp 1954:57).⁴² Orrin E Klapp (1954:56) maintains that social types have a “normative nature, role as sanctions, and mutual contribution to consensus and social control”.⁴³ He argues that a group without simplifications and reliable concepts that aid comprehensibility will be disordered, unmethodical and without proper response mechanisms (Klapp 1954:57). Social groups contain categories that were created by consensus and into which a person is placed.⁴⁴ These categories have definite implications for a person’s status, influence and the kind of treatment he or she will receive (Klapp 1954:56). The social group then “allows” the person cast in his or her social role to play the type,⁴⁵ but even if the person neither possesses the social type’s qualities nor plays their role, “the popular mind can [confer the social type] by a joke, rumour, epithet, slander, publicity trick, or news story” (Klapp 1954:59). However, the social type cast upon a person is not fixed or static, and it is possible for an individual in a social group to develop into another social type (Klapp 1954:59).⁴⁶

According to Klapp (1954:61), social types play “major personal and group functions”. On a personal level, social types are interiorised and act as references – they become archetypes an individual strives either to emulate or to avoid. With

⁴² For example, Klapp (1954:57) observes that “appropriate behavior toward a hero includes recognition of his unusual achievement, commemoration, holding him up as an example, and otherwise converting him into a cherished collective symbol.”

⁴³ Klapp (1954) explores three types: the hero, the villain and the fool. Each of these types represents a deviation from normal, ordinary behaviour (Klapp 1954:57).

⁴⁴ Consensus is necessary for the collective need to act in a certain way towards social types and to treat a type appropriately (Klapp 1954:60).

⁴⁵ According to Gleason (1983:916), role theory is based on the link between social roles and social statuses. The theory explains why people accept the statuses that accompany the roles in which they are cast. Nelson Foote (in Gleason 1983:917) linked identification with role theory and defined identification as “appropriation and commitment to a particular identity or series of identities”. An individual appropriates and commits to roles and statuses as assigned to him or her by others. However, imposed identities are not absolute and can be joined and adapted with others as the individual is subjected to other social situations (Gleason 1983:916).

⁴⁶ These observations by Klapp (1954:59) presuppose Gleason’s (1983:916) role theory, explaining why people accept the accompanied statuses of the roles in which they are cast.

regard to the group, social types have several functions: the group knows how to act according to consensually defined lines; “[m]ultiple, confusing or unknown factors are simplified” and organised by assigning these factors to a scapegoat; complicated situations are simplified into a battle between good (the hero) and evil (the villain); distant and inaccessible personalities become understandable; individuals “play” their social roles in dramatic or stressful situations; social types “enlist interest in causes and create mass followings”; they create a “we-feeling” and strengthen group morale; and they create solidarity, and collective norms and values (Klapp 1954:61-62).

Richard Dyer (2009:209) observes that social types are representations of members who belong to a social group, “whereas stereotypes are those who do not belong, who are outside of one’s society” (i.e., “other”).⁴⁷ This distinction between members who belong and those who do not is determined by the relative power of certain social groups in a given society who define themselves as central and the “other” as peripheral (Dyer 2009:209). Dyer (2009:207) states that “it is not stereotypes, as an aspect of human thought and representation, that are wrong, but who controls and defines them, what interests they serve.”⁴⁸

Referring to Walter Lippmann, Dyer (2009:207) discusses the functions of stereotypes as “(i) an ordering process, (ii) a ‘short cut’, (iii) referring to ‘the world’, and (iv) expressing ‘our’ values and beliefs.” The first function of stereotypes as an unavoidable ordering process refers to how individuals, of any social group or society, order and organise the mass of complicated data and information received from the world into generalities, patterns and types in order to make sense of the world.⁴⁹ Hall (1997:257) explains this function as follows: “We understand the world by referring individual objects, people or events in our

⁴⁷ Thus, social types are the acceptable behaviours as proposed by Klapp (1954), whereas stereotypes are unacceptable behaviours.

⁴⁸ This is an important aspect of social types and stereotypes: they need not be seen as a negative aspect of society, but should rather be explored according to the hegemonic practices that utilise and condone them.

⁴⁹ Dyer (2009:207) notes that “all such orderings are by definition ... partial and limited [but that] does not mean that they are untrue – partial knowledge is not false knowledge, it is simply not absolute knowledge.”

heads to the general classificatory schemes into which – according to our culture – they fit.”⁵⁰ It should be noted that this kind of ordering implicates power relations in social groups and society, as well as a belief in absoluteness and rigid casting (Dyer 2009:207).

The second function deals with the “often-observed ‘simplicity’ of stereotypes” (Dyer 2009:208). Dyer (2009:208) states that “stereotypes as a short cut points to the manner [*sic*] which stereotypes are a very simple, striking, easily-grasped form of representation”. However, this form of short-cutting condenses group and personal intricacies and “implies knowledge of a complex social structure” (Dyer 2009:208). The third and fourth functions are described by Lippmann (in Dyer 2009:206) as “the guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights.” In this regard, stereotypes are a well from which ideas about different social groups are drawn, and individuals then situate their own sense of self in relation to these ideas.⁵¹

Hall (1997:258, emphasis in original), defines stereotypes as follows: “*Stereotypes* get hold of the few ‘simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized’ characteristics about a person, *reduce* everything about the person to those traits, *exaggerate* and *simplify* them, and *fix* them without change or development to eternity.” He builds on Dyer’s (1996) initial work by considering the features of stereotypes. The first feature is that stereotyping “reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘difference’” (Hall 1997:258). The second feature of stereotyping is its creation of symbolic boundaries between individuals or groups who belong and those who do not.⁵² The third feature is that

⁵⁰ “Typing” is therefore essential to making sense of the world through wider categorisation, and it also aids the creation and communication of meaning as proposed by representation (Hall 1997:257).

⁵¹ Hall (1997:257) observes that one’s “picture of who the person ‘is’ is built up out of the information we accumulate from positioning him/her within ... different orders of typification.”

⁵² Stereotypes have the potential and power to construct the ‘other’. Mohanty (2005:54) states that “typification” is the process of assigning physiological and psychological characteristics to a people. The main concern of typification is that it reduces a heterogeneous people to a homogeneous, static type. The individuality and variation of ‘the other’ is not recognised, but is reduced to a generalised state (Mohanty 2005:54).

stereotyping arises “where there are gross inequalities of power” (Hall 1997:258). This feature echoes Dyer’s (2009:209) observation that certain social groups have the power to determine who is central and who is peripheral in a society.

In the case of portraiture, Brilliant (1991:12) states that the type is very important because it provides a frame of reference. He observes that people incorporate “both the general and the particular in their lives, in their bodies, in their thoughts and emotions, and in their memories” (Brilliant 1991:12). He states that it is often easier to recognise an individual in a type, defined by its historical, cultural and artistic setting – in other words, the personality and individuality of the sitter are referenced in the type (Brilliant 1991:32). In order to understand the way in which ‘types’ are constructed in portraiture, Brilliant (1991:16) discusses a portrait bust of the Roman philosopher, Plotinus.⁵³ Plotinus is believed to have been depicted as a fully matured, bearded man “‘looking like a philosopher’” (Brilliant 1991:16).⁵⁴ In other words, the philosopher-type – an elderly, bearded man – is established. According to Brilliant (1991:47), “the deliberate replication of a singular image for wide public distribution” aided the recognisability of a person, or group. Brilliant (1991:137) observes that “[o]nce the portrait type of a famous figure has been accepted as definitive, even normative, portraits that do not conform to the type disturb our sense of the whole person whose image we have formed in our minds”.⁵⁵

The type implies traits and characteristics associated with the depicted person and the group of which he or she is a part (Brilliant 1991:80). If a sitter is portrayed, partially, as a type, then he or she bears a general likeness to the people or group to whom he or she belongs.⁵⁶ This will be made evident by the

⁵³ It has been a common reference point to portray individuals in their social roles, which are, after all, connected to a person’s identity. Brubaker and Cooper (2000:17), as discussed later, refer to this as “social location”.

⁵⁴ The portrait bust was destroyed and is only known through literature on the artwork.

⁵⁵ If “the whole person” (Brilliant 1991:137) were to be replaced by ‘the group’, then a portrait of, for example, a vice-chancellor and principal who is not represented in their academic/social role would not fit our image of the person.

⁵⁶ If the type creates a general likeness of the people or group to whom the sitter belongs, then a sense of commonality is created (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:20).

particular identifications, such as pose, dress, tradition, customs, accessories, and so forth (i.e., iconographical signs) chosen for the representation. Type is, thus, a shared attribute (commonality) comprising generalising characteristics or traits of a group or nation. Depicting an individual according to a type undoubtedly has the potential to fix him or her in a specific time and place (Brilliant 1991:129). It could be argued that the portrait is only an image of a person at a specific time and place and that he or she is capable of change after that occasion,⁵⁷ but this would only be possible if the person is understood as having personality, depth or psychological essence. In the case of portrayals of ethnic individuals, the “white gaze” implied that black people did not possess the necessary psychological aspects mentioned above, and as such are not capable of ‘moving on’ from their representation.

Types are constructed iconographically by making use of written and visual codes (Dyer 2009:210). In portraiture, iconographical signs are used to represent and depict the type – in other words, iconographical signs “suggest” the type. Portrait sitters who are represented in a specific social type, for example the official portraits of the University, generally accept the particular iconographical portrayal deemed necessary to acquire the appropriate representation. In the case of the University of Pretoria official portraits, the carefully chosen iconographical elements display the superior wisdom, intelligence and importance of the sitter and, even more so, the established power of the Institution (West 2004:87). The following section discusses the historical art practice of iconology, which investigates the iconographical signs in artworks.

2.4.1 Iconology

Iconology enquires about the “subject matter or meaning of works of art” (Panofsky 1972:3). Gillian Rose (2011:202) states that “[t]he subject matter or meaning was, for Panofsky, to be established by referring to the understandings of the symbols and signs in a painting that its contemporary audiences would have had.” The understanding of symbols and signs (i.e., reaching meaning) is

⁵⁷ Such an argument would represent a constructivist, soft approach to identity.

achieved through a process of analysing three levels of iconology. The three levels, as proposed by Panofsky (1972:5), are: pre-iconographical description,⁵⁸ iconographical analysis and iconological interpretation. The first level deals with the correct identification of primary or natural subject matter – the recognition of the artwork’s line, colour and volumes as representations of objects, people and places, and the identification of the relations among objects, people and places to represent scenes, events or actions. These identifications of objects and their relations are called “artistic motifs” (Panofsky 1972:5).

The second level, the iconographical analysis, investigates the secondary or conventional subject matter through dealing with the connection of “artistic *motifs* and combinations of artistic *motifs* (*compositions*) with *themes* or *concepts*” (Panofsky 1972:6, emphasis in original).⁵⁹ When artistic motifs are connected to themes and/or concepts, they may be called images, and combinations of images reflect stories and allegories (Panofsky 1972:6). Panofsky (1972:6, emphasis in original) states that “*themes* or *concepts* [manifest] in *images*, *stories* and *allegories*”.⁶⁰

The third level of iconology, the iconological interpretation, looks at the intrinsic meaning or content of artworks. Panofsky (1972:7) explains this level as follows:

It is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion – unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work. Needless to say, these principles are manifested by, and therefore throw light on, both ‘compositional methods’ and ‘iconographical significance.’

In other words, the third level explores the influences varying societies, ideologies and historical conditions have on how artistic motifs, themes, concepts, images,

⁵⁸ The first level, a pre-iconographical description, is further divided into factual and expressional qualities.

⁵⁹ In relation to representation, discussed earlier, the pre-iconographical description and the iconographical analysis are the first system of representation – the first system deals with connecting things and our conceptual representations of these things.

⁶⁰ The themes and concepts were expressed as types (Panofsky 1972:13). Panofsky (1972:13) observes that, for example, there was a type of Judith (a heroine from the Christian Bible) represented in sixteenth-century paintings.

stories and allegories are understood. When the artistic motifs, themes, concepts, images, stories and allegories are perceived as expressing the “underlying principles”, the aspects (i.e., artistic motifs, themes, etc.) of an artwork are referred to as “‘symbolic’ values” (Panofsky 1972:8).⁶¹ The artist is generally unaware of symbolic values which “may even emphatically differ from what he [or she] consciously intended to express” (Panofsky 1972:8).

Iconographical signs make use of a culture’s conceptual maps and their relations, as suggested by Hall (1997). In order to interpret and reach the most plausible and accurate interpretations of the iconographical signs employed in artworks, we must have access to the two systems of representation shared by the specific culture in which the artworks were created (Hall 1997:19). Iconographical signs are similar to visual codes that propose representations such as social types and stereotypes. With regard to the official portraits of the University, it is precisely because stakeholders of the University share a culture – in a representational sense – that they will interpret, for example, the portrayed University’s academic robes, in similar ways. However, when it comes to the artworks by Mayer, contesting meanings will be interpreted and understood in particular ways depending on social, cultural and historical background. When the Mayer portraits are engaged with, for example, the specific social, cultural and historical conditions and ideologies undoubtedly aid their interpretation and understanding. At the same time, since, according to Hall (1997), meaning is neither fixed nor static, alternative meanings can be reached through collaborative discussions and consensus. Thus, iconographical signs contribute to, but do not fix, the meanings of artworks. When the members of a culture represent things – that is, “what we say, think and feel about them” (Hall 1997:3) – we give things meaning. In other words, we give things meaning by constructing, interpreting and using representations in different ways (Hall 1997:3).

⁶¹ The aspects of an artwork were/are expressed differently based on varying societal, ideological and historical conditions (Panofsky 1972).

The next section discusses the concept of identity. As noted earlier, identity, individuality and personality are never absent when a social type or stereotype is represented through iconographical signs that signify the type. As Brilliant (1991:32) states, it is often easier to recognise an individual's identity (or different identities) in a type, because the type implies different meanings and understandings about an individual.

2.5 Identity – and alternative concepts

Phillip Gleason (1983:910) observes that, because identity appears to be obvious and universal, writers make the mistake of assuming that readers will know what the definition of identity is and which of the many definitions they refer to. Therefore, it is necessary to unpack some of the ways in which identity is understood in order to make the arguments presented later in this study clearer. For Gleason (1983:914), "identity involves an interaction between the interior development of the individual personality ... and the growth of a sense of selfhood that arises from participating in society, internalizing its cultural norms, acquiring different statuses, and playing different roles". In an everyday setting, identity is the way in which individuals "make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from, others" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:4). It also involves understanding oneself, and one's interests and difficulties. Furthermore, identity is used to persuade individuals that they are similar to some and different from others, and to coordinate and validate "collective action" in certain cases (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:5). Brubaker and Cooper (2000:7) also look at the different uses of the concept of identity within academia. They state that identity:

is used to highlight non-instrumental modes of action; to focus on self-understanding rather than self-interest; to designate sameness across persons or sameness over time; to capture allegedly core, foundational aspects of selfhood; to deny that such core, foundational aspects exist; to highlight the processual, interactive development of solidarity and collective self-understanding; and to stress the fragmented quality of the contemporary experience of "self," a self unstably patched together through shards of discourse and contingently "activated" in differing contexts.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000:2) argue that if writers use the term “identity” to conceptualise “all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications”, it becomes blunt, flat and meaningless. They state that the term is used, over-used and abused between so-called “hard” and “soft” meanings – the essentialist implications and the constructivist qualifiers (discussed below) (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:2). Moreover, Brubaker and Cooper (2000:6) observe that “identity” is often used in a direct or indirect reifying manner. They maintain that in order to avoid this reified concept of identity – the essentialist aspect – most contemporary theorists define identity as multiple, fragmented and adaptable (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:6).

Brubaker and Cooper (2000:10) observe that identity has four strong conceptions or understandings. Firstly, it is something all individuals either have, should have or are searching for. The second understanding is that identity is something that all groups either have, should have or are searching for. The third is that identity is something that both individuals and groups can have without consciously knowing it. And, the final strong conception of identity entails “strong notions of collective identity” inferring “strong notions of group boundedness and homogeneity” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:10).⁶²

In addition to Brubaker and Cooper’s four ‘strong’ conceptions of identity, Gleason (1983) and Brubaker and Cooper (2000) identify two approaches to identity which can be categorised as ‘hard’ or ‘soft’. The two approaches contrast most significantly regarding “whether identity is to be understood as something internal that persists through change or as something ascribed from without that changes according to circumstance” (Gleason 1983:918). The first approach is based on a Freudian tradition according to which identity is “‘located’ in the deep psychic structure of the individual” and that even though it is shaped by interaction, change and crisis, “it is at bottom an ‘accrued confidence’ in the ‘inner

⁶² These two aspects, group boundedness and homogeneity, suggest “high degrees of groupness, an ‘identity’ or sameness among group members, a sharp distinctiveness from non-members, [and] a clear boundary between inside and outside” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:10).

sameness and continuity' of one's own being" (Gleason 1983:918). This first approach is, therefore, modernist, essentialist, primordialist and Eriksonian.⁶³ Furthermore, according to this approach, identity is considered to be "deep, internal, and permanent" (Gleason 1983:920). Brubaker and Cooper (2000:1) refer to this approach as the "hard" meaning, because it looks at the "hard" dynamics and essentialist claims of contemporary identity politics".

The second approach, according to Gleason (1983:918), is based on sociology and defines identity as a product of an individual's interactions with society. Gleason (1983:918) states that this approach is fundamentally based on "being designated by a certain name, accepting that designation, internalizing the role requirements accompanying it, and behaving according to those prescriptions". The second approach is interactionist and optionalist – the interactionists consider the individual as having a series of identities that are accepted or discarded according to social circumstance (Gleason 1983:919). According to this approach, identity is "shallow, external, and evanescent" (Gleason 1983:920). Brubaker and Cooper (2000:1) understand this approach as constructivist and a "soft" conception that considers "identities [to be] constructed, fluid and multiple". In order to avoid the term's bluntness, flatness and meaninglessness, Brubaker and Cooper (2000:14) propose alternative sets of concepts that writers and academics could use when dealing with identity: categorisation and identification; self-understanding and social location; and, commonality, connectedness and groupness.

2.5.1 Categorisation and identification

The first alternatives are categorisation and identification. Both terms are derived from processual verbs,⁶⁴ and imply acts of categorisation or identification done by specific categorisers or identifiers. Categorisation, according to Brubaker and Cooper (2000:16), is important for organisational work within society, while

⁶³ Eriksonian refers to Erik Erikson, a twentieth century psychologist and psychoanalyst, who wrote *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), in which he coined the term 'identity crisis', and states that identity is "'located' in the core of the individual" (Erikson in Brubaker & Cooper 2000:37, emphasis in original).

⁶⁴ Categorisation and identification is a process, while identity is a condition or a state.

identification is not reifying and it requires an agent that is doing the identifying.⁶⁵ Brubaker and Cooper (2000:14) state that this identifying process will not inevitably end in “eternal sameness”, “distinctiveness”, or “bounded groupness”. They observe that self and other identification is central to everyday social life depending on the situation and context.⁶⁶ Brubaker and Cooper (2000:14) further divide identification into relational and categorical modes, and self-identification and external identification – the identification and categorisation of oneself by others. These two alternative concepts are discussed in more detail below.

Relational identification implies that an individual identifies himself or herself and others “by position in a relational web” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:15), whereas categorical identification is when an individual identifies himself or herself (or another person) as belonging to a group of people who share some categorical characteristic (such as race, language, gender or nationality). Self-identification, according to Brubaker and Cooper (2000:15), “takes place in dialectical interplay with external identification”, and the two dualities do not necessarily come together. The process of external identification involves people identifying and categorising others in the same way as they identify and categorise themselves. Brubaker and Cooper (2000:15) point out, however, that there is a form of external identification that stands apart from the duality with self-identification. This form entails “the formalized, codified, objectified systems of categorization developed by powerful, authoritative institutions” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:15).⁶⁷

2.5.2 Self-understanding and social location

The next pair of alternative terms proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000:17) are self-understanding and social location. They state that self-understanding is “a dispositional term” that refers to one’s “situated subjectivity” – this is the sense an individual has of himself or herself, his or her social world, and how he or she

⁶⁵ However, it does not call for a specifiable “identifier”, because it can be universal and influential.

⁶⁶ For example, the identification of one’s own and others’ social types and stereotypes.

⁶⁷ One example of this form of external identification is the state that has “material and symbolic resources to impose ... categories, classificatory schemes, and modes of social counting and accounting” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:16), e.g. the apartheid government in South Africa.

would be prepared to act (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:17). For Brubaker and Cooper (2000:17), it is important that the 'self' in self-understanding should not be understood in the modern sense of the word (as homogeneous, bounded or unitary), but that the sense of self can take various forms. Self-understanding appears to be more subjective, superficial and fluctuating than deep, constant and "true" identity. They state that "[i]n some settings, people may understand and experience themselves in terms of a grid of intersecting categories; in others, in terms of a web of connections of differential proximity and intensity" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:17).

Self-understanding is also not reifying or the same across time – self-understanding, unlike the so-called 'hard' conception of identity, can change across time and vary from person to person, is not limited to circumstances of change and instability, and is not linked with sameness or difference (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:18). It is shaped by dominant discourses and brings about action. However, Brubaker and Cooper (2000:18) identify three limitations of self-understanding: it is subjective, and refers to an understanding of oneself without the input of others' understanding in shaping self-understanding; it suggests cognitive awareness, that is also "affectively tinged or charged"; and self-understanding is not as objective as identity proposes.

2.5.3 Commonality, connectedness and groupness

The final set of alternative terms put forward by Brubaker and Cooper (2000:19) are: commonality, connectedness and groupness. These terms link with the affective aspect of self-understanding, namely, an individual's "sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group, involving both a felt solidarity or oneness with fellow group members and a felt difference from or even antipathy to specified outsiders" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:19). The reason Brubaker and Cooper propose abandoning the term identity is because it does not differentiate between strong, exclusive groupist tendencies and loose, open affinities or affiliations. Brubaker and Cooper (2000:20) define the three terms – commonality, connectedness and groupness – as follows:

'Commonality' denotes the sharing of some common attribute, 'connectedness' the relational ties that link people. Neither commonality nor connectedness alone engenders 'groupness' – the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group. But commonality and connectedness together may indeed do so.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000:20) build on the ideas of Charles Tilly who stated that groupness is the result of categorical commonality and relational connectedness. The first amendment to his theory proposes a third element: "a feeling of belonging together". The second modification is that relational connectedness is not fundamental to groupness. Brubaker and Cooper (2000:20) demonstrate this with the example of nations: members of a particular nation experience a strong, bounded sense of groupness because of a fervently imagined or felt commonality.⁶⁸

Brubaker and Cooper's (2000:19) groupness can be linked with Gleason's (1983:916) reference group theory. According to Gleason (1983:916), reference group theory is an identification process. The individual comes to realise "what groups are significant for him, what attitudes concerning them he should form, and what kind of behaviour is appropriate" (Gleason 1983:916). He continues that the individual either accepts or rejects reference groups based on whether they are positively or negatively important for the individual (Gleason 1983:917). Berger (2008:11) states that paintings, and in particular portraits, are a well from which viewers draw assumptions that influence their actions. For this reason, the official portraits, and, by implication, the Institution itself becomes a point of reference for mythical constructions. The portraits in the UP Art Collection undoubtedly possess the same capacity to influence their viewers' assumptions about the authority, importance, power and status, not only of the people they portray, but also of the Institution to which they belong and which they represent.

With regard to the relationship of identity with portraiture, Woodall (1997:1) observes that the two concepts developed alongside each other. Identity was

⁶⁸ Linking with "groupness", Hall (1997:3) observes that culture and, by implication, cultural objects, are employed to define and sustain identities "within and difference between groups".

initially associated with the first avenue of portraiture, that focusses on external representation, where a person's identity was linked to his or her external appearance. Only from the Renaissance and the "awakening of personality" (Friedländer 1963:231) did identity largely refer to the inner quality and internal self of a person (Woodall 1997:6), which led to the second avenue that focusses on internal representation. This was the first understanding of identity – as essential and primordial⁶⁹ – while in the later twentieth century most theorists attempted to define identity as multiple, fragmented and adaptable. Consequently, the link between visual resemblance and the appropriate representation of identity was continually questioned by many postmodern artists.⁷⁰ In other words, artists have grappled with the question of whether to emphasise the physical, external, physiognomic likeness, or the unique, interiorised identity, inner quality or internal self that is either constant or in flux. Woodall (1997:9) calls this the "dualist" conception of identity, where there is a separation between the person as a living body and their "real" or "true" inner self. However, the term itself implies that the two identities, interiorised subject and exteriorised object, are interdependent and mutually reliant, which explains the constant use of external resemblance and likeness within portraiture (Woodall 1997:12).

In other words, the interiorised subject and the exteriorised object are unified and central to the analysis of portraiture, because the subject is always already embodied within the object. The two identifiers, categorisers, and self-understandings, as described by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), are dependent on each other; they co-exist and change in relation to one another. It is the combination of internal qualities and a specific face or body (external qualities), or reference to a person, that renders an individual unique and distinguishable

⁶⁹ Despite the fact that identity is now rarely understood in such an essentialist way, Woodall (1997:6) maintains that it is considered to be unique, personal individuality that is expressed in the face, which alludes to the recognisability of the specific person.

⁷⁰ Noticeably, naturalistic, physiognomic likeness did not disappear entirely, for example, honorific portrayals of office bearers, or photographs of people whom we wish to remember or cherish.

from others (cf Brilliant (1991:9) in section 2.2). Freeland (1997:98) agrees, arguing that the portraitist:

seeks to convey the subject's unique essence, character, thoughts and feelings, interior life, spiritual condition, individuality, personality, or emotional complexity. Just how this is done involves use of the varied techniques of portraiture to show many significant external aspects of a person, such as physiognomy, in addition to the depiction of features such as status and class through the use of props, clothing, pose and stance, composition and artistic style and medium.⁷¹

Thus, the internal is revealed through the external portrayal of a sitter, and the embodiment of the self is recognised in the image depicted. Artists must link internal identity to a specific external identity in order to ensure recognisability of a specific, referred-to individual. The "internal" identity of an institution can be displayed through the representation of a specific external identity such as a portrait of a vice-chancellor and principal with the necessary "props, clothing, pose and stance" mentioned by Freeland (1997:98). Thus, the following section explores institutional identity and culture in order to understand the ways in which the portraits in the University's Art Collection represent its identity and culture.

2.6 Institutional identity and culture

Douglas Toma, Greg Dubrow and Matthew Hartley (2005:40) state that institutional culture expresses institutional identity, aids commitment, improves constancy, directs sense making, and describes authority. Institutional identity is not merely "who we are", but what is perceived as being characteristic, fundamental and enduring about an institution (Toma *et al.* 2005:40).⁷² It is responsible for the kinds of mental associations and behaviours of stakeholders, and is communicated through a set of 'images' to the public (Toma *et al.* 2005:18, 27).⁷³

⁷¹ With regard to portraiture, according to Roberts (2011), "the pose is the subject's presentation of his or her identity ... [and] an act which ensures the preservation of that identity".

⁷² Toma *et al.* (2005:58) observe that an institution's identity and culture is, for example, communicated through its orientation programmes for new students.

⁷³ Universities have various, and sometimes competing, images: universities may vary in how they are seen and understood by different stakeholders (MacDonald 2013:160).

Ginger MacDonald (2013:154, emphasis added) defines university identity as “the central and ongoing *representations* of a university that suggest shared beliefs, values, and its organizational culture, which over time create metaphors for its unique qualities.” She reasons that “university identity is shaped by the members of its culture” (MacDonald 2013:154). MacDonald (2013:156), relying on Stuart Albert and David Whetten’s acronym of Central, Enduring and Distinguishing (CED), describes institutional identity as follows:

[It] is expressed by what is C = Central to the structure of an institution, capturing the essential knowledge of the organization and the criterion on its claimed central character. Identity also is based upon what is E = Enduring, referring to those timeless organizational elements with a degree of continuity in which the deepest, preserved memories of the institution reside, creating a mythical institutional narrative. The tone of these stories was often authored by formative organizational leaders, and is contained in the concept of legacy – or the lasting impact of original mission and founders of the institution. Finally, a functional criterion refers to that which is D = distinguishing (or distinctive) with an intended dual meaning of different and better than. This can include distinctive functions institutions perform, the ways they are structured, or organizational circumstances that trigger identity disclosure.

These definitions reflect Gleason’s (1983) essentialist and Brubaker and Cooper’s (2000) “hard” descriptions of identity. As I have already pointed out, from a postmodern perspective, however, identity is neither enduring nor lasting, but has the capacity to adapt to circumstances and situations. For example, even though university identity statements, markers and labels⁷⁴ reflect collective organisational meanings, and reveal the culture of the institution (MacDonald 2013:154), the postmodern perspective claims that organisational identity is socially and culturally created. Thus, the statements, markers and labels may remain, but the meanings ascribed to them are fluid and open to interpretation over time (MacDonald 2013:161).

However, MacDonald (2013:157) observes, and I agree, that certain aspects of identity will always stay the same, while others will change. In other words, both

⁷⁴ The artworks of the University, and by implication the portraits, can be seen as institutional identity statements, markers or labels (i.e., institutional representations).

hard and soft definitions apply simultaneously. Thus, an individual or an institution has a “retentive capacity both to have a stable identity core and an aspect of identity which changes with every new experience” (MacDonald 2013:157). Sue Alessandri, Sung-Un Yang and Dennis Kinsey (2006:259) avoid the modern or postmodern perspective by defining university identity as “its strategically planned and purposeful presentation of itself in order to gain a positive image in the minds of the public.”⁷⁵ Consequently, in theory, the public and stakeholders, through institutional identity, may experience institutional identification (i.e., self and external identification), because people want to be part of places that relate to them (people find a commonality and connectedness in order to experience a sense of groupness).⁷⁶

Institutional culture has been defined as “the deeply embedded patterns of organisational behaviour and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organisation or its work” (Peterson & Spencer in Campbell & Hourigan 2008:37).⁷⁷ Toma *et al.* (2005:18) observe that culture presents that which is characteristic, fundamental and enduring⁷⁸ (i.e., identity in an essentialist sense) about an institution, and which has practical

⁷⁵ Alessandri, Yang and Kinsey (2006:259) state that a university’s image is “the public’s perception of the university, [and] is a direct result of the associations people have with the university’s identity.”

⁷⁶ MacDonald (2013:154) states that people “tend to choose activities congruent with salient aspects of their identities, and they support institutions embodying those identities.” Toma *et al.* (2005:3) state that people want to associate and partake in places that are distinct, central and enduring. According to Toma *et al.* (2005:5), the benefits for institutions creating unified understandings among stakeholders are: “awareness, associations, loyalty, perceived quality (brand equity), contact, cooperation, attachment, and loyalty (institutional identification)”. Toma *et al.* (2005:1) also observe that in order for a tertiary institution to have a strong culture it needs a sense of commonality and connectedness – as defined by Brubaker and Cooper (2000:20) – between and among the varied stakeholders. They also imply that strong cultures should have strong ideologies, and that a sturdy institutional culture strengthens institutional identification – institutional identification is a perceived feeling of belonging to a specific group of people (Toma *et al.* 2005:18, 21). Toma *et al.* (2005:21) state that this “sense of oneness with or belonging to an institution results from people’s self-categorization into groups, allowing them to segment and order the social environment.”

⁷⁷ This is a definition of institutional culture from a social science framework and in an anthropological sense (Hall 1997:2).

⁷⁸ These attributes echo those of institutional identity as proposed by MacDonald (2013:156), relying on Stuart Albert and David Whetten’s (1985) acronym of Central, Enduring and Distinguishing (CED). Furthermore, it is clear that institutional identity and culture are very closely linked, because institutional culture expresses and conveys institutional identity, and institutional identity represents institutional culture.

functions and uses in and for it. They state that institutional culture “underscores institution-specific norms, values, and beliefs through more concrete means specific to an institution such as symbols, language, narratives, and practices” (Toma *et al.* 2005:21). The “symbols, language, narratives, and practices” are the tangible markers of differentiation between different institutions’ cultures. Furthermore, according to Toma *et al.* (2005:6), “institutional culture conveys a sense of identity (who we are), facilitates commitment (what we stand for), enhances stability (how we do things around here), guides sense making (how we understand events), and defines authority (who is influential)”. In other words, institutional culture conveys institutional identity.

While the desire for groupness among stakeholders is imposed by powerful structures, it might not be felt and experienced by individual stakeholders. Such desires are imposed by powerful structures who aim to benefit from institutional identification (Toma *et al.* 2005:5), and to create commonality and connectedness in order to achieve institutional identification. Schmahmann (2013:15) describes the culture of higher education institutions in South Africa as overwhelmingly white thereby promoting structures and discourses that support white male privilege. In other words, institutional culture indicates the “customs, practices and discourses that a university may take for granted and view simply as manifestations of the way things would ‘normally’ be done, but which, in fact, privilege those who are white, male, heterosexual and middle class while marginalising those who are not” (Schmahmann 2013:15). In South Africa, if the planned and purposeful presentation of an institution (e.g., the identity of a university) by the powerful structures that produce and maintain institutional identity and culture reflect more than mere “overwhelming ‘whiteness’” and male, middle-class heterosexuality, individuals that feel marginalised based on race, sexual orientation, gender, language and class might feel a sense of groupness.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Universities and tertiary institutions in South Africa are becoming more equitable, and no longer exclusively favour white, male and heterosexual identities.

An alternative understanding of institutional culture can be derived from the earlier discussion of representation, meaning and culture. According to the powerful structures that produce and maintain an institutional culture, the members of an institutional culture should share similar conceptual maps, similar conceptual relations, a language, and a similar way of interpreting the signs of a language. For the purpose of this study, which deals with representations in the form of portraiture, institutional culture must be defined according to Hall's (1997:2) understanding "as a process, a set of practices." To reiterate, Hall (1997:2) explains that (institutional) culture is about "the production and the exchange of meanings ... between the members of a society or group" who make sense of, understand and interpret these meanings in roughly similar ways. Culture is thus dependent on its members' similarities and their shared "sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways" (Hall 1997:4). The sets of concepts, images and ideas have the potential to change over time, which is happening in South African higher education institutions. Universities or institutions might have a central and enduring character, element, legacy, and distinguishing function, but their identity and culture can be socially and culturally re-created and adapted.

Maria Campbell and Niamh Hourigan (2008:40) discuss the four commonalities that create an institutional culture. The first is language – also identified by Hall (1997) as one of the important aspects of a shared culture – which includes the documents, images and symbols members of the culture use to communicate. The second aspect is tools that members use to do their work, for example teaching methodologies and pedagogies. The third is "explicit roles, procedures and regulations" that determine how the institutional culture functions or operates. And the fourth commonality is the implicit behaviours that differentiate the institutional culture and its members from another (Campbell & Hourigan 2008:40).

Toma *et al.* (2005:4) argue that the images, names and symbols of an institution (i.e., Campbell and Hourigan's (2008) first commonality) communicate what the viewer knows about an institution. In other words, they are representations of the norms, values and beliefs of the institution. Schmahmann (2013:16) observes that an institution's "images and objects ... form part of the traditions and visual rhetoric of the institution". In addition, she argues that every culture is occupied with creating and maintaining structures of meaningful forms (symbols, artefacts, etc.) (Schmahmann 2013:176). Schmahmann (2013:18) recognises that artworks such as portraits, which are significant artefacts owned by an institution, communicate to viewers the particular preferred values and ideals of the institution.⁸⁰

Schmahmann (2013:243) argues that the "images on campuses speak of institutional identities and transformative imperatives". She states that, rather than hiding artworks that reveal a privileged white, male, heterosexual, middle-class identity – or, identifiers and categorisers, as proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000:16) – in basements or archives, exposing and exhibiting these images has the potential to encourage commitment to justice and equal opportunity in institutions (Schmahmann 2013:25) (refer to section 4.4 and 5.5). In other words, the official portraits not only encourage commonality in the shape of order, constancy, tradition, knowledge, power, authority and leadership, but can be 'rewritten' to inspire justice and equal opportunity where individuals might indeed feel a sense of connectedness or 'groupness'.

According to Hall (1997:3), these attributes dedicated to the portraits that encourage commonality are our mental representations, or set of concepts that are arranged, organised and classified into relationships with one another. Since the attributes are arranged, organised and classified, they are changeable. Hall (1997:4) continues by stating that the sets of concepts, or the "conceptual map"

⁸⁰ Eksteen (2015) concurs with Schmahmann's observations, and states that artworks owned by universities are the visual histories of the institutions that cannot be denied. He states that artworks specifically commissioned or bought for an institution's art collection reflects the frame of mind of the institution and what they attempt to express to the public.

as he calls it, differs from person to person, but when, through discourse and negotiation, people interact and influence each other, they begin to develop shared understandings of concepts. This is when commonality and connectedness can potentially lead to a sense of groupness among some viewers (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:19).

Campbell and Hourigan (2008:39) state that if people participate in the activities of a community (in other words, participate in its culture), their actions and identities change because “they are enculturated into the dispositions and belief systems of that community and are subsequently prepared to engage in similar activities”. Brubaker and Cooper (2000:17) refer to this idea as “situated subjectivity”, which means the participants have a sense of themselves, their social milieu and how to willingly act. The implication is that if the contentious discourses and ideologies around the artworks are negotiated among different social groups, then the risk of misunderstanding artworks and having a one-dimensional interpretation of them would be minimised and avoidable.

It is obvious that multiple cultures with various perspectives can co-exist at tertiary institutions, because of the varying social, cultural, historical and religious backgrounds of stakeholders. Schmahmann (2013:27) encourages another attempt at diversifying institutions with co-existing cultures in South Africa by ‘combining’ images associated with “colonialism, imperialism, Afrikaner nationalism or apartheid” with contemporary and alternative visual representations – in other words, to place them in the same space or locality. The images of a bygone era whose ideologies and standpoints are no longer relevant should be considered as heritage objects that still require consideration and attention. Schmahmann (2013:27) states the types of associations relating to images are not fixed or inherent, so the meaning of an image can be changed. Thus, images have to be reinvented (as in the example of juxtaposing these images with contemporary representations) in order to reflect on previous times and to make statements about the present.

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter began with a discussion of portraiture, including its history, purposes and importance during various time periods; its avenues of depiction; and its functions. Based on the aforementioned section on portraiture, the portraits selected for this study have a referential character with an intended degree of mimesis, and a combination of the two avenues of depiction discussed. The selected portraits also adhere to Schneider's (1994:28) functions of portraiture, Brilliant's (1991:15) notions of what an artist attempts to represent in a portrait, and Freeland's (2007:100) four ways in which a portrait identifies subjects. The portraits discussed in chapters Three and Four were also selected based on whether they reveal one or more of Brilliant's (1991:9) identity traits or identifiers. The selected official portraits of office bearers and public figures at the University exemplify the fact that wealthy and powerful institutions who commission these types of portraits, aim to communicate their own status, authority and power by 'sacrificing' the sitter's individuality. The portraits influence viewers' concepts, ideas and feelings, which alludes to portraiture's identification and categorisation as representations.

Portraits are representations, because they are a language, a medium, signs and images⁸¹ that produce, carry, circulate, communicate, symbolically stand for or represent concepts, ideas and feelings (i.e., our conceptual maps and relations). Although they may never be entirely fixed or static, conceptual maps and language need to be shared by members of a culture in order for effective communication to take place. Based on the discursive constructionist approach, portraits are connected to power, regulate actions and behaviours, create and influence individuals' identities and subjectivities, and describe, for example, how academics' roles are represented, thought about, practised and studied.

Representation in portraiture makes use of typing, especially in the portraits selected for this study. Social types are the members of a culture who 'belong' (the social type is evident in the official portraits of University of Pretoria office

⁸¹ Portraits are each of these simultaneously: a language, a medium, a sign and an image.

bearers, and Erich Mayer's portraits of the Boer), while stereotypes are members who are deemed different, outside of the norm, or "other". These castings affect personal and group functions which are the effects and consequences of the discursive constructionist approach. Based on Hall's theory of representation, social types and stereotypes are understood within a specific culture. Social types are created with certain meanings attached, which powerful structures attempt to fix by using iconographical signs that imply specific messages that the coder (i.e., the portraitist, the sitter or a commissioning body) wishes to communicate. The iconographical signs, social types and stereotypes aid the viewers of portraits to understand the portrayal. Both cultural objects and social typing and stereotyping influence individual and group behaviour and habits. At the end of the study, it will also be suggested that the portraits discussed in the study (i.e., the University's cultural objects) that use social typing and stereotyping, influence student, staff, faculty and visitor behaviour and habits.

The chapter then discussed identity from two points of understanding, as well as alternative concepts that can be used when dealing with this ubiquitous and ambiguous term. It stems from the notion that social types and stereotypes aid the identification of an individual's identity. Brubaker and Cooper (2000:14) proposed alternative terms or concepts that writers and academics could use when dealing with identity: categorisation and identification; self-understanding and social location; and commonality, connectedness and groupness. These alternative concepts are used throughout this study in order to express individuals' (and, more specifically, the subjects of portraits) sense of belonging, their social roles, their common attributes (commonality), and their relational ties with other members of a culture (connectedness).

The final section of the chapter dealt with institutional identity and culture. This study does not conceive of identity, culture or meaning as static and fixed. While institutional identity and culture have a retentive aspect, they are also able to adapt. This characteristic is important for the negotiation of artworks with problematic histories, because the past will always be linked with the artworks,

but forward-thinking stakeholders can adapt their meanings for the present and future. The chapter concluded by suggesting a way to incorporate representations of institutional identity and culture whose histories and discourses may be divisive into the contemporary setting of a university.

CHAPTER THREE

FACES OF POWER

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the formal, official portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures of the University of Pretoria in the UP Art Collection. In the first section, a brief history of the Institution is given in order to reveal how the ‘faces of power’ receive and assert their authority and control. The reasons the University chose to memorialise the authoritative figures in the form of oil portraits are then considered and discussed. Proceeding from the deliberation on the portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures, is a general discussion of the uses, goals and purposes of formal portraiture. Thereafter, the chapter discusses the officially commissioned portraits of office-bearers of the University of Pretoria. The portraits of female academics and public figures are discussed in particular because they are so rare in this collection of mostly male faces. Black academics and public figures are also discussed for a similar reason. Section 3.4.4 discusses portraits of other academic and public figures, before a discussion is presented regarding the University’s culture and identity as they relate to the tradition of the formal depiction of the faces of power.

3.2 The power of the faces

The University of Pretoria was born out of the Pretoria branch of the Transvaal University College (TUC) (Van Eeden 2008:169). Academic activities started at Kya Rosa (a house in central Pretoria) on 10 February 1908, with the University gaining independence from its Johannesburg branch on 17 May 1910. In September 1911, the TUC moved into the newly-constructed Old Arts and Old Chemistry buildings (as they are known today) in Hatfield, on the current location of UP’s Hatfield Campus (University of Pretoria Historical Overview [sa]). On 10 October 1930, TUC was renamed the University of Pretoria and became a fully-fledged university (Van Eeden 2008:169). At the time, more than 900 students attended the University, making it the largest tertiary institution in South Africa. At the time of its establishment, the University was the only fully bilingual institution

in South Africa. However, in 1932 the medium of instruction was changed to solely Afrikaans, and UP was subsequently referred to as the “Voortrekker Universiteit”¹ (University of Pretoria Historical Overview [sa]).² After the addition of the Faculty of Medicine, the Club Hall, the Administration Building and the Merensky Library, student numbers increased steadily. Consequently, between 1948 and 1982 a further 13 buildings were added (University of Pretoria Historical Overview [sa]).

From 1982 to 1989, students of all races were accepted into UP but the University only became officially ‘open’ to all races in 1989. The language policy was changed in 1994 to return to the initial bilingual status (University of Pretoria Historical Overview [sa]). Distance education was introduced in 1989 and alliances were signed with institutes such as the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research). In 2000 the Teachers Training College Pretoria (now the site of the Groenkloof Campus of UP) merged with the University. At the same time, GIBS (the Gordon Institute of Business Science) was opened in Johannesburg. The Mamelodi Campus of Vista University also united with UP in 2004. The University campuses expanded with the construction of new buildings, and in 2007 the University adopted a third language of communication, Sepedi (University of Pretoria Historical Overview [sa]). In June 2016, a new language policy was adopted which will make English the primary language of instruction and assessment.³ UP currently has more than 50 000 students “from all walks of life”, making it a multicultural, multiracial University (History of the University of Pretoria [sa]).

¹ Translated as the Voortrekker University.

² Afrikaans became the official language of the Union in 1925 after the National/Labour Party alliance, under the leadership of General JBM Hertzog, won the general election in 1924. According to Jeanne van Eeden (2008:182), the acceptance of Afrikaans as the national language was necessary for the recognition of Afrikaans culture. Thus, the acceptance of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at UP undoubtedly influenced the Institution’s Afrikaans culture and identity.

³ At the time of writing, the implementation date was not yet confirmed. According to the official website of the University, “[t]he goal of the new policy is to facilitate social cohesion and promote inclusivity” (UP Council supports adoption of new language policy 2016).

Many traditions were initiated in the early years: the student council in 1909; Rag in the 1920s; first year initiation ceremonies; Spring Day; Intervarsity; cultural and academic student associations; and student publications, such as *Trek* in 1931, *Rag Mag* in 1936, and *Perdeby* in 1939. The 1930s also saw a boom in Afrikaner cultural organisations with a rising emphasis on Afrikaner nationalism, not only at the University, but also nationally.⁴ The tradition of memorialising office-bearers and academic figures in formal and official portraits at the University began in 1973 (Policy and procedure ... [sa]). The University decided to create a visual lineage of their leadership in the form of commissioned, painted portraits. However, the decision to commission paintings warrants further discussion, since the camera and photography were already well established by that time. This decision alludes to the idea that a painted portrait represents more about the identity of a sitter and is more highly valued than a photograph.

3.3 Why painted portraits?

It is important to consider the reasons why, in 1973, the University decided to create a lineage of their leadership in the form of painted portraits when the camera and photography could presumably have done the job equally well. If the tradition of commissioned portraits was initiated before the invention of the camera then it would be understandable that this tradition needed to be continued for the sake of uniformity and permanence. However, it could be argued that UP wanted to associate itself with the traditions of painting institutional officials already well established in European institutions. The University, therefore, may have wanted to create the illusion of a long-standing and prestigious history. Furthermore, portraiture is considered to be a part of Western so-called 'high art',⁵ and UP might have wanted to affiliate itself with Western traditions and culture. The depiction of office-bearers in the form of a portrait owes much to the idea that

⁴ Martin du Toit founded two such organisations, the Afrikaans Art Association in 1931, and the University cultural society Castalides in 1932. Du Toit was the head of the Department of Afrikaans Art and Culture at the University and is credited with initiating the UP Art Collection (Van Eeden 2008:167).

⁵ The tradition of commissions and patronage has a distinct link to the participation in 'high art' (Buck & McClean 2013:31). The association with Western 'high art' is also evident in the owning of portraits (Berger 2008:86), allowing the University to convey an image of being culturally advanced, affluent and wealthy.

portraiture conveys a sense of “recognition, respectability, reliability and trustworthiness” (Woodall 1997:19). The combination of the official status of the Institution and portraiture’s well-established traditional status imbue the official portraits with value. In other words, without the Institution, and the tradition and culture of portraiture, the artworks would not have meaning or value.

Schmahmann (2013:187) maintains that the medium of painting, and in particular oil painting, has the potential “to invest a particular account of history with authority and authenticity”. In the same way, John Berger (2008:133) states that the sitter’s power and prestige come from this assumed authority and authenticity. He goes on to say that oil paintings also remind Europeans of their cultural heritage and what it means to be civilised and educated (Berger 2008:135). Moreover, according to Schmahmann (2013:188), oil paint is associated with the implied qualities of “permanence, authority and ... tradition”. Because of the realistic and naturalistic qualities of formal portraits, these represented qualities and social identities are perceived as truth. The portraits are, therefore, symbolic cultural objects representing the qualities of both the sitter and the commissioning body. In addition, when an image of a person is perceived as an artwork (as in the case of the UP official oil portraits), the viewer ascribes certain qualities associated with art, such as “truth”, “genius”, “status” and “taste”, to the subject of the portrait (Berger 2008:11).

Based on the above arguments by Berger (2008) and Schmahmann (2013), it may be argued that visitors to a university with a tradition of commissioning and owning artworks, such as UP, are encouraged to be impressed and persuaded that the institution fits within the well-established European legacy of universities and institutions (Berger 2008:135). Berger (2008:139) refers to this as “you are what you have”. In commissioning painted portraits of its office-bearers, UP is thus “consolidating [its] own sense of [its] own value” (Berger 2008:142). In addition, oil painting has long been associated with permanence and steadfastness (Schmahmann 2013:187); historically, a portrait in oil paint was considered to be a permanent, authentic record and a way of communicating the

present to the future (Berger 2008:144). These portraits then represent evidence of the qualities of permanence and steadfastness that the University aims to communicate.

Another reason why the University may have favoured painted portraits rather than photographs is addressed by Van Alphen (2005:23), who argues that a camera captures the material reality of a sitter “automatically and maximally”, while only an artist can, apparently, capture the essential quality of a sitter. However, as Friedländer (1963:262) notes, and Woodall (1997:7) confirms, the advent of the camera and photograph soon questioned portraiture’s claim to absolute truth and its ability to capture the essential quality of a sitter. The photograph would capture the objective external peculiarities and imperfections, but the ultimate subject of interest for artists became the unique, interiorised identity, inner quality or internal self of a sitter (Woodall 1997:7),⁶ and, after the invention of the camera and photography, artists working in many different media found artistic freedom in their quest to depict this deeper quality of a sitter. Thus, the University may have wanted to depict the internal and external qualities of their office-bearers.

Thus, the emphasis on the peculiarities and imperfections of the exterior became less popular in the early twentieth century, when the assumption that the representation of identity⁷ is achieved through visual likeness was questioned (Woodall 1997:7). This does not mean that naturalistic, physiognomic likeness disappeared entirely from visual culture, for honorific portrayals such as the portraits of UP office bearers persisted. Woodall (1997:8) refers to this as ‘re-representation’, where the person is made present again, which directly implies recognition and substitution (as is the aim of the official UP portraits). However, recognition and likeness do not necessarily suggest physical, external, physiognomic resemblance, because, as Woodall (1997:9) states with reference

⁶ These are the elements and qualities that render the sitter unique, which the University endorsed in their leaders and Institution.

⁷ Identity, in this case, refers to the unique, interiorised, inner quality or internal self of a sitter.

to Barthes, “likeness’ has become elusive, and personal to the viewer rather than the sitter”.

In 2008, Frikkie Eksteen created portraits that question the tradition of formal portraiture. The series of portraits is based on the official portraits of principals and vice-chancellors in the UP Art Collection. Eksteen photographed, digitised and combined the original official portraits using morphing software in order to create new likenesses (Eksteen 2010). They were exhibited alongside the original portraits.⁸ Commenting on his commissions for the University in Schmahmann (2013:185), Eksteen observes that mimetic portraits are regularly contested, because colleagues, friends and family of the sitter each have specific ideas about or references of the person. When these personal recognitions are not adequately captured, the portrait may be met with disappointment.⁹ Eksteen also questions the tradition of painting the leaders of the University, asking what a painting can achieve that a photograph cannot. Of course, as argued earlier, it is not entirely about what a painting can capture that a photograph cannot. It is about tradition (as confirmed by De Kamper 2014), prestige and status.

Therefore, the significance of the decision to have the official portraits of office-bearers and important figures associated with the University painted and not photographed is clear. The camera does not have the same authoritative, alluring, permanent, wealthy, affluent and steadfast associations as the oil-painted portrait is assumed to have. Because this chapter focuses on the official and formal portraits of UP, the following section discusses the history, purposes and usage of the formal, commissioned portraits at UP.

⁸ Eksteen (2016) states that the official portraits of principals and vice-chancellors stand for 100 years of history at the Institution. The eleven portraits of principals and vice-chancellors in the UP Art Collection represent the “highlights” of this history, while Eksteen’s hybridised portraits were meant to represent the “in-between” years.

⁹ For example, Eksteen’s portrait of Prof Flip Smit (Figure 8) was rejected by the sitter, who then commissioned Cyril Coetzee (Figure 9).

3.4 UP formal, official portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures

Until 2003, the series of office-bearers was housed in a separate collection of the University, but from then on it became a part of the official UP Art Collection that is now managed by the Department of Museum and Arts Management. Included in this series of the collection are portraits of the chancellor,¹⁰ the vice-chancellor and principal¹¹ and the chair of council.¹² The portraits of the chancellor, and vice-chancellor and principal are up to date, forming a complete visual genealogy of the leadership of UP. According to De Kamper (2014), only these portraits are commissioned and paid for by the University Executive; portraits of deans, heads of departments and exemplary lecturers are at the expense of the respective faculty and department. However, the power to make decisions about commissioning a work and about how (and whether) it will be displayed resides with the Art Committee of the University.

For the purpose of the study, the portraits of office-bearers include sitters that had an office-bearing position directly relating to the University, such as chancellors, vice-chancellors, principals, vice-principals, executive directors, registrars, council and senate members, presidents of convocation, faculty deans and department heads. The portraits of academic and public figures consist of exemplary lecturers, politicians, military figures, business leaders, directors of education, superintendents of education, poets, composers, authors, theologians, lawyers and philanthropists.

In other words, UP associates with people whose qualities, prestige and accomplishments endorse and support the Institution. In turn, these people

¹⁰ The chancellor is the titular head of the University with a five-year term in office. The current Chancellor is Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu (the first black incumbent).

¹¹ The vice-chancellor and principal is the chief executive and accounting officer responsible for the management and administration of the University. He or she is also the chairperson of senate and has a five-year term in office. The current Vice-Chancellor and Principal is Prof Cheryl de la Rey (the first black and first female incumbent).

¹² The council is responsible for governance, policy-making and monitoring. It consists of 30 members and meets once per semester. Interestingly, since 1998 the portrait of the chair of council has been a portrait photograph, raising the question of whether these sitters' representations are considered less important or less authoritative.

become the face of the University (literally, in the case of portraits) and their characteristics are communicated by their presence at and association with UP.¹³ According to Gleason (1983:917), individuals' (e.g., University stakeholders') self-consciousness is shaped through "social interaction, mediated through shared symbolic systems". The portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures (the shared symbolic systems) suggest the ideal qualities and characteristics that transcend the individual (West 2004:26). The commissioned portraits portray the general qualities the University advocates within the particular sitter's social milieu. The sitters are idealised and typified, without peculiarities and imperfections, to reflect the qualities and characteristics endorsed by UP that are socially worthy of admiration and imitation (West 2004:27). In these ways, the portraits strengthen the Institution's reputation as a centre of knowledge acquisition and cultural exchange, and represent the 'Who's Who' and lineage of the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the official portraits is to document and authenticate the sitters' identifications: their appearance, name, age and status (West 2004:59). The documentary aspect of the official portraits can be trusted, because commissioned artists have little artistic freedom and are specifically employed to mimetically portray their sitters. In this sense, the portraits are expository and as such the artworks can be used as primary visual resources, as in the case of this study. The second purpose of commissioning official portraits is to ensure complete genealogies of the University's leadership. As such, one should not read them as primarily providing significant insight into the sitter, and accept them as portraits of the physiological, and not psychological, qualities of the subject, as argued above. In addition, they should be understood as giving insight into the commissioning body, the University of Pretoria. The portraits are presumed to be unbiased recreations of the physical attributes of the sitter which supposedly exude a sense of the Institution's 'psychology', or culture and identity.¹⁴ The

¹³ In effect, these highly regarded people (and their portraits) become the way the University communicates its own qualities, prestige and accomplishments.

¹⁴ In other words, as argued previously, in these representations, the 'psychology' of the University is assumed to correspond with that of the sitter.

characteristics and qualities sanctioned by the University are thus communicated to viewers of the portrait. The portraits, therefore, are constructed in particular ways so as to articulate the loyalty and devotion of the sitter to the Institution, and also encourage loyalty and commitment in the viewers, who, in turn, should be encouraged to *want* to be associated with UP.¹⁵

Creating a visual lineage of the leading authorities in the form of portraits requires dedication to ensuring that the timeline is complete. If not, the authenticity of such a visual database is brought into question, because a chronology of portraits acts as a record and history of an institution. These portraits are used to construct the University's institutional history. They are the anchor or focal point around which histories are retold.¹⁶ Even though the official portraits at UP are, for now, mostly of white, middle-class men, the portraits of the current Chancellor, and Vice-chancellor and Principal are the first portraits that indicate diversity at the Institution.¹⁷

Van Alphen (2005:24) describes the portrait as a sign. The realistic, mimetic representation of the sitter is the 'signifier' and the sitter's qualities, attributes, and "inner essence" are the 'signified'. As signs are dyadic, the unity of the signifier and signified creates the sign, in this case the portraits of authoritative figures. With regard to official portraits of office-bearers, it could be argued that the qualities, attributes and "inner essence" belong to the University for which the portraits are commissioned. This means that even though the signified, the sitter, is no longer present – whether deceased or no longer associated with the Institution – the presence of the preferred qualities meant to be associated with the University are continuously communicated (Van Alphen 2005:38). In other words, the sign was once iconic, referring to a subject outside of the frame, but

¹⁵ This again links with Gleason's (1983:916) reference group theory and Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) commonality, connectedness and groupness.

¹⁶ They could be seen as representations of the events and achievements that took place while the person was in office (Schmahmann 2013:236).

¹⁷ In other words, until the inauguration of the current Chancellor, and Vice-chancellor and Principal, the histories told by the portraits in their various locations on UP's campus are of an overwhelming male, white and Afrikaner University.

has become symbolic, standing for a larger body of ideas linked to the Institution. The official portraits communicate to stakeholders that the Institution represents order, constancy, tradition, knowledge, power, authority and leadership. These messages suggest an ideal towards which the University constantly strives.¹⁸

Since 1994, the dominance of white, male faces at Higher Education Institutions became increasingly interrogated for their marginalisation of people along the lines of gender and race. Consequently, the portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures that were traditionally hung in and around council chambers in South African institutions were relocated (Schmahmann 2013:189). For instance, in 2005 the University of Pretoria's portraits of chancellors (for example, Figure 2 and Figure 3) were moved from the council chamber into storage (most of these portraits are in the Education Law cellar) and relocated to alternative buildings and offices. Schmahmann (2013:189) argues that the displacement of these images indicates uncertainty regarding their role in strengthening pride and honour in contemporary universities. She states that the tradition of commissioning portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures is continued, with the knowledge that within changing demographics the portraits will become more representative and include marginalised groups (Schmahmann 2013:192). The portraits then become signs of cultural transformation at the University.

3.4.1 Official commissioned portraits of office-bearers

As stated earlier, the official commissioned portraits of office-bearers are of the chancellor, the vice-chancellor and principal and the chair of council. However, since the decision was made to depict the chairperson of council in a photographic portrait, these images no longer reside in the UP Art Collection, but in the UP Archive instead (Policy and procedure ... [sa]). Listed below are the

¹⁸ Apart from being iconic and symbolic, the portrait is also indexical, indicating an encounter between the sitter, the artist, and, in this case, the commissioning body (the UP executive), even if only in the imagination of the viewer (West 2004:41). Figures 6 and 7 are examples of instances where the viewer is made aware of this encounter, because it appears as if the sitter was intruded upon by the artist.

persons who have held these offices and whose portraits are included in the UP Art Collection:

- The chancellors of the University of Pretoria:

<u>Office-bearer</u>	<u>Term</u>
Judge TJ de V Roos	1930 – 1932
Rev AJ Louw	1933 – 1934
Dr HJ van der Bijl	1934 – 1948
Adv C te Water	1949 – June 1964
The honourable Dr H Muller	November 1964 – November 1984
The honourable AL Schlebusch	February 1985 – November 1986
Dr AE Rupert	February 1987 – November 1996
Dr CL Stals	February 1997 – February 2006
Prof LW Nkuhlu	November 2007 –

- The principals of the University of Pretoria:

<u>Office-bearer</u>	<u>Term</u>
Prof AC Paterson	1 March 1918 – 29 February 1924
Dr NM Hoogenhout	1 May 1925 – 30 April 1927
Prof AE du Toit	May 1927 – 1934
Mr CF Schmidt	1935 – 1940
Prof MC Botha	1941 – 1947
Prof CH Rautenbach	1948 – 30 June 1970
Prof EM Hamman	1 July 1970 – 31 December 1981

- The vice-chancellor and principals of the University of Pretoria:

<u>Office-bearer</u>	<u>Term</u>
Prof DM Joubert	1 January 1982 – 31 December 1991
Prof P Smit	1 January 1992 – 31 December 1996
Prof J van Zyl	1 January 1997 – 31 July 2001
Prof CWI Pistorius	1 August 2001 – 31 August 2009
Prof CM de la Rey	1 November 2009 –

- The chairpersons of council of the University of Pretoria:¹⁹

<u>Office-bearer</u>	<u>Term</u>
WF Lance	1908
JW Wessels	1909 – 1919
HL Malherbe*	1919 – July 1921
JE Adamson*	July 1922 – July 1924
HP Veale	July 1924 – November 1929
NM Hoogenhout*	November 1929 – March 1932
GJ Maritz	March 1929 – December 1932
JS Smit*	December 1932 – November 1933
AP Brugman	November 1933 – December 1935
G Moerdyk*	October 1935 – June 1942
F Meyer*	August 1942 – August 1946
W Nicol*	August 1946 – October 1947
F Meyer*	October 1947 – November 1948
HO Mönnig*	December 1948 – September 1957
F Meyer*	September 1957 – 1972
SM Naudé*	1973 – 1982
P Hoek*	October 1982 – October 1984
J Howell*	October 1984 – October 1990
C du P Kuun	October 1990 – 1994
VE Hesse*	1994 – 1999
BC Alberts	October 1999 – August 2003
N Mtoba	June 2004 –

There are various priorities and concerns to consider when the University commissions portraits of their leading office-bearers. The portrait has to be commissioned as soon as possible after the swearing in of the office-bearer/sitter. The portrait of Prof LW Nkuhlu (Figure 1) was painted soon after his inauguration, and is exhibited while he is the Chancellor of the University. When deciding on

¹⁹ The asterisks indicate that their painted portraits are in the UP Art Collection.

an artist for a commission, the Art Committee²⁰ and the office-bearer/sitter have equal say in the choice. An artist can be nominated either by the Art Committee or the sitter, but the final decision is based on the artist's previous experience with painting portraits (Policy and procedure ... [sa]). Because these portraits serve as records, an artist with experience in verisimilitude and mimesis is preferred²¹ in order to achieve an accurate portrait, despite the fact that many contemporary (postmodern) portraits deal with the limitations of mimetic representations. It is a priority and concern that the appearance of the sitter be replicated, "albeit through a filter of idealisation" (Schmahmann 2013:154).²²

The relationship between artist and sitter is always a complex one.²³ As is the case with the official portraits of UP office-bearers, the artist might be obliged to flatter or idealise the sitter, because certain qualities or characteristics need to be highlighted. With regard to these desired qualities and characteristics, the artist also has to negotiate with the sitter or the commissioning body about the appearance of their subject and the guidelines expected of them (West 2004:38). In line with the mythic appearance of authority, these portraits must represent strong, sturdy and mature individuals who are afforded "immortality ... by providing a permanent record of how that individual may have appeared at the prime of life" (Schmahmann 2013:163). The tendency to portray sitters in the prime of life is a form of flattery. It denies the process of aging, death and human vulnerability because the goal is to eternalise the person and his or her represented qualities. In this way, the portrait sums up the life of the sitter (Brilliant 1991:10). The person is meant to appear timeless, and by association, these qualities and characteristics are also timeless and pervasive at the University.

²⁰ The Art Committee is responsible for the management of all artworks and collections in the possession of the University.

²¹ De Kamper (2014) notes that it is of utmost importance that the representation of the sitter is accurate and descriptive.

²² The problem with choosing an artist with a distinct style is that the portrait then becomes about the artist and not the person represented. In other words, the sitter does not gain importance for being painted by an established artist; the artist gets recognition for the artwork.

²³ Eksteen described his experience of creating commissioned portraits for the University in his interview (see Appendix E).

This reflects an ideal university that is strong, stable, reliable, mature, current and enduring.

De Kamper (2014) states that the chancellor, and the vice-chancellor and principal are still commemorated and memorialised in portraits because of a respect for the enduring tradition. Likewise, Schmahmann (2013:192) observes that contemporary office-bearers do not want to be remembered as “a generation that simply obliterated a tradition”. In order to preserve the tradition and the appearance of the series, certain guidelines must be adhered to by the artist and the sitter. The guidelines for chancellors’ portraits at the University (as demonstrated in Figure 1) are that the medium should be oil on canvas and the dimensions should be 105 cm x 81 cm without the frame.²⁴ There is no specification regarding pose and setting (De Kamper 2015). The guidelines that need to be followed for the creation of a portrait of a vice-chancellor and principal are the same as the chancellors’ portraits, in order to maintain the uniformity of the series located in the corridor leading to the foyer of the senate chamber. Once the artworks are completed, their placement is at the discretion of the Art Committee, and when exhibited, each portrait is accompanied by a bronze plate with the name of the sitter and the term when he or she was in office at UP (Policy and procedure ... [sa]). Berger (2008:29) notes that the meaning of artworks is greatly influenced by what is immediately visible next to the image. The bronze plate gives the necessary information on who the sitter was, which is necessary for the identification of specific leaders within the series. The individual portraits are also influenced and given significance because the series is exhibited together.

The chancellor’s portrait is displayed in the foyer of the Rectorate during *his* (there has not yet been a female chancellor) time in office (Figure 1). The reason for

²⁴ For the purpose of economy, the discussion of each of the selected artworks does not include all the background information, such as: when and how they were acquired; under which policy, or in service of which ideological project, were they acquired; when, where and for what purpose were they displayed; when and why were they removed or relocated; or what should future generations know about these artworks. However, these questions could be answered in possible future research.



Figure 1: Cyril Coetzee, *Prof LW Nkuhlu*, 2008. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2015).

exhibiting the chancellor's portrait is to "establish the identity of the current reigning power and to consolidate that authority by making the appearance ubiquitous" (West 2004:57). After the sitter's departure from the University, the portrait is moved into storage. Even though the portraits of the vice-chancellor and principals are commissioned soon after their inauguration, their respective portraits are only revealed after their departure from the University.²⁵ This

²⁵ In other words, the portrait is a part of the UP Art Collection, but may not be shown until his or her retirement from the University. The portrait is hung alongside the other portraits of vice-chancellors and principals in Administration 1-15 (De Kamper 2015).



Figure 2: Irmin Henkel, *Dr Hilgard Muller*, 1975. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

tradition is related to the notion that portraits are associated with the past and with memory (West 2004:62). With regard to the portrait of the chair of council, the final choice of photograph lies with the Art Committee and it is kept as the official portrait in the University's archives (Policy and procedure ... [sa]).

The portraits of chancellors, vice-chancellors and principals, and chairpersons of council, abide by certain conventions – not rules – regarding pose, setting and overall appearance. What follows is a basic analysis of the composition and traditions of the official portraits in the UP Art Collection that reveal and depict the



Figure 3: Irmin Henkel, *Ds AJ Louw*, 1977. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

social type of the ideal University leader.²⁶ Berger (2008:13) states that the composition of paintings, and I would add the uniformity of the paintings in a series, furthers their power. From a close inspection of the portraits, the first

²⁶ Individuals commemorated in the official portraits of the University fit into the social type of the hero as explained by Klapp (1954). He defines the hero as a person of note who is well regarded and esteemed for supposed unusual virtues or accomplishments (Klapp 1954:57). Heroes have an honoured status, receive treatments such as “homage, commemoration, celebration and veneration”, and “[b]ecause of their superior qualities, heroes dominate the scene of human action, symbolizing success, perfection and conquest of evil, providing a model for identification by the group – one might say its better self” (Klapp 1954:57). Because of the heroes’ supposed unusual virtues and accomplishments, they are widely idealised and made to be a symbol that individuals of the social group aim to imitate and follow (Klapp 1954:60).



Figure 4: Frikkie Eksteen, *Prof Johan van Zyl*, 2001. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

tradition that appears to be upheld throughout relates to the facial expressions of the sitters. The expressions of all the sitters are neutral with an air of dignified peacefulness and sometimes the appearance of being grave and pensive (West 2004:34). Figure 2, a portrait of Dr Hilgard Muller, is an example of facial features that portray repose. The portrait of Rev AJ Louw (Figure 3) represents a grave, serious and pensive expression.²⁷ Of all the commissioned portraits of the University, only two of the sitters are slightly smiling without showing teeth. These

²⁷ Both Dr Muller and Rev Louw were chancellors at the University.



Figure 5: Cyril Coetzee, *Dr Anton Rupert*, 1995. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

two exceptions confirm that formal, official portraits rarely show sitters exhibiting emotions. The sitters are represented as serious, professional men who react not emotionally, but soberly. In other words, the office-bearers appear to be wearing masks of uniformity and prestige. Brilliant (1991:12) states that:

Social roles, however enacted, are like masks or disguises, carefully assumed by individuals in order to locate themselves in a society conditioned to recognize and identify these forms of representation in practice and in art. If there were nothing more than that, then representing a person in a role, defined by society, would not be a disguise to conceal some uniquely private kernel of being, because



Figure 6: Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, *Dr Anton Rupert*, 1992. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

there would be nothing to conceal, no inner reality that the portraitist would be obliged, somehow, to uncover or express.

The pose in the official portraits tends to display a partial profile, if only to a degree, as is seen in the portrait of Prof Johan van Zyl (Figure 4). This approach to representing the face is intended to avoid giving the impression that the sitter is glaring at the viewer; however, in every portrait of the chancellor, the vice-chancellor and principal and the chairperson of

council, the sitter stares out at the viewer. Only one exception was found who did not look out at the viewer, but rather up: the portrait of Prof LW Nkuhlu (Figure 1).²⁸ It seems as if Prof Nkuhlu's attention was drawn towards something to his right. With regard to the positioning of the body, a degree of "frontality" (West 2004:73) is often – but not always – used along with a seated position, as seen in Figure 5, a portrait of the Chancellor, Dr Anton Rupert.²⁹ West (2004:73) argues that the combination of a frontal and seated pose creates a sense of divinity and command, particularly if the subject is seated as if on a throne. Dr Rupert displays his authority through his direct gaze and the 'divine' connotation of the pose. This depiction reflects Rupert's status as former Chancellor, former Tukkier of the Century and Alumnus of the Century. In all the official portraits, the sitter's feet seem to be firmly on the floor. This implies that the office-bearers are not idle and do not waste time, but rather are constantly present at their posts and working

²⁸ This is the newest commissioned portrait, and it raises the question of why the direction of the gaze is suddenly different.

²⁹ This is the re-commissioned portrait by Cyril Coetzee after the Marie Vermeulen-Breedt painting of Dr Rupert (Figure 6) was found by the Art Committee to be of inadequate quality.

hard for the benefit of the University, relating to the idiom of 'keeping one's feet on the ground'.³⁰

Apart from having 'both feet on the ground', there are four portraits, besides the portrait of Prof LW Nkuhlu, where the sitters appear to have been busy working and were interrupted by the artist (it is assumed that the artist 'interrupted' the sitter, because the sitter is looking directly outward). Two of these are portraits of former principals, namely *Prof Patterson* [sa] by JN Rodgers, and *Prof Smit* [sa] by Margaret Gradwell. For the purpose of the discussion, the two portraits deliberated on are of vice-chancellor and principals, *Prof Joubert* by Louis van Heerden (Figure 7) and *Prof Flip Smit*³¹ by Frikkie Eksteen (Figure 8).³² Both sitters are posed as if performing daily duties required by their position as office-bearer.³³ The portraits imply that the subjects would wear the academic robes of their office and position on a daily basis as if they were uniforms of their trade. Figure 8 is the first portrait that was created of Prof Smit. It was commissioned and accepted by the Art Committee; however, Prof Smit was unhappy with it. Therefore, in his own capacity, he commissioned Cyril Coetzee to create a second portrait (Figure 9). At the request of Prof Smit, this second portrait is displayed alongside the other portraits of vice-chancellors and principals in the Administration Building.³⁴

³⁰ The idiom means to remain calm and stable, and not having one's character spoiled by fame or success. It also provides a sense of authoritative rationality.

³¹ The visual reference of the Prof Smit portrait provided in the database by De Kamper in 2014 differs from the portrait photograph provided in 2015. This discussion is based on the first image provided in 2014 in the database.

³² The decision was made to discuss these two artworks, instead of the portraits of the two principals.

³³ Eksteen (2015) observes that the sitters of these portraits did have a degree of say about how they were depicted – were they seated, standing, holding papers, etc.

³⁴ This is one of only two instances where the portrait of an office-bearer was repainted and accepted by the Art Committee. The other involved a portrait of Dr Anton Rupert by Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, which was re-commissioned to Cyril Coetzee. Eksteen (2015) states that, with regards to commissioned portraits, it is difficult to keep everyone involved in the process equally happy. In both cases the repainting of the portraits was awarded to Coetzee. Schmahmann (2013:154) also observes Coetzee's popularity and states that it is not surprising "given the stress placed on imitation or mimesis". Eksteen (2015) states that, with regards to commissioned portraits, it is difficult to keep everyone involved in the process equally happy.

All vice-chancellor and principals are portrayed wearing the required academic dress of their respective offices. The academic robes worn by office-bearers capture the identity of the University, because they vary from institution to institution (Schmahmann 2013:96). The markers of institutional identity are put on and become a part of the person's identity. What the subject is known as or for is his or her position and social role, which is also his or her identifiable feature or characteristic. However, this feature of identity is attributed to the person by society, and might not be fundamental or essential to his or her "truth" (Schmahmann 2013:174).³⁵ The robes are also markers of authority, power, importance and achievement for viewers of the artworks. The sitter becomes dependent on the academic robe to mark his authority at and relation to UP. The robe links the sitter to a specific social and professional milieu and acts as the uniform of the sitter's occupation (West 2004:86). The specific academic robes worn by UP officials also form a part of the branding strategy of the Institution. They mark the identity of UP as strong, substantial and distinctive when they are worn and displayed during ceremonies and in the portraits (Branding and advertising [sa]). The fact that the robes have remained unchanged over the decades further reflects the traditions and steadfastness the University aims to communicate. It can also be seen as a link with the past and interpreted as a sign of the wearer's pride in being connected to the Institution and its history.

According to De Kamper (2015), all the portraits of office-bearers that served before Prof DM Joubert (in other words, before 1982) were created posthumously. The decision to commission the subjects' portraits before they departed the University was only made in 2006. An example of a posthumous portrait is Figure 10, titled *Prof AE du Toit* by Nico Roos. Du Toit served as principal from 1927 until 1934 and his portrait was commissioned in 1985. John Pope-Hennessy (1966:8) states that posthumous portraits are commemorative and "directed to a future when the living would no longer be alive". In the case of the UP official portraits, the purpose for commissioning posthumous portraits is

³⁵ This notion links with Brubaker and Cooper's (2000:15) alternative concept of external identification.



Figure 7: Louis van Heerden, *Prof Joubert*, 1991. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

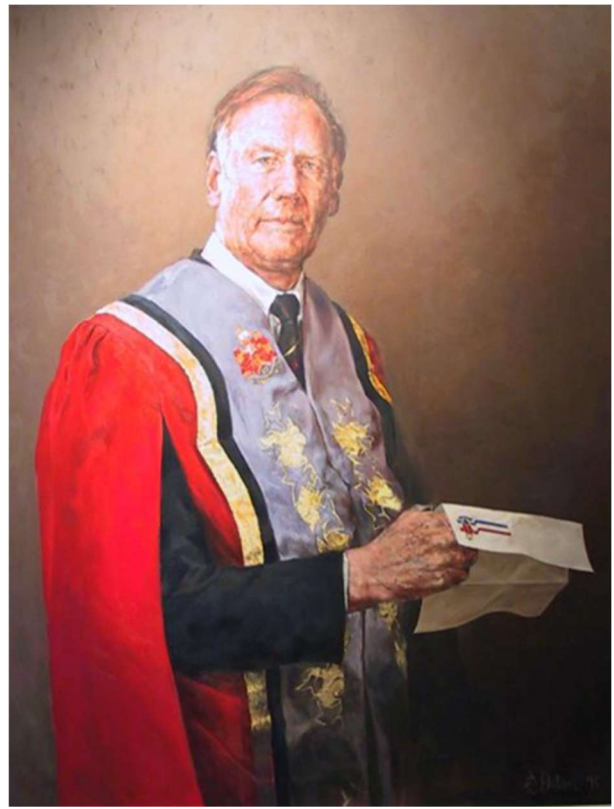


Figure 8: Frikkie Eksteen, *Prof Flip Smit*, 1997. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).



Figure 9: Cyril Coetzee, *Prof Smit*, 2012. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2015).



Figure 10: Nico Roos, *Prof AE du Toit*, 1985. Oil on canvas, 105 cm x 81 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

to create a complete visual lineage and chronology of the University's leadership. It also upholds the UP Art Collection's dependability as a primary visual resource (even if only with regard to the officially commissioned portraits). Another important reason for posthumous commissions is to remember specific office-bearers' achievements, contributions and dedication to the development and growth of the University.

3.4.2 Portraits of female academics and public figures

In the UP Art Collection, there are only five portraits of female academics and public figures. The women are listed below:

- Portraits of female academics and public figures in the database:

<u>Academic or public figure</u>	<u>Position</u>
Prof Carolina Koornhof	UP Executive Director of Finance and Business Initiative, 2011 – present
Prof Malie Smuts	Head of Anatomy, Faculty of Veterinary Science, 1982 – 1986
Prof Charlotte Searle	First professor of nursing in SA in 1967 at UP
Prof Anna-Neethling Pohl	Professor at the Department of Drama 1965 – 1971
Annie Botha	Wife of General Louis Botha

From the list of women whose portraits are included in the UP Art Collection, it is evident that these women are definitely honourable and worthy of being memorialised in a portrait as per the requirements discussed above. The two portraits discussed are of Prof Carolina Koornhof (Figure 11) and Prof Anna Neethling-Pohl (Figure 12). Prof Carolina Koornhof was the first female professor in the Department of Accounting and the first female Dean in the history of the Faculty of Economic and Management Science at UP. She is an author and founding member of various Accounting organisations, committees and institutes. At the time of writing, she is the Executive Director of Finance and Business Initiatives of the University (Executive Director: Finance and Business Initiatives [sa]). The series of portraits of the heads of the Faculty of Economic and



Figure 11: Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, *Prof Carolina Koornhof*, 2006. Oil on canvas, 60 cm x 49,5 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

Management Science consists of 12 portraits,³⁶ of which there are only two exceptions to the white, male, middle-class faces: Prof Carolina Koornhof (Figure 11) and Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo (Figure 15).³⁷ The entire series was painted by

³⁶ The portraits of the heads of the Faculty of Economic and Management Science are on display in Economic and Management Science 2 – 12.

³⁷ Interestingly, the portraits of the ten white men are not named in the database as provided by De Kamper (2015), while the two exceptions are described according to the sitters' names. This raises the question of why the identification and categorisation, as proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000:16), of the two exceptions were deemed important, as apposed to the typification of the ten white deans.



Figure 12: Hans Nel, *Anna Neethling-Pohl*, ca 1975. Oil on board, 169 cm x 105 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

Marie Vermeulen-Breedt and appears more 'artistic' than photo-realistic.³⁸ With regard to composition, only the busts of each of the sitters are included and they are not depicted in academic robes, but rather business suits. The exclusion of their hands renders them smaller and less obtrusive in the frame, compared with the portraits of the chancellors, and vice-chancellors and principals.

³⁸ Brushstrokes are more visible and the sitters' forms (for example, around the shoulders) fade into the background. The portraits appear softer and less intimidating, because they are composed with neutral features (six of the 12 portraits have slight smiles), partial profiles and frontality, and two of the sitters do not stare out at the viewer. Of the 12 portraits, five of the heads are slightly turned downwards, as exemplified in Figure 11.

Anna Neethling-Pohl (Figure 12) was a writer, actress, founding member of various drama organisations, translator, Drama professor at the University and the first female broadcaster at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). She performed in more than 50 stage productions and lead roles during her lifetime (Anna Neethling Pohl [sa]). The portrait of Neethling-Pohl is included in the dissertation, because she was a pioneer, leader and mentor for women in the entertainment industry in South Africa. However, she was also a staunch proponent of the ideology and order otherwise associated with white middleclass nationalism and patriarchy, and she occupied a prominent role in the paramilitary extremist-nationalist Ossewa Brandwag (Blignaut 2012:71). This portrait does not depict the sitter in the prime of her life,³⁹ but the seated position does reveal authority. According to West (2004:73), when the full-length figure is depicted in portraits it connotes images of saints. The portrait reminds one also of a teacher reading a book to her pupils, evoking Neethling-Pohl's final years during which she taught at the University and at which time the portrait was commissioned by the Drama Department.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, the portrait has not been handled with care and consideration for the famous woman it represents. When I went looking for the portrait in order to photograph it for this study, I found it in the Masker Theatre, propped against a wall, behind furniture, and badly damaged.

3.4.3 Portraits of black academics and public figures

The formal portraits in the UP Art Collection are certainly not representative of the racial demographic of South Africa. Listed below are the four portraits of black academics and public figures in the database provided by De Kamper (2014):⁴¹

- Portraits of black academics and public figures in the database:

<u>Academic or public figure</u>	<u>Position</u>
Nelson Mandela	First Democratic President of the RSA, 1994 – 1999

³⁹ The effect of portraying Neethling-Pohl in a later stage of her life can be read as conveying her knowledge/wisdom of and experience in the entertainment industry.

⁴⁰ It can be argued that Neethling-Pohl was immortalised in a portrait by her peers because she was a leader in the arts and for her role in the Nationalist agenda.

⁴¹ This list excludes the portrait of Prof LW Nkuhlu (Figure 1), because his portrait is part of the series of official commissioned portraits of office-bearers at the University.

Thabo Mbeki	President of the RSA, 1999 – 2008
Oliver Tambo	President of the ANC, 1967 – 1991
Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo	Public Service Commissioner, RSA; Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Science 2000 – 2003; Research Professor in the Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship at UP; former Executive Director and a member of the Executive of UP

By owning, and publicly displaying, portraits of revered black leaders and politicians, the University illustrates and reinforces their attempt at diversifying the Institution. Schmahmann (2013:192) maintains that changing demographics at South African institutions “will ensure that the portraits [commissioned and owned by an institution] are no longer almost exclusively of white males, and thus will no longer articulate messages of inequity and lack of opportunity to people of colour or to women”. By displaying the portraits of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (Figure 13) and Oliver Reginald Tambo (Figure 14) in the Centre for Human Rights and in the Oliver R Tambo Law Library, the University communicates that it supports the values and beliefs upheld by these two men. As both were the leaders of the ANC (Tambo from 1967 to 1991, and Mandela from 1991 to 1997), and as such were constantly delivering speeches and passionately encouraging others with their words, Marie Vermeulen-Breedt depicted them “with talking hands” (Friedländer 1963:236). It appears as if the portrait was captured ‘mid-sentence’ and that their words are still echoing in the halls and corridors where their portraits hang. Their depiction as deeply immersed in some form of communication also conveys the notion that the rights and freedom for which they fought are still relevant today and continue to be of utmost importance. Through their expressive and even passionate postures, they also appear to be encouraging viewers to stand up for equality, freedom and democracy.

The portraits of Nelson Mandela (Figure 13) and Oliver Tambo (Figure 14) were painted by a female artist, Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, who also painted Thabo



Figure 13: Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, *Nelson Mandela*, 2005. Oil on canvas, 100 cm x 100 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

Mbeki, Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo (Figure 15) and Prof Carolina Koornhof (Figure 11). Therefore, these portraits unite two previously marginalised groups: people of colour and women. The official portraits of an institution function as signs of an illustrious pedigree, but Schmahmann (2013:158) observes that, generally, they also reveal a tradition of white, male dominance in the realms of both sitters and artists. These reveal histories of discrimination, marginalisation and bias on grounds of race and gender. Even though the University definitely has an overabundance of white, male sitters, as well as white artists, women portraitists have been commissioned to memorialise office-bearers, academics and public



Figure 14: Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, *Oliver Tambo*, 2005. Oil on canvas, 100 cm x 100 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

figures.⁴² One note-worthy example of this is Vermeulen-Breedt, who was also commissioned to portray Dr Anton Rupert (1992), Dr J Howell (1989), Prof Piet Hoek (1989) and Mr Schlebusch (1989). However, in all of the portraits by a woman portraitist, the 'presence' of a female creator is not apparent and all emphasis is placed on the male sitter (Schmahmann 2013:180). With regard to

⁴² The female portraitists include: Marie Vermeulen-Breedt (19 portraits), Fleur Ferri (one portrait), Susan Kruger Grundlingh (four portraits), Margaret Gradwell (two portraits), Cecilia Kruger (one portrait), Mariette Botha (one portrait), Johanna Wassenaar (one portrait), Louise Florence Zerffi (one portrait), and Marcella De Boom (three portraits). This amounts to 33 portraits by (white) women artists out of about 87 official commissioned portraits of office-bearers.



Figure 15: Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, *Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo*, 2000. Oil on canvas, 60 cm x 49,5 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

the bias on grounds of race, from the database of commissioned portraits it is clear that there has not yet been a black artist commissioned to portray an office-bearer.⁴³

⁴³ Examples of artists of colour that could be asked to create official portraits are Catherine Ocholla, Khanya Mbatha, Dathini Mzayiya and Paul Sibisi.

3.4.4 Other academic and public figures

The discussion of the formal portraits in the UP Art Collection has thus far focused on those of office-bearers and the portraits of female and black academics and public figures. The portraits that have not yet been discussed include those of deans of faculties, heads of departments, chairpersons of council, members of council and senate, exemplary lecturers, vice-principals, registrars, presidents of the convocation, principals of the education college, superintendents of education, directors of education, and business leaders, authors, poets, composers and lawyers. The portraits of deans of faculties and heads of departments have for the most part not been removed from the corridors of the respective faculties and departments, like those of the office-bearers in the various council and senate chambers (for example, Figures 2 and 3), as discussed in section 3.4.). Unfortunately, the study cannot look at all these portraits, but it is worth noting that they have a common goal: displaying intellectual power. The portraits of these individuals are also physiologically correct, but display a less idealised version of what a leader and academic 'should' look like in terms of the conventions of pose and dress discussed earlier. According to West (2004:88), displaying the peculiarities, imperfections and idiosyncrasies of sitters aims to emphasise their mental or intellectual power. She refers to these types of portraits as depicting the sitter's 'genius'. In such representations, the sitter can therefore be described as the "anti-hero whose prowess was intellectual rather than physical" (West 2004:89).

3.5 University of Pretoria culture and identity

Toma *et al.* (2005:4) argue that the names and symbols (in this case the portraits of officials) communicate what the viewer knows about an institution. Currently, the University's 'image' is predominantly represented by white, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied men, clearly indicating that, as shown by Kesh Govinder, Nombuso Zondo and Malegapuru Makgoba (2013), transformation towards a more diverse and equal representation of people of colour and women at institutions around South Africa is "painfully" and "embarrassingly" slow. By contrast, Lis Lange (2014:14) observes that "the overall look and feel of most

universities has changed dramatically in the last twenty years". Visual evidence of UP's desire for and commitment to transformation is therefore apparent in the recent portraits of women and people of colour who have taken up managerial, academic and public roles at the University.

The official portraits of office-bearers and public figures, whether commissioned by the University or its constituent departments, or bequeathed to the University, are a part of the traditions of the Institution and become the artefacts passed down from generation to generation. They are also symbols of knowledge, achievement, power, authority, longevity, strength and virtue – values and ideals the Institution wishes to communicate to stakeholders. According to Toma *et al.* (2005:5), the benefits to institutions of creating unified understandings among stakeholders are: awareness, associations, loyalty, perceived quality (brand equity), contact, cooperation, attachment, institutional identification, financial support and donations, and may attract exemplary teachers and researchers. If the importance of the sitters and artists of the portraits were better known, boasted about or exhibited, the University could reap these benefits.

Campbell and Hourigan (2008:37) observe that multiple cultures with various perspectives can co-exist at tertiary institutions. The portraits and their histories would most likely be interpreted differently by students of differing race, ethnicity, gender and nationality. When the perspectives and thoughts of all the students, staff and faculty are considered, respected and combined, the portraits can stand for and communicate messages that not only encourage viewers but also make them proud of the University's heritage and hopeful about its future. In other words, the stakeholders can identify with the University and create a better community of individuals who share a sense of belonging together (groupness), improving on the weaknesses of the past and building on its strengths.

However, these notions expressed by Toma *et al.* (2005), and Campbell and Hourigan (2008) are idealistic, problematic and more complex in the South African context with its history of colonialism and apartheid. In South Africa, there

is resistance to the ideologies associated with or symbolised by these images. The most obvious example is the debates and demonstrations over the statue of the British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2015. Various students argued that the statue is a symbol of historical white oppression (Cheers and protests... 2015), while others argued that the removal of the statue is an attempt to erase history. The protests over the statue began in March 2015 when a student threw human excrement at the statue, which prompted other attacks on colonial statues around the country.⁴⁴ Ideologies associated with images are diverse, as evidenced by the memorandum to “demand protection” for heritage handed to parliament by the youth wing of the white Afrikaner solidarity group AfriForum (Cheers and protests... 2015).⁴⁵ *The Guardian* (Cheers and protests... 2015) reports:

Afrikaners are descendants of mainly Dutch settlers from the 17th and 18th centuries and dominated South Africa’s white-minority government before the end of apartheid in 1994. They are no fans of Rhodes, who was on the British side in the Anglo-Boer war at the turn of the 20th century, but have seen statues of their own forebears come under attack in the wake of the university protests.

This statement in *The Guardian* newspaper reflects the notion that it is possible for viewers of statues and artworks to appreciate the historic value of art objects even if the ideologies associated with stem from a controversial past.⁴⁶ Xolela Mangcu, an academic at UCT, is quoted saying, “I’m happy the statue will open the conversation ... It didn’t have to come to this. I’m hoping there will be a different mode of engagement” (Smith 2015). From Mangcu’s statement, it is evident that conversation and engagement are necessary for the renegotiation of problematic ideologies. UCT’s vice-chancellor, Max Price, is also in favour of free speech and rational debate (Price 2015).

⁴⁴ Other monuments that were defaced include the statue of former president Paul Kruger in Pretoria (for which the Economic Freedom Fighters claimed responsibility), the statue of King George VI at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the statue of Louis Botha outside parliament in Cape Town, and the monument to the leader of the first settlers, Jan van Riebeeck, in Cape Town (Cheers and protests... 2015; Hess 2015).

⁴⁵ The black Economic Freedom Fighters party, on the other hand, called “for all symbols of white rule to be destroyed” (Cheers and protests... 2015). The party’s leader, Julius Malema, enjoined ‘fighters’ to take down and destroy symbols of colonialism and apartheid (Hess 2015).

⁴⁶ According to heritage@uct (sa), “many young Afrikaners in the 1930s and 1940s were uncomfortable on a campus which provided daily reminders of Rhodes and Jameson”.

The statue of Rhodes was removed from the UCT campus in April 2015 on the suggestion of Price.⁴⁷ However, for many students this was not enough, and they demanded that the statue be destroyed. UCT decided to remove (but not destroy) the statue because of the personality of Rhodes as a coloniser, brute, maverick and outspoken racist (Price 2015), and because of the symbolic location of the statue.⁴⁸ Price (2015) states that “historical memory does not simply depend on, or require retaining statues of old without relocation or recontextualisation.” Price (2015) argues for finding appropriate ways of recognising controversial art objects’ place in history and re-appropriating their ideologies.⁴⁹ Price’s (2015) argument of recontextualisation is exactly the point this dissertation is attempting to propose for the artworks (specifically the portraits) at UP, whose campuses are home to multiple cultures.⁵⁰

Portraits of historical figures, although they may be considered heroes by one group and figures of oppression by another, should be read as markers and storytellers of history. Schmahmann (2013:148) urges visual culture readers to understand that “[d]iscourse is a powerful weapon, and if it is understood that meanings and associations are not intrinsic to works of art but are ascribed to them, it is clearly possible to shift the signification of an object”. Therefore, viewers of these portraits, such as Figures 2 to 10, (as well as Figures 16 to 18, discussed in Chapter Four) should regard them not only as representing problematic ideological positions, but as objects to reflect upon and mark what society has achieved regarding issues such as equality, freedom and democracy. Ákos Eleőd, conceptual designer of Memento Park in Budapest, Hungary, states

⁴⁷ The statue is in safe-keeping at an undisclosed location while Heritage Western Cape decides on its new location (Price 2015).

⁴⁸ Price (2015) states: “The location in pride of place on Jammie steps, at the focal point of the magnificently balanced built landscape of the upper campus, communicated that Rhodes was emblematic of UCT, thus signalling much more about UCT than it did about Rhodes.”

⁴⁹ The debate and demonstrations over the Rhodes statue are also symbolic of greater issues regarding transformation at the University. Price (2015) states “[i]t is symbolic of deeper experiences of alienation by some black students and staff in what feels to them like a white, colonial or European institution.”

⁵⁰ Albie Sachs (2015) suggests that the Rhodes statue should be kept in place to witness how far South Africa has come constitutionally. I believe that his proposed approach to dealing with controversial artworks is insightful and can benefit work towards transformation.

that “[d]emocracy is the only regime that is prepared to accept that our past with all the dead ends is still ours; we should get to know it, analyse it and think about it!” (The designer’s commendation [sa]).

Returning to Campbell and Hourigan (2008:37), as discussed in Chapter Two, and linking with the different cultures at tertiary institutions, Bergquist (in Campbell & Hourigan 2008:37) observed four co-existing cultures in institutions:

Collegial culture arises primarily from the disciplines within the faculty and values scholarly engagement and shared governance. Managerial culture focuses on the goals and purposes of the institution and values efficiency, effective supervisory skills and fiscal responsibility. Developmental culture is focused on the personal and professional growth of all members of the institution. Finally, negotiating culture values the establishment of equitable and egalitarian policies and procedures, valuing confrontation, interest groups, mediation and power.

With regard to the first, namely collegial culture, the University’s vision is “[t]o be a leading research-intensive university in Africa, recognised internationally for its quality, relevance and impact, as [sic] also for developing people, creating knowledge and making a difference locally and globally” (Vision, Mission and Values [sa]). In other words, it could be argued that “scholarly engagement” with the official portraits is encouraged, and according to the collegial culture, the people of the University should share governance. Even if, thus far, the portraits have predominantly represented white, middle-class men, the University is diversifying its leadership, as seen in the portraits of some of the current and recent office-bearers. The same webpage states that one of the navigational markers of UP is diversity. However, diversity is not yet visible in the official portraits of the University, with a mere four portraits of black people (one of whom is a head of department), and five of women (four of academics and one of Annie Botha).

With regard to developmental culture, through engagement with controversial artworks and by renegotiating their meanings, University stakeholders will experience personal and professional growth. Interpreting and re-interpreting the

portraits in the UP Art Collection could influence personal and Institutional behaviours, mental associations, ideas and habits, as well as the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies of the Institution's culture. The fourth culture, the negotiating culture, as described by Bergquist (in Campbell & Hourigan 2008:37), states that mediations are important in institutional culture. Negotiating with institutional artworks was addressed by Schmahmann (2013:27), as cited in Chapter Two. She advised South African institutions to 'combine' images associated with "colonialism, imperialism, Afrikaner nationalism or apartheid" with contemporary and alternative visual representations; in other words, they should be placed in the same space or locality. The artworks should not be hidden away out of embarrassment or fear of destruction, but rather reflected upon in terms of how much South African institutions have already diversified and progressed. The official portraits of the University were first understood as a representation of the proud leadership lineage of the University. Then, because of changing cultural, linguistic and social conventions, they came to represent racial and sexual exclusion from this leadership. However, as the leadership of the University becomes diverse, the portraits will come to represent how far the University has come, from being known as the "Voortrekker" University to being a culturally diverse Institution. The fourth culture is very important at UP, and all universities in South Africa, because of their colonial and apartheid histories. The goal of transformation in universities in South Africa is to establish equitable and democratic policies and procedures (Lange 2014).

The first core policy in UP's Strategic Plan – 2025 is to acknowledge the University's early beginnings and to strengthen its existing diversity (Strategic Plan – 2025 [sa]). It is important to continue to display artworks that were previously thought to establish and maintain marginalisation in terms of race and gender, and to encourage engagement and recontextualisation of these artworks, as opposed to having them disposed of or destroyed. The artworks should not be 'hidden away', but should be intermittently exhibited and reflected upon.⁵¹ When

⁵¹ Eksteen (2015) believes his artworks that are included in the UP Art Collection – those that are not commissioned portraits, but rather purchased – reflect the Institution's self-criticism of its past. He observes that institutional self-criticism is a progressive necessity. Eksteen states that

students from diverse backgrounds and histories critically engage with these portraits, they will reveal new perspectives on their significance, impact and place in society, which will fulfil another policy goal in the Strategic Plan – 2025, namely “[e]mbracing diversity to enrich the University’s intellectual environment” (Strategic Plan – 2025 [sa]). Embracing diversity also includes conducting research on what makes this Institution different and unique within national and global arenas. The UP Art Collection is one of the distinguishing aspects of UP, but accessibility to information on the collection is limited.

As set out in the corporate policy of the University’s Heritage Committee, one of their functions is to “professionally and legally obtain, document, record, conserve and restore heritage objects ... and artworks in the University of Pretoria Heritage Collections” (Corporate Policy ... [sa]). The documentation, specifically the digitisation, of the artworks is not complete. In some instances – for example, in the case of the official portraits – the information is ‘more’ complete, but not yet sufficient. It would appear that the portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures are considered more important and worthy of identifying, categorising and digitising. De Kamper (2014) states that the Department of Museum and Arts Management does not have a satisfactory budget that would allow them to document and digitise the artworks’ information in a single project. In the policy, the heritage collections of the University are referred to as “some of the University’s major assets”; however, it would appear that insufficient support is lent to the Department to adequately manage these assets. This is evident in the missing information as well as the spelling mistakes in the names of people who are, ultimately, the faces of the University.

The special treatment of the official portraits⁵² is evident in the fact that the majority of official portraits were in Group 1⁵³ received from De Kamper, with the

his artworks in the UP Art Collection represent the history of the Institution in an alternative way and that their inclusion reflects a creative investigation of the Institution’s history.

⁵² The official portraits were more readily available and identified, categorised and digitised as portraits in the collection.

⁵³ Group 1 included not only two-dimensional portraits, but also portrait busts and non-traditional portrait sculptures. The total number of two-dimensional portraits in Group 1 is 144.

exception of eight portraits of public figures in Group 2,⁵⁴ and other portraits that were not included, as I realised at the time of writing. If the focus of this dissertation were to only do research on the official portraits and portraits of public figures, then the lack of accessibility would have been less of a problem. The Heritage Committee's objective is to make the collection public and accessible;⁵⁵ however, because of the policy to not classify portraits according to genre, the accessibility was not 'open' or 'easy'. Even De Kamper had to systematically go through all the artworks in order to compile a document of artworks he considered to be portraits (Group 2), in which the final eight official portraits were placed. These final eight portraits were only of male Afrikaner public figures who were classified in the dissertation as figures of Afrikaner historical significance (i.e. portraits of political or cultural leaders of Afrikaner history, discussed in section 4.2).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the formal, official portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures related to the University of Pretoria. When highlighting the history of the Institution, it became apparent that many traditions were initiated throughout the lifespan of UP, including the tradition of commissioning portraits. Following this, the possible reasons why UP chose to memorialise their office-bearers in painted portraits instead of photographs were considered. It was established that the preference for painted portraits of UP office-bearers, most of which are in oil paint, is associated with Western traditions, prestige, status and notions surrounding 'high art'. The artworks are also connected to notions of authority, authenticity, truth, civilisation, education and permanence.

Before elaborating on portraits of office-bearers and academic and public figures, it was necessary to discuss the uses, goals and purposes of formal portraiture in general. The section concluded with a discussion of the formal quality of official

⁵⁴ Group 2 included artworks that De Kamper considered to be portraits after sifting through the entire collection.

⁵⁵ Drawing from a comment by Eksteen (2015), it would be interesting to investigate whether stakeholders at the University is aware of the Collection, and some of its important artworks.

portraits, the authority of portraits and the actions and feelings evoked by portraits in viewers. The chapter then discussed the different groups within the official portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures. The first is the officially commissioned portraits of office-bearers of the University. Thereafter, the portraits of female academics and public figures were examined, because they are so rare in this collection of male faces. Black academics and public figures were also discussed for the same reason. In order not to neglect the other academic and public figures, a short section mentioned the role and status of these portraits in the collection. These portraits generally display peculiarities, imperfections and idiosyncrasies of sitters with the aim of emphasising their mental and intellectual power, in contrast with the official portraits of office-bearers, which are idealised.

The final section in the chapter discussed the University's culture and identity relating to the tradition of the formal depiction of the faces of power. The section argued that portraits are symbols and artefacts that belong to the Institution and stand for ideas outside of the frame, such as the aims, goals, values, vision and mission of UP. The new strategy of diversifying the portraits, and combining and juxtaposing images from the past and present as proposed by Schmahmann, fosters the interaction of stakeholders with the artworks. The aim of such interactions should not be to forget, but to understand the histories and traditions of the Institution, and to commit to justice and equal opportunity in the future (Schmahmann 2013:25). It is therefore imperative to engage with the artworks and with other viewers in order to build new understandings that lead to better relationships among people. To conclude, even though the University is becoming more representative of South African demographics, this is not yet truly visible when it comes to the official commissioned portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures. Much work still needs to be done to make transformation more visible.

CHAPTER FOUR FACES OF AFRIKANERS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the idea of the individual within ‘the type’.¹ In order to relate the creation of official portraits at the University to a tradition of immortalising figures that inspire and motivate viewers, the portraits of political or cultural leaders of Afrikaner history are discussed. These portraits are part of Group 1 and 2, while the portraits by Erich Mayer (discussed in section 4.3) is part of Group 2. In South Africa, at the time when Mayer produced his art (namely, the early to mid-twentieth century), classification seems to have been important to academic institutions and the state.² Mayer faithfully recorded what he saw, but were also concerned “with creating art for its own sake” (Alexander 1962:11). Based on the discussion of the type in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter examines the idea of Afrikaner³ types. The different interpretations of these selected portraits will depend on the political climate and ideological ‘lenses’ worn by viewers and stakeholders. Thus, my interpretation of the portraits is one among many.

The ‘Afrikaner type’, seen in the both sections’ artworks, is, however, discussed according to its representation in Mayer’s art; the University of Pretoria already began to collect his work at an early stage in his career (Schoonraad 1990:v). The first artwork was donated in 1925 by Mayer (De Kamper 2016). According to Jeanne van Eeden (2008:187), even though the University’s collection was only officially begun in the 1930s, by 1931 the UP Art Collection already had an

¹ It builds on the idea of the type in the portrait. In Chapter Three, the type was explored in relation to the office-bearers, academics and public figures who were depicted according to conventional sign systems.

² This is in line with Brubaker and Cooper’s (2000:15) external identification that entails “the formalized, codified, objectified systems of categorization developed by powerful, authoritative institutions”. The state, for example, has “material and symbolic resources to impose ... categories, classificatory schemes, and modes of social counting and accounting” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:16).

³ Afrikaner refers to “a Dutch-speaking or (later) Afrikaans-speaking white inhabitant of South Africa, usually of Dutch, German, or Huguenot descent; also, occasionally applied to any white citizen of South Africa” (Afrikaner 2012). It is a term of identity (Delmont 2001:7).

artwork by Mayer in its possession, which reflects the importance the leaders of the University ascribed to his work. In 1932, the University bought one of his artworks and another was donated, while a unique sketch book and Mayer's personal archive were donated before his death in the 1950s (De Kamper 2016).⁴ The UP Art Collection now has 329 artworks by Mayer, consisting of oil and watercolour paintings, as well as pencil and pen drawings.⁵ Section 4.3 begins with a short biography of Mayer, before discussing the ways in which Afrikaners were portrayed in South African art, in order to establish the relation between a more general artistic practice and Mayer's particular method of depicting Afrikaner men, women and children. Then, because Afrikaner nationalist art typically portrayed Afrikaner subjects, it is necessary to consider the purpose, goal and intention of nationalist art. The discussion of nationalist art includes many opinions and arguments by Mayer himself, because he was an avid supporter of South African nationalist art. For this reason, one might wonder what messages the works by Mayer that are owned by the University might convey to their audiences. Moreover, their continued place in the UP Art Collection may well raise uncomfortable questions for the Institution.

The portraits of political or cultural leaders of Afrikaner history and Mayer's portraits of Afrikaner types are discussed for three reasons. The first is the contentious nature of their subject matter. Both section's subject matter can be labelled as problematic because he depicted the Afrikaner volk, who are seen as the oppressive creators of segregation and apartheid in South Africa.⁶ The second reason is that recent events at South African institutions, in which artworks representing contentious ideologies were contested, defaced and

⁴ It is interesting that Mayer donated his artworks to the University and during the 1950s. The University was known as the Voortrekker Universiteit, and the 1950s is when Afrikaner Nationalism was at its peak. The reason behind Mayer's decision, and whether he was asked or encouraged to donate is not clear, but further investigation is necessary to rehabilitate these artworks.

⁵ Most of Mayer's artworks are housed in the UP Archives in the Old Merensky room 3 – 14, because they are in his sketchbooks. However, some are displayed around campus, for example *Man* (1922) is in Administration 5 – 25. Mayer's sketches could be made publicly available on an open access online database.

⁶ A viewer of Mayer's artworks might view them as contentious or controversial, because the image of the Boer or Afrikaner might evoke memories of apartheid, segregation and marginalisation.

renegotiated, require that institutions relook at their artworks. The third reason these portraits are discussed is to foster dialogue among various stakeholders. Rather than destroying, disposing of or hiding away these contentious artworks, if properly and sensitively contextualised or renegotiated, they may become significant instruments in UP's journey towards a transformation. The chapter concludes with a speculative discussion of the future contested role and status of these portraits at the University.

4.2 Portraits of political or cultural leaders of Afrikaner history

Schmahmann (2013:157) observes how the creation of a tradition of commissioning official portraits of office-bearers was part of the visual conceptualisation of Afrikaner heroes. Portraits of these individuals would inspire the urbanised and educated Afrikaner nationalist middle class to achieve professional and cultural success. Following Schmahmann's argument, the purpose of commissioning portraits of high-ranking officials at a university, as well as paintings in general, can thus be regarded not only as part of a desire to create and establish an institutional identity, but, with specific regard to UP, also as being deeply tied to the promotion of an Afrikaner national identity. Listed below are the portraits of Afrikaner political and cultural leaders in the database provided by De Kamper (2014).

- Portraits of Afrikaner political and cultural leaders in the database:

<u>Political and cultural leader</u>	<u>Position</u>
General Koos de la Rey	Boer general
JH de la Rey	Boer general
Paul Kruger	President of the ZAR, 1882 – 1900
Paul Kruger	President of the ZAR, 1882 – 1900
Paul Kruger	President of the ZAR, 1882 – 1900
Paul Kruger	President of the ZAR, 1882 – 1900
CR de Wet	Boer general and rebel leader
CR de Wet	Boer general and rebel leader
General JBM Hertzog	South African Prime Minister, 1924 – 1939
Eugene N Marais	Author; Poet; Lawyer; Naturalist

JD du Toit (pseudonym Totius)	Poet; Theologian; Co-translator of the Bible into Afrikaans
Jan FE Celliers	Poet; Author
JH de Waal	Lawyer; Founding member of the Afrikaanse Taal Vereniging

Joubert (1989:153) states that language was used to separate the Afrikaner people from English-speaking people. After 1932, the University distinguished itself from other institutions in South Africa by changing the medium of instruction to solely Afrikaans. An Afrikaner hero who is glorified for his contribution to the Afrikaans language is Jacob Daniel “Totius” du Toit (Figure 16).⁷ Du Toit was a poet and theologian. He is credited with completing the translation of the Bible into Afrikaans in 1932 – a task initially started by his father, Stephanus Jacobus du Toit. The subject of his poems include faith, love for people and nature, British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism (Jakob Daniel Du Toit 2016). An example of his influence on Afrikaner nationalism is seen in his poem “Vergewe en vergeet” (1908), in which he encouraged Afrikaners to move beyond the pain of losing the South African War and to stand up once again to become a strong people (Giliomee 2014:285). Furthermore, Du Toit drafted the scriptural foundation of apartheid, which was used by the National Party to further their implementation of complete segregation of races (Hofmeyr & Millard 2014:616).

West (2004:87) notes that “portraits of writers, philosophers, composers, theologians, and scholars” often attempt to follow the second avenue of depiction: the portrayal of their inner spirit or creative power. As seen in Figure 16, Totius appears to be alone with his own thoughts – pensive and determined. He was also considered to be a deeply religious, devoted and conservative man – personal qualities that would qualify him as a suitable Afrikaner hero (Jacob Daniel “Totius” du Toit [sa]).

⁷ Figure 16 was initially located in the Normaal Kollege Pretoria Trust. When this college amalgamated with the University of Pretoria in 2001, it became part of the UP Art Collection (De Kampher 2015). Ever since, the portrait has been in storage (De Kamper 2018/02/06).



Figure 16: Jo Roos, *Totius*, 1973. Oil on board, 60,5 cm x 51 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

However, the images of Paul Kruger (Figure 17) and Koos de la Rey (Figure 18), for example, had to be mimetic and physiologically accurate because the subjects have been cultivated as celebrities for the Afrikaner people.⁸ Images of these Afrikaner heroes and celebrities have become iconic motives (West 2004:76), as established in the 1930s when the Afrikaner culture experienced an increase in

⁸ Figures 17 and 18 were bought by Prof SP Engelbrecht for the Department of Afrikaans Art and Culture (De Kamper 2015), a precursor of the Department of Visual Arts. Figure 17 is in storage since before 1986 (De Kamper 2018/02/06).



Figure 17: JH Pierneef, *Paul Kruger*, 1930. Linocut, 63,1 cm x 50 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2015).

popularity and activity. The portrait of Kruger (a linocut) is not in colour and does not contain a large amount of detail, but his image is immediately recognisable. The fame of these kinds of sitters is considered as a new type of authority (apart from their political authority and power) (West 2004:93). The recognisability is further necessary in order to attribute specific qualities, achievements and contributions to the sitter. Paul Kruger was the leader of the resistance movement against British rule and the President of the South African Republic (Transvaal) until the South African War broke out in 1899 (Visser 2014:204). He was instrumental in establishing the Afrikaner people as independent and unique, and

is described as “the symbol of the Afrikaner spirit of independence” (Grobler 2014:179).

The Greek and Roman tradition of depicting the head of a ruler in profile is evident in the portrait of General Koos de la Rey (Figure 17). The Romans realised the potential of portraiture to depict and assert power. The purpose of portraying the head in profile was to disperse the ruler’s identity throughout his empire (West 2004:77). The aim of using this type of depiction in later periods was to compare the power of civic leaders with that of the ancient Roman and Greek leaders who were seen to have possessed a great deal of power. Pope-Hennessy (1966:157) refers to these kinds of portrait as the “profile ruler portrait”. They were popular from the middle of the fifteenth century during the Renaissance, with the aim of informing viewers about the person portrayed. For this reason, the portraits are not idealised, but “penetrate beneath the surface of the personality” (Pope-Hennessy 1966:23). Pope-Hennessy (1966:35) argues that recognisable features are easier to achieve in profile and that the profile portrait was originally for documentary reasons, such as acknowledging a donor of a painting or creating visual references for a family tree. He also notes that the profile portrait was employed to depict figures posthumously (Pope-Hennessy 1966:40). Hendriks, the portraitist of De la Rey (Figure 18), would have been 15 years old and living in Rotterdam, Netherlands, when De la Rey died (Petrus Anton Hendriks [sa]). For this reason, it can be assumed that the portrait was created posthumously and complies with the tradition of commemorative profile portraits depicting deceased sitters.

De la Rey’s portrait is appropriate in this section on figures of Afrikaner history, because he is most well-known as a leading general in the South African War in the Western Transvaal who employed guerrilla tactics and achieved significant victories on 13 December 1900 at Nooitgedacht, on 25 February 1902 at Ysterspruit and on 7 March 1902 at Tweebosch (Pretorius 2014b:248). He was responsible for re-establishing the Boers’ authority in the Western Transvaal and was nicknamed “the Lion of the Western Transvaal”. De la Rey has been

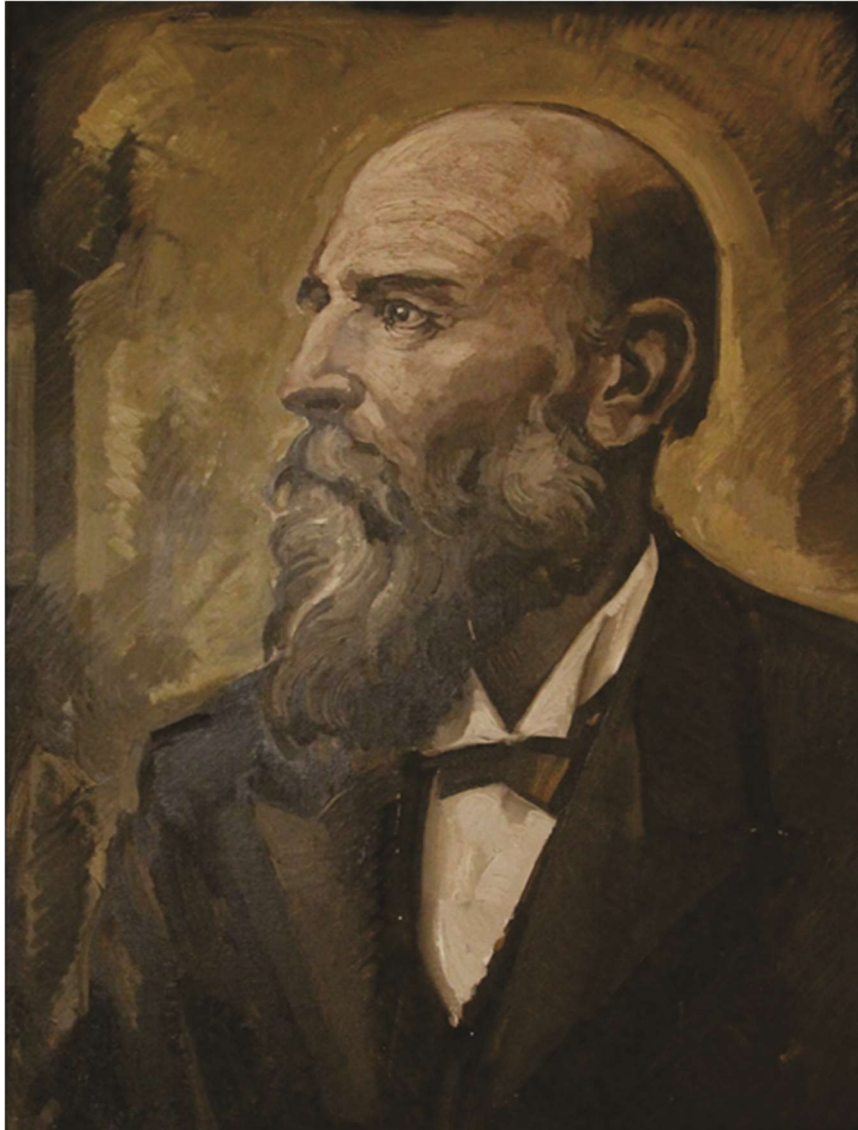


Figure 18: PA Hendricks, *General Koos de la Rey*, ca 1925. Oil on board, 57 cm x 46 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. Photographed by author.

described as a merciful man,⁹ who was initially against the South African War and was instrumental in the creation of peace between the British and the Boers, having co-signed and persuaded the Boers to sign the Peace of Vereeniging on 31 May 1902 (General Koos de la Rey – The Lion of the Western Transvaal [sa]).¹⁰

⁹ After Lord Methuen was wounded and captured at the battle of Tweebosch, De la Rey released the British general in order for him to receive the necessary medical care (General Koos de la Rey – The Lion of the Western Transvaal [sa]).

¹⁰ According to the database provided by De Kamper (2015), the portrait of De la Rey is located in the Human Sciences building floor 18, room 18. When I went to view the portrait, the portrait was not there. However, two lectures were aware that the portrait had been there recently. Yet,

4.3 Erich Mayer – the Afrikaner type

Erich Ernst Karl Mayer (Figure 19) was born on 19 April 1876 in Karlsruhe, Germany. After studying architecture in Berlin, he moved to Vrede in the Orange Free State, South Africa in 1898. After only a year of living among the Afrikaans-speaking community and identifying himself with Afrikaner culture, he volunteered to join the Boer¹¹ army as war-artist and soldier. In 1900, after a failed attempt to invade Mafeking by the Boers, Mayer was captured and sent to St Helena as a prisoner of war (Pretorius & Mayer 2000:9). Following a two-and-a-half-year internment on the island, he briefly went back to Germany, before settling in Windhoek in South West Africa (now Namibia). During his short stay in Germany he started his studies in art, and while living in South West Africa from 1904, he frequently travelled to Europe to further his training in drawing and painting. He moved to Port Elizabeth in 1911 after the formation of the Union of South Africa, and from then on, he travelled around the country, documenting and portraying the countryside and especially the Boers and their daily activities (Pretorius & Mayer 2000:9).

In 1914, Mayer held his first noteworthy solo exhibitions in Potchefstroom and Johannesburg (Schoonraad 1990), but with the outbreak of World War I, Mayer was once again imprisoned for nearly two years in Pietermaritzburg because he was German (Berman 1983:279). It was not until 1919 that he could continue his art. From then on, he lived in Johannesburg and Pretoria, and married Marga Gutter in 1928 (Pretorius & Mayer 2000:9). They continued to travel around South Africa, documenting and portraying the rural, mainly white, but also a few black, South Africans, the latter comprising mainly Bushmen. The predominant theme that emerged in his work at this time was the Boer-type and typical Boer life. The

when De Kamper (2018) was asked where the portrait currently resides, he states that the portrait has been in storage since before 1986. This situation once again reflects bad art-historical practices that need to be addressed not only by the Department but also by the University.

¹¹ The etymology of Boer is “countryman, peasant and farmer”, and the word means “[a] Dutch-speaking colonist in South Africa, especially one engaged in agriculture or cattle-farming ... an Afrikaner” (Boer [sa]). According to the Oxford Dictionary (Boer [sa]), “[t]he Boers’ present-day descendants are the Afrikaners.”

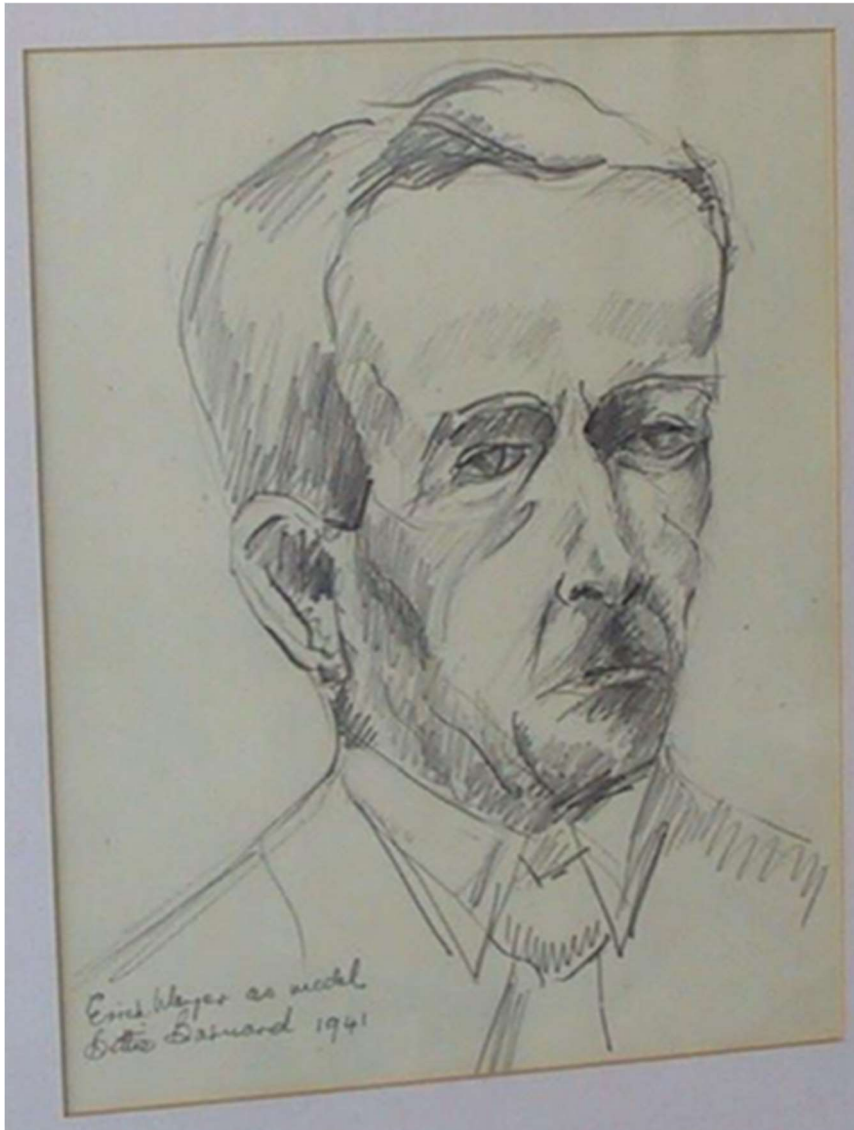


Figure 19: Bettie Cilliers-Barnard, *Erich Mayer as model*, 1941. Pencil, 23 cm x 30 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

Mayer couple settled in Pretoria in 1931, and after they divorced in 1939 he mainly stayed in the capital city until his death on 10 August 1960 (Pretorius & Mayer 2000:9).

4.3.1 Portraying Afrikaner South Africans

The creation of artworks of Afrikaner men, women and children was a significant part of establishing and engaging with the discourse of Afrikaner nation-building

from the 1920s to the 1940s.¹² Viewers of artworks of Afrikaners were encouraged to identify “with the Voortrekkers in order to reinforce at every level notions of the legitimacy of the Afrikaner people” (Freschi 2011:13).¹³ In art and literature, the Voortrekkers were depicted as suffering heroes of the Great Trek and later of the South African War (Freschi 2011:13).¹⁴ According to Magubane (2004:125), from an English perspective, the Boer men and women were represented as suffering under the oppression of the British Empire. She observes that the Dutch – the dominant ancestral group of the Boer – were seen by the British as racially Other and not a part of the white race. Magubane (2004:139) states that “the English reserved the right to render the Dutch more white or less white, depending upon the circumstances. When the Dutch were kind, progressive, or enterprising they were ‘white’;¹⁵ when they were mean, backward, or retrograde they were ‘black’”.

Afrikaner men, women and children were conventionally portrayed in realistic representations by those artists who aligned with the Afrikaner nationalist style in art (see 4.3.2). The people depicted were recognisable, and deliberately inspiring, social types displaying characteristics advocated by the Union government and the National Party’s apartheid government. Afrikaner men were depicted as heroes (in the act of performing heroic deeds),¹⁶ leaders¹⁷ and divine subjects (Harmsen *et al.* 1985:22). The women were shown to be pious, virtuous, proud, strong, courageous, humble, passive, nurturing and protective of their

¹² The Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations) were the “cultural brokers and image-makers” responsible for determining and regulating the representation of Afrikaans South Africans (Delmont 2001:6).

¹³ The Voortrekkers were “[a]ny of [the] numerous Dutch-speaking emigrants who moved from the Cape Colony into the interior of southern Africa during the 19th century” (Voortrekker [sa]).

¹⁴ These two important events helped give rise to Afrikaner nationalism in the 1920s (Suzman 1999:30). Many British citizens condemned the South African War and stated that the British government had committed a great crime in using force against a weaker state (Magubane 2004:126).

¹⁵ The assimilation of the Boers into the white race was necessary for their obtaining citizenship in South Africa (Magubane 2004:125).

¹⁶ Examples include works by artists such as Mayer and WH Coetzer.

¹⁷ Coert Steynberg’s statues of Afrikaner leaders such as General Louis Botha (1946) and Marthinus and Andries Pretorius (1945), and Anton Van Wouw’s statues of President MW Pretorius (1905), General CR de Wet (1926), General Koos de la Rey (1926) and President MT Steyn (1938), are good examples (Anton van Wouw (1862–1945) [sa]).

children, according to the *volksmoeder* (translated as Afrikaner mother) ideology (Van der Watt 1998:93),¹⁸ while the children were obedient and disciplined – they were ‘seen and not heard’.¹⁹ These traits were favoured by the Afrikaner volk, and as such their depictions carried ideological messages the Afrikaner viewer was encouraged to agree with (Van der Westhuysen 1959:92).

Liese van der Watt (1998:95) observes that the Voortrekker Monument’s marble and tapestry friezes visualise the frontier history of Afrikaner men, women and children working together as a unified pioneer family. Federico Freschi (2011:17) refers to this type of imagery as “the blood-and-soil imagery of the Great Trek”. In these images men and women have both “mutually supportive” yet different roles (Van der Watt 1998:95). The Afrikaner women’s roles are to care for the children, the sick and the weak, while the men are represented in authoritative roles such as leading family devotions and exploring and travelling the South African landscape (Van der Watt 1998:97).²⁰ Van der Watt (1998:96) notes the message conveyed by the imaging of the unified Afrikaner family: “[s]hrewdly, an image of the unified Voortrekker family was emphasised to deliver a message which rang truer than ever in the victorious, but foreboding early years of National Party rule: if the family, as microcosm of the Afrikaner *Volk* is strong and unified, then the *Volk* cannot be shaken”. The familial trope²¹ in representations of Afrikaners was very important in the beginning of the twentieth century for the cultural brokers of Afrikanerdom, because the Afrikaner family unit was synonymous with the Afrikaner nation,²² and it was authoritative during social activities and religious practices (Delmont 2001:5).

¹⁸ Good examples of this image are the Anton van Wouw sculpture, *Mother and children* (1939), at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, and the *National Women’s Memorial* (1913) in Bloemfontein (Fransen 1982:326).

¹⁹ Artists include Anton Van Wouw (1862–1945) (specifically the Voortrekker Monument’s frieze), WH Coetzer and Frans Oerder (1867–1944).

²⁰ Käthe Kollwitz and Ernst Barlach (both German artists) interrogated the heroic figure or the female-type during times of war or during the evolving identity of a group of people (especially the working class, poor and oppressed) (Figura 2011).

²¹ The familial trope was used to “naturalize national connections” (Delmont 2001:14). This trope also legitimised the notions of the ‘subordinate’ races as dependents of the family (Delmont 2001:20).

²² The whole nation was propagated as a family and as standing together (Delmont 2001:14).

The Afrikaner people were also often depicted in historical roles and scenes, such as the Voortrekkers, settlers and forefathers (especially in artworks by WH Coetzer (1900–1983) (Van Eeden 2008:184). As Berger (2008:11) states, art representing the invented or imagined past has the potential to justify the social, political and cultural role of the ruling classes. In the depictions of Afrikaners, the setting was often nature, because both the Afrikaner people and their association with nature were considered to be divine and pre-ordained (Coetzee 1992:24). Elizabeth Delmont (2001:14-15) concurs that “the Afrikaner was interpellated as subject in terms of a mythical and naturalized connection to the land”, and nature was the sacred sphere where Afrikaners could achieve spiritual growth.

4.3.2 Nationalist art

The interests that were important for the Afrikaner volk were religion, language, nationalism²³ and the identification and empathy with the environment and nature. This idea rested on the assumption that nature ‘belonged’ to the volk (Basson 2003:10). Hence, Afrikaner nationalist art is based on establishing and maintaining these interests, as well as encouraging artists who were Christian, Afrikaans and/or patriotic and who created artworks that depicted the Afrikaner environment and people, and the South African landscape²⁴ (Basson 2003:14). Examples of these artists include JEA Volschenk (1853–1936), WH Coetzer (1900–1983), JH Pierneef (1886–1957), E Roworth (1880–1964), PH Naudé (1868–1941), WG Wiles (1875–1966), MJ de Jongh (1885–1942), to name a few (Harmsen *et al.* 1985:202).

For Mayer, a national art identity should demonstrate either the love an artist has for humanity and the environment, or of the country and volk an artist belongs to (Basson 2003:40). He further believed that nationalist art is necessary for the existence of a volk’s culture, because art is the visual interpretation and

²³ Mark Suzman (1999:1) defines nationalism as “a political ideology insisting that the ‘state’ be controlled by the ‘nation’ ... [t]he *nation*, in this conception, is a politically mobilised ethnic group seeking to secure state power”. From the 1920s to the 1940s Afrikaner nationalism was strongly promoted in all forms of South African (visual) culture.

²⁴ According to Delmont (2001:17), “the favoured landscape type in the early twentieth-century” was the panoramic, empty landscape.

representation of their soul, character, identity and culture (Basson 2003:40).²⁵ Mayer argued that nationalist art is established and confirmed when it is compared with and opposed to the art of other ethnic groups. As the Oxford English Dictionary definition of nationalism confirms, the character and interests are determined in relation to and to the exclusion of other characters and interests (Nationalism 2015). In other words, that which makes ethnic groups different is what makes a specific group unique and, in the Afrikaner's case, special.

Berman (1983:13) argues that during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the period in which Mayer created his artworks, many white South African artists explored and depicted the South African landscape and its peoples. According to Alexander (1962:47), it is not so much motif, such as landscapes and peoples that gives art its national character, but rather visual form and the particular conventions of depiction. Berman (1983:3) confirms that “[b]efore valid, creative South African art could be produced it was necessary that artists find conventions for translating the distinctive character of this environment”. Delmont (2001:14) identifies the accepted genres of art in South Africa in the early twentieth century as landscapes, still lifes and portraits.

Mayer encouraged Afrikaner artists to look to the volk and the landscape for their inspirations and subjects. Historical themes that emerged from the desire to depict South Africa's history and landscape in art included the settlement of the country, the landscape, the saga (blood, sweat and tears) of the Great Trek, the heroic deeds of the South African War and the valorisation of Afrikaner heroes (Alexander 1962:38). Another theme of Afrikaner national art was the reconstruction of historical scenes in which the protagonists were heroically, realistically, expressively and symbolically portrayed (Harmsen *et al.* 1985:22). The imagined past made visible by artists such as Mayer, Pierneef and Coetzer gave the Union state legitimacy as a people with a past, heritage and future (Freschi 2011:15). Artists such as Mayer used the focus on the historical, and

²⁵ This statement is affirmed by Hall's (1997) later observation of the close link between representation, culture and meaning, as discussed in Chapter Two.



Figure 20: Erich Mayer, *Ds HS Bosman*, 1930. Ink, 16.8 cm x 11.7 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

especially cultural history, as the basis for the creation of Afrikaner identity (Basson 2003:36). In *Ds HS Bosman* (Figure 20), the minister of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk and an advocator for Christian National Schools, Reverend HS Bosman is portrayed (Hermanus Stephanus Bosman [sa]). Mayer likely chose to depict Bosman because of his culturally significant role in the creation and maintenance of the Afrikaner volk.

Alexander (1962:13) states that defining the character of an artistic period's style is easier than defining the character of a national style. According to Harmsen *et*

al. (1985:202), the Afrikaner nationalist style is based on a classical style: “simple, harmonious, well-proportioned, and finished, in accordance with established forms”. Erich Mayer’s style was acceptable to the Union government in the early decades of the twentieth century. This style was “figurative, conservative in style, and self-consciously aware of its cultural importance”, and constituted the canonical basis of what was considered to be ‘good’ art in the early and mid-twentieth century (Freschi 2011:13). Hamsen *et al.* (1985:203) assert that classical art is frequently “austere and devoid of overt emotional expression”, although the emotion is implied in the subject matter, such as historical themes, not the execution of the artwork.

Nationalistic art in South Africa developed from Realism (Harmsen *et al.* 1985:203). According to Alexander (1962:16), the scientist and the realistic painter are both interested in the factual, but “both have to detect an order” essential to reality. In other words, they describe the physical as well as the metaphysical.²⁶ Alexander (1962:14) observes that some artists in South Africa – usually those who belong to an older generation – only considered representational art as true art. He states that, for these artists:

[T]he purpose of painting is to give pleasure to the beholder by describing the beauty we find in nature in harmoniously balanced colours and forms. According to them, non-figurative art represents nothing and is justified only as decorative ornamentation and this they regard as art of a very minor kind. To them, all non-figurative pictures are nothing but decadent sensationalism (Alexander 1962:14).

Realistic, naturalistic or representational art was also favoured for its ability to convey the artworks’ messages to Afrikaners, who could understand and admire it, but were not familiar with the concepts and peculiarities of art in general (Van der Westhuysen 1959:92). Harmsen *et al.* (1985:199) state that depicting Afrikaners and their country realistically furthered the belief that the representations are based on reality and objective truth. Realistic representations led the lay Afrikaner, with limited experience of art, to believe in their Afrikaner

²⁶ Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that, among other topics, studies “being *qua* being”. In other words, a study concerned with being or “beings – of things that can be said to be” (Aristotle’s Metaphysics 2012).

volk as heroes, leaders and divine subjects. If viewers immediately recognised the depicted reality, then they would become involved in the world as it was propagated by Nationalists (Harmsen *et al.* 1985:204). Representational art made it possible for all Afrikaners to accept both the overt and ideological messages of the artworks, and develop a consciousness of and interest in art that furthered the nationalist agenda. Harmsen *et al.* (1985:199) argue, however, that realist artists aim to exactly present their world with a sense of detachment and objectivity – an approach that Mayer certainly did not take.

Depictions of Afrikaner life created the image of a heroic Afrikaner history with details of their everyday rural lives, ranging from their dress to regular activities (Freschi 2011:9, 11, 24). In other words, the inspiration for and subject of artworks in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were Afrikaner reference points (Freschi 2011:19). Maggie (Maria Magdalena) Laubser (1886–1973) is an example of a South African artist who portrayed the rural identity of South African people in her artworks. Delmont (2001:7, emphasis added) describes the world she creates in her artworks as “a timeless, dehistoricized *pastoral* idyll concretizing stable and harmonious feudal relations ... where work is not presented as being determined by social and economic relations, but rather as *an heroic activity* obeying the repetitive cycles of nature”. The rural, pastoral farm stood for the “old order with traditional values” favoured for the creation of an Afrikaans cultural identity (Delmont 2001:10).²⁷ In South Africa in the 1920s and 1930s the farm became synonymous with nature (Delmont 2001:10). In depicting the beauty of nature – or the farm - realistically,²⁸ Afrikaner nationalist artists further believed that their artworks would be grand and ennobling, because they believed God was present within nature and His people, the Afrikaner volk (Coetzee 1992:25). The artists thought of nature and the Afrikaner as a perfect model given by God to inspire and act as subject matter for their artworks (Harmsen *et al.* 1985:201).

²⁷ According to Nico Coetzee (1992:23), the Afrikaner had a “sense of being mystically linked to the land”.

²⁸ Van Eeden (2008:181) observes that “realistic art was concerned with the idealisation of nature and a heroic ideal” in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Van Eeden (2008:183) argues that when talking about a unique art style “during the 1930s ... ‘South African/Afrikaans’ art often used terms such as ‘national art identity’, folk art and Afrikaner art interchangeably” and that the unique art style in South Africa included aspects that were “believed to be characteristically South African” (i.e., the land and its people).²⁹ However, she observes that some critics in the 1930s believed that South African nationalist art should be a representation of the soul of the South African, and that the essential features of Afrikaner art is tragic, “sober, reflective and melancholic” (Van Eeden 2008:185). Thus, South African national art was a realistic, sober, but also emotive, thoughtful and melancholic representation of the South African landscape, peoples (especially the Afrikaner man, woman and child) and soul and was made by artists who were themselves considered to be ‘true Afrikaners’.

4.3.3 Mayer as artist

Erich Mayer was a figurative, conservative artist favoured by the Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (South African Academy of Science and Art) and the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations), because his art was in line with the conservative traditions of the recognised canon of Afrikaner nationalist art (Freschi 2011:13, 15). In 1944, he received a Medal of Honour for Painting from the South African Academy of Science and Art for his extensive body of work and focus on the depiction and documentation of the Afrikaner landscape, the rural Afrikaner lifestyle and its people³⁰ (Pretorius & Mayer 2000:9). In *Namakwalandse Boer* (1921) (Figure 21) the landscape is visible in the background, but as this study focuses on the portrait, the Afrikaner lifestyle and people are discussed. Owing to the particular perspective used in this painting, the sitter appears larger and more important than his environment. He appears simultaneously pensive and autonomous.

²⁹ Echoing Alexander (1962:38) and Delmont (2001:14), Van Eeden (2008:184) maintains that although “a ‘national imagery’” was never made clear, “typical motifs included flowers, animals, the San people, historical themes and the landscape”.

³⁰ From looking at Mayer’s *oeuvre*, it seems that he preferred creating portraits and, specifically, documenting the Boer.



Figure 21: Erich Mayer, *Namakwalandse boer*, 1921. Watercolour and ink, 20.25 cm x 10.45 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

The inspiration for and subjects of Mayer's artworks adhere to Afrikaner nationalist art's focus on Afrikaner reference points (Freschi 2011:19) – the landscape and farm, the farmer,³¹ the soldier and wildlife. Mayer chose to depict the daily activities and emotions of the people around him – he created pencil

³¹ Berman (1983:279) observes that Mayer's drawings and paintings of farmers are not only men that were in his battalions or with him in exile, but also the men and women living on the farms in South Africa. He would sketch, draw and paint the inhabitants when his division passed their homesteads.

and charcoal sketches and drawings³² and watercolour and oil paintings while living in the Boer commandoes as a prisoner of war on St Helena island and in Pietermaritzburg, and as a South African citizen (Pretorius & Mayer 2000:6).³³ According to HM van der Westhuysen (1959:91), Mayer knew the Boer-type very well and was an expert in “Boerestudies” – translated as Boer studies. *Boer* (Figure 22) is a drawing of a Boer, and an example of the people Mayer observed while travelling around and staying at Boer commandoes.

Among the Mayer artworks in the UP Art Collection, a seated figure with a hat and beard seems to represent the archetypal Boer man. The walking cane is also a frequent occurrence in Mayer’s drawings and paintings (as seen in Figure 22). Figure 22 is an example of a drawing Mayer would have traded for provisions. Mayer preferred to portray the Afrikaner people and their identifications, self-understandings and social locations, commonality, connectedness and groupness, rather than the brutality and ugliness of the wars, because, as Harmsen *et al.* (1985:203) state, nationalist art in South Africa was considered to have a moral function to improve the world. Pretorius and Mayer (2000:6) affirm that Mayer’s portraits³⁴ are also more than mere likenesses, revealing the emotional and inner state of the people – whether at home, at war or in exile.

Alexander (1962:38) sees Mayer as a sincere and modest artist who truthfully recorded what he saw around him. Furthermore, Mayer did not depict or portray the curious customs of a distant people for the purpose of displaying ethnographic images. He considered himself to be a part of the Afrikaner volk whom he portrayed through the simplistic lines of his sketches, drawings and paintings (Alexander 1962:38). It could be suggested that by studying the Boer so intensely

³² The sketches and drawings were primarily created from life, and were later reworked into paintings.

³³ Instead of keeping or selling his artworks, he donated the portraits to the sitters, or, during his time in the Boer commandoes and in captivity on St Helena and in Pietermaritzburg, he exchanged them for coffee, sugar and similar products (Pretorius & Mayer 2000:13).

³⁴ Schoonraad (1990:14) notes that Mayer was schooled in portraiture by Annigoni and Prof Chini during his visits to Florence from 1935 to 1936.

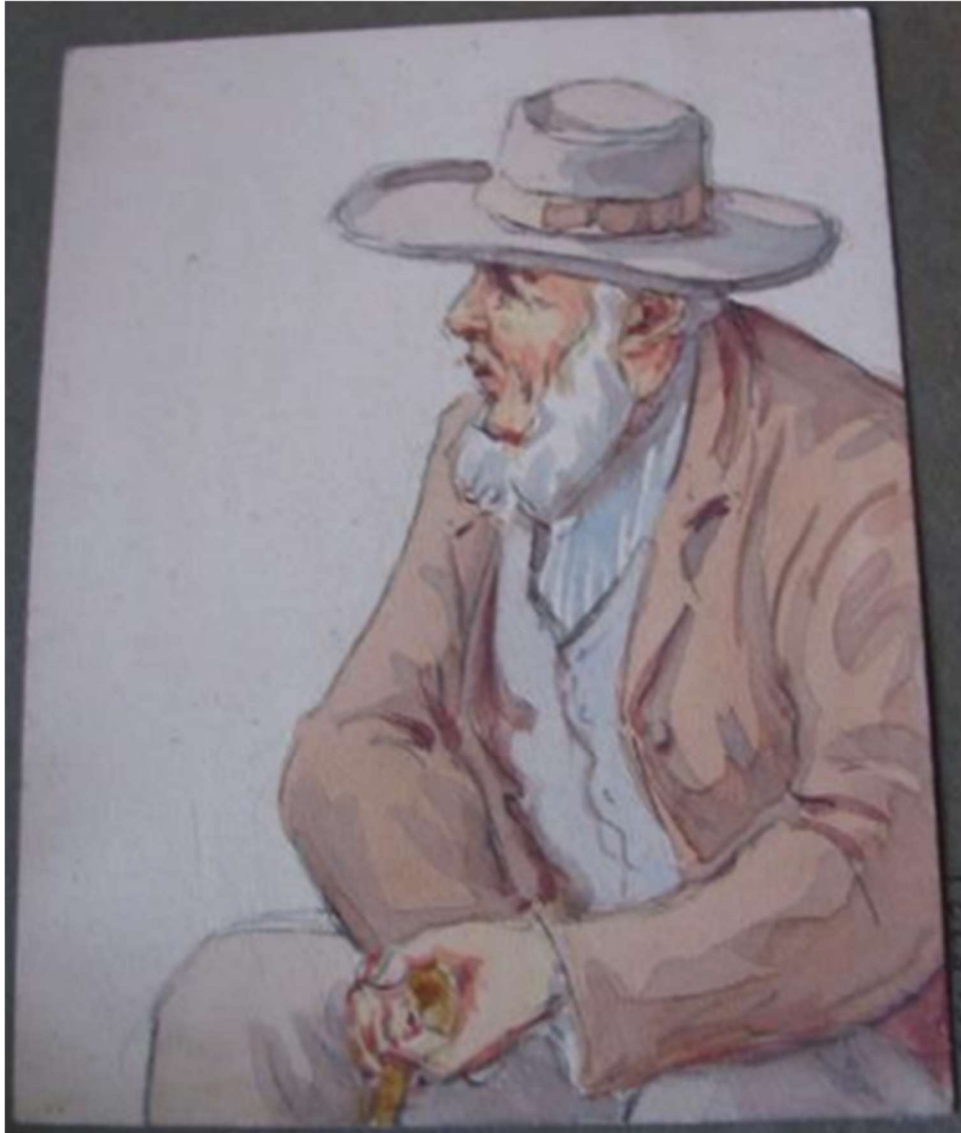


Figure 22: Erich Mayer, *Boer*, 1936. Watercolour, 11.5 cm x 8.9 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

and throughout his career, he wanted to gain knowledge about how to be a part of the volk.

Pretorius and Mayer (2000:6) note that most of Mayer's artworks are small in size because of his tendency to carry them around and make sketches and drawings in his sketch book. They observe that even the ones that were later transformed into paintings are no bigger than 20 x 25 cm. Van der Westhuysen (1959:91) contends that it was always Mayer's intention to convert all his sketches and drawings into paintings in his studio, but that he never managed to achieve this. It is also evident that paper was scarce, because it is common to find more than



Figure 23: Erich Mayer, *Boerestudie*, 1920. Ink, 12 cm x 8.9 cm. UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

one drawing on a page. *Boerestudie* (Figure 23), for example, shows this tendency.

According to Pretorius and Mayer (2000:9), the Afrikaner people loved Mayer for his decision to join the volk and his devotion to the Afrikaners and their country. Van der Westhuysen (1959:92, translation from Afrikaans by Le Roux) dedicates the following message to Mayer:

In the history of our art he has an inalienable place as pioneer; that is why we keep him in our thoughts, and pay tribute to him as someone

from far away who chose to dedicate his life to South Africa and identify with this country, volk and cultural life.³⁵

Mayer's artworks can be seen as visual resources and evidence because he described and recorded his visual experiences. Mayer was a visual reporter of the Afrikaner communities, their farms, labour, utensils, dress, environments, habits and customs, as well as the Boer types (Basson 2003:232). He was capturing and preserving the changing and disappearing Boer and volk. Eunice Basson (2003:234) states that Mayer was also more than an artist; he was a researcher, documenter and enthusiast of the volk he depicted.³⁶ His intention was to create a national consciousness of the beauty and uniqueness of the Afrikaner volk and landscape.

Basson (2003:234) argues that the dominant recurring theme in Mayer's work is the creation and establishment of a unique art-identity for South Africa. Van Eeden (2008:184) concurs that Mayer was "concerned with establishing an aesthetic consciousness and a (Afrikaans) 'national art identity' in the early decades of the twentieth century". His artistic style reflected what he advocated. He worked in a representational tradition – as was popular at the time (Berman 1983:280). Murray Schoonraad (1990:19) describes Mayer's artworks as having a strong composition and showing a good understanding of colour, even if he used a soft and subdued palette. As stated previously, he sketched, drew and painted with simplistic lines that are most visible in his portraits of Afrikaner men, women and children. *Boer* (Figure 24)³⁷ exemplifies the strong composition, soft and subdued palette, and simplistic lines that were evident in Mayer's entire oeuvre. Basson (2003:234) describes Mayer's style as intimate and modest, articulating the supposedly calm and 'mystical' quality of the people, the veld and wildlife. From looking at Mayer's artworks in the UP Art Collection, it is noticeable

³⁵ The original text is: "In die geskiedenis van ons kuns het hy 'n onvervreembare plek as pionier; daarom hou ons hom in ons gedagtes, en daarvoor bring ons hulde aan hom as iemand van veraf wat self gekies het om sy lewe aan Suid-Afrika te wy en om hom met hierdie land, volk and kultuurlewe vir goed te vereenselwig."

³⁶ Mayer can be regarded as a visual cultural historian.

³⁷ In many of Mayer's artworks of the Boer, the sitter is smoking a pipe – it seems to have been a common pastime.

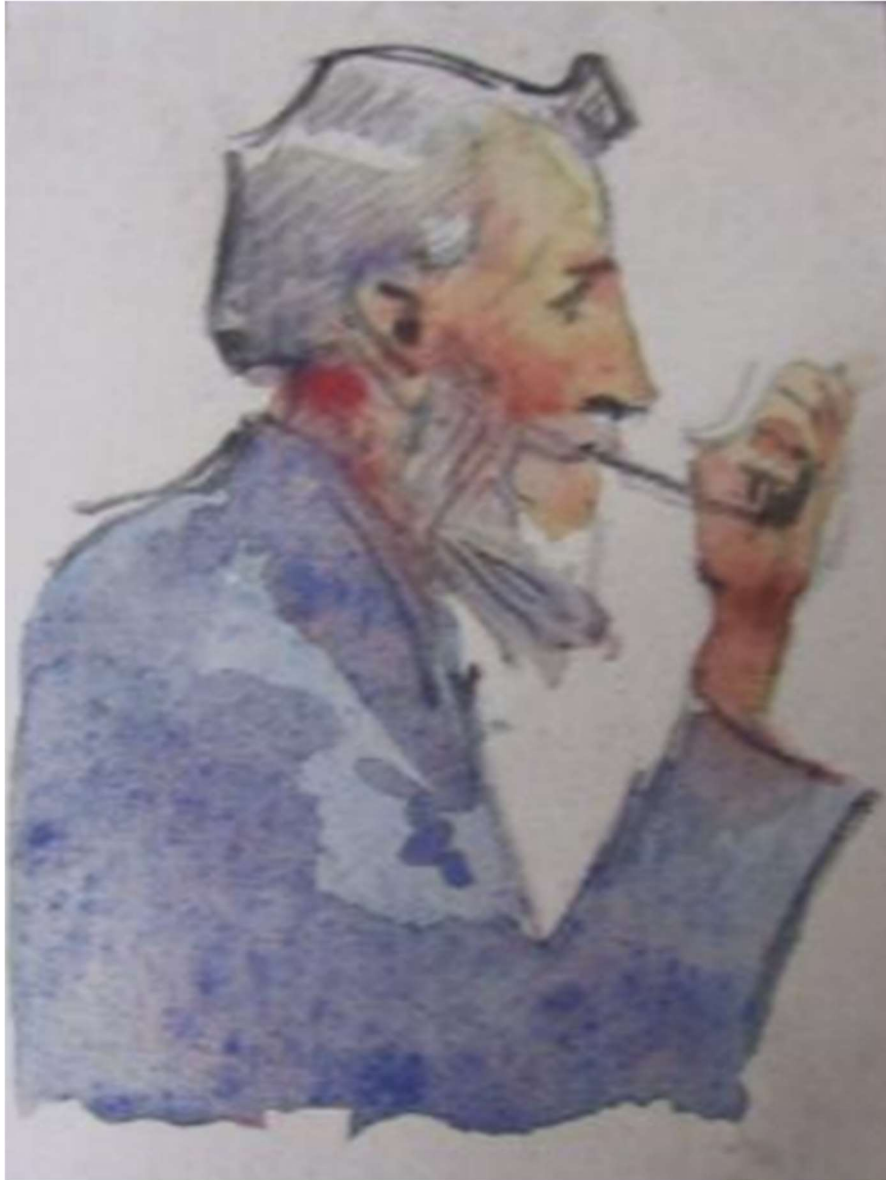


Figure 24: Erich Mayer, *Boer*, 1936. Ink, 5.9 cm x 4.6 cm.
UP Art Collection, Pretoria. (De Kamper 2014).

that very few of the sitters in the portraits or the figures in his “Boerestudies” look directly at the viewer. It appears as if the sitter is unaware of Mayer observing them; they are portrayed as un-posed and preoccupied with mundane activities.

During his entire career living among his chosen nation, he studied and perfected his Boer-types. He obtained remarkable insight into the volk and it was his desire to portray the people and the customs and traditions of his chosen nation (Schoonraad 1990:5). In summary, the Boer-type constructed by Mayer is the

passive, gentle³⁸ and pensive sitter occupied with everyday tasks. The Boer-type is a seated, bearded man wearing a hat, holding his cane and smoking a pipe. The type is either a farmer, Boer soldier or Boer exile: some form of survivor.

4.4 University of Pretoria identity and culture

As part of attempts to create an Afrikaner culture and identity under nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s, the schools and universities of the Union, Pact government and the National Party Government (at the end of the 1930s) were given a pronounced Afrikaans character (Freschi 2011:21).³⁹ As stated previously, UP was nicknamed the “Voortrekker” University. With the change institutions underwent during the late 1980s and the 1990s, there were concerns about the inherited visual images and objects from the past that had “possible pejorative meanings” (Schmahmann 2013:12). One of these concerns was that the artworks would encroach upon the dignity and standing of ethnic groups. Schmahmann (2013:14) states that universities experience difficulties in classifying and categorising artworks from or of the past, because they are sources of contestation. She goes on to say that “some artworks acquired by universities during their early histories may fall within the rubric of general collections managed by archivists rather than curators” (Schmahmann 2013:14), of which Mayer’s works is most certainly an example.

Mayer stated that a national art is necessary for the existence of a volk’s culture, because art is, to him at least, the visual interpretation and representation of the soul, character, identity and culture of a volk (Basson 2003:40). If viewed through a particular lens, the institutional art of UP is a representation of the soul, character, identity and culture of the University. Artworks of earlier periods are the interpretation and representation of the University’s past and histories. However, Schmahmann (2013:11) encourages institutions to change the reading and discourses of artworks in their collections.⁴⁰ If the University of Pretoria were

³⁸ Passive and gentle because he did not depict the brutalities of war.

³⁹ Giliomee (2014:300) refers to this as the institutionalisation of Afrikaner nationalism.

⁴⁰ UP’s Strategic Plan – 2025 states that the University aims to recognise its early beginnings and strengthen existing diversity.

able to achieve this, then Mayer's artworks could change from being visual evidence of differences, to a visual database for students. The artworks could become a visual archive of past customs, traditions, dress and characteristics. They also have the potential to become commemorative images, which is one of the main purposes of portraiture (Schmahmann 2013:15).

Schmahmann (2013:15) argues that in a postmodern era, and from Hall's (1997) representational perspective, artworks' meanings are relative to the viewer and the context and time in which they are studied and exhibited. In other words, the artist and his or her intention is also relative and carries less weight in the examination of his or her artworks than the observer or viewer. When the meanings of artworks are relative, the artworks become a "locus of contestation" (Schmahmann 2013:15), open to a tradition of questioning, challenging and debating discourses associated with artworks. In an institution with a diverse student body and faculty, and diverse visitors, such as UP, the artworks, owing to their differing political, cultural, social and religious meanings, have the potential to maintain and strengthen inequalities of race, gender and class. This is especially likely if the histories of the artworks, and particularly the portraits, are not reinterpreted and rehabilitated in order to change the negative, ethnographic assumptions ascribed to them by academic discourses.⁴¹ Schmahmann (2013:16, 205) states that "it seems important that art and imagery inherited only as the unfortunate and embarrassing outcome of unhealthy alliances and allegiances of the past" should be re-evaluated, because the images have the potential to offend or harm people who were previously discriminated against by the old administration if they are not given new and alternative meanings.⁴²

⁴¹ These discourses include *Volkekunde*, artistic styles and characteristics, such as Afrikaner nationalistic art, and political agendas, such as apartheid.

⁴² For example, the current Strategic Plan of UP addresses social justice and academic freedom in one of its values: "We cherish: academic freedom, creative and innovative thought, ethical standards and integrity, accountability and social justice".

When dealing with artworks at an institution that are contested and opposed by different viewers, it is important to remember not to react emotionally or harshly.⁴³ For the University of Pretoria, in an educational environment, the artworks have the potential to open up new avenues of serious informed discussion and deliberation among diverse viewers, provided the participants are aware that the discussion aims to achieve new understanding and acknowledgment of different opinions and interpretations.⁴⁴ Schmahmann (2013:25) argues that when artworks with controversial histories, such as Mayer's, are exhibited, they may encourage "critically informed discussion". The artworks should not merely be dismissed as racially, socially or culturally biased, or as encouraging certain ideologies and loyalties. As described in Chapter Three, Schmahmann (2013:25) argues that "exposing an institution's past via images and objects ... is more likely to develop viewer's commitment to justice and equal opportunity than hiding the works away". The artworks can reveal how much each group has changed and evolved over time. The artworks in the UP Art Collection form part of the University's heritage and require reflection and courtesy. Continuous research ought to be done on the artworks of the past in line with the research-intensive identity the University is striving for.

Schmahmann (2013:27) also notes that "[r]ather than removing images associated with colonialism, imperialism, Afrikaner nationalism or apartheid, organisers of public imagery have tended to place alternative new icons in their vicinity". This tendency encourages critically informed discussion, and improves understanding, acceptance and appreciation of artworks associated with earlier ideologies. Schmahmann (2013:60) also believes that creative reinvention of the exhibition of and debate about the artworks creates "meaningful statements about the present".⁴⁵ The interlocutors are deemed as 'forward thinkers',

⁴³ The history needs to be accounted for and not 'swept under the rug', but the interaction with artworks of the past ought to be open-minded and accepting.

⁴⁴ The University aims to enrich its intellectual environment and improve graduate outcomes by embracing diversity (Strategic Plan – 2025 [sa]).

⁴⁵ With regard to the UCT Rhodes statue that was removed from the main campus, a columnist for *Business Day*, Chris Thurman (2015), made an interesting statement: "Instead of approaching the statue as a static monument with a fixed meaning that must either be endorsed or condemned, why not commission an artist or group of artists to propose a creative response?"

accepting, respectful and sensible – some of the characteristics of the University of Pretoria’s identity and culture. One of the values of the University is that “differing perspectives, arising from diverse backgrounds and histories that define our identities, deepen scholarly inquiry and enrich academic debate” (Strategic Plan 2011:5).

However, because UP has an identity and culture of multicultural, diverse inclusion and participation, the different understandings and renderings of, and attitudes towards history, attract competing thoughts, feelings and associations (Schmahmann 2013:28). The University has to be mindful of viewers and welcome cultural diversity, but should also inform and negotiate with opposing stakeholders in order to achieve its core strategies.⁴⁶ Schmahmann (2013:211) argues that narrow understandings of art threaten free speech and cultural association. She calls for a process of encouraging different points of view as a means towards the reinvention and “rehabilitation” of artworks from earlier decades (Schmahmann 2013:106). When artworks are ‘looked at again’, they reveal and question “devices used to construct history” and notions of identity (Schmahmann 2013:193).

Just as institutional identity can be altered, a university’s culture is created, recreated and sustained by meaningful symbols, artefacts, images and objects (Schmahmann 2013:176). The reinvented and rehabilitated artworks are one such meaningful entity. Berger (2008:33) finds that people who are able to engage and work with the past, including the art of the past, are able to situate themselves in history. He continues that viewers who are able to deal with art of the past are capable of being active agents in understanding and rehabilitating history.⁴⁷

The statue of Rhodes could be modified, or incorporated into a larger work, making it part of a continuing dialogue rather than a monumental monologue”.

⁴⁶ According to the University’s Strategic Plan – 2025, the “staff and students are the University’s core human capital asset”.

⁴⁷ I believe Berger implied respectful and open-minded approaches.

Berger (2008:32) states that artworks from the past are useful and viewers with questionable ideological positions should not look at them nostalgically. Viewers of artworks are encouraged to try not to understand art spontaneously, but to obtain knowledge about the history, context and time of the artworks. It would appear that an iconological approach is required in the study and possible transformation of the discourse around the contentious Mayer artworks. The University's values also advocate inquiry-led and evidence-based approaches to generating knowledge (Strategic Plan 2011:5). When viewers merely react to artworks with incomplete knowledge and understanding, they are overlooking significant aspects of its meaning.⁴⁸ UP strives to encourage stakeholders (i.e., its community) to participate in creating and sustaining the potential diversity of people, knowledge, skills and research (Strategic Plan – 2025 [sa]).⁴⁹

4.5 Conclusion

In order to relate the creation of official portraits at the University to a tradition of immortalising figures with the intention of inspiring and motivating viewers, the portraits of Afrikaner public figures were discussed. Magubane (2004:2) states that “racial difference functions as a negative pole against which to construct an identity by way of contrast”. The depiction of the Afrikaner, in relation to Europeans, has no doubt aided the visual construction of a particular Afrikaner identity. As I have argued, the identities of the different sitters, are portrayed in the artworks of Afrikaner figures and by Mayer.

Mayer's artworks are more than mere detached observation, but neither is it completely subjective involvement. The people portrayed in his artworks are types with an indication of identity, and are discovered through empathy and respect. Mayer identify with his sitters and are aware of the specific, mundane, and often difficult, routines of everyday life. He was aware of the documentary

⁴⁸ In the same way as the goal of nationalist art was to communicate immediately the intended and hidden messages to 'lay' viewers who had little to no knowledge and experience in viewing art, the artworks owned by a university such as UP communicate messages that are often no longer relevant or acceptable. It is then, once again, important to exhibit artworks and encourage respectful and composed negotiation with these images.

⁴⁹ The vision of the University includes an aim for “developing people”.

value of his art, and was sensitive to the social and artistic conventions attached to portraying individuals of the different ethnic groups. He wished to achieve a specific mood or indication of his sitters' dominant characteristics, "rather than to record the particularities of their physiognomy" (Schmahmann 2013:160) and favoured figurative over non-figurative subjects (Freschi 2011:17).

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate that, like the portraits discussed in Chapter Three, the portraits of Afrikaner figures and Mayer's portraits did not only function to portray mimetic likenesses. For, as West (2004:24) states, and as I have argued previously, portraiture has a dualistic characteristic – the sitter is represented through likeness and type. Together with likeness, the portrait also emphasises "the typical, conventional, or ideal aspects" of the sitter (West 2004:29). West (2004:24) quotes Panofsky's statement that portraiture aims at communicating two fundamental things: "whatever it is in which the sitter differs from the rest of humanity...[and] whatever the sitter has in common with the rest of humanity" (West 2004:24). According to West (2004:25), portraits reveal more than just the likeness of the sitter; they also demonstrate their social position through poses and props, for example Mayer's characteristic Boer hat, beard, cane and pipe. The likeness and the type in a portrait, thus, comment not only on the identity of the sitter but also on the identity of a larger group (West 2004:29).

It is my contention that, despite their controversial status, the portraits of Afrikaner figures and by Mayer ought to be renegotiated for academic, preservation, social and historical reasons. Identity and culture is never static, and as such, if the contentious identities and cultures portrayed in these artworks were rehabilitated and renegotiated to come to new understandings, they may have the potential to change and influence the University's current identity and culture. This practice might prevent an incident similar to UCT's Rhodes statue protests, where emotions override reason.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The study set out to explore and explain whether and in what ways the implicit messages of the selected portraits in the UP Art Collection support or negate the University of Pretoria's institutional culture and identity. The aim was to establish whether portraits owned by the Institution are visual representations of the identity and culture the University establishes, maintains and communicates. It concludes with a summary of chapters, the study's contribution in terms of the explicit and implicit messages embedded in the selected portraits, as well as the limitations of the study and possible avenues for further research.

5.1 Summary of chapters

Chapter One introduced the background and aims of the study, describing the initial difficulty in getting access to information regarding the portraits in the UP Art Collection. Thereafter, the portraits were divided into categories in order to explore what they reveal about UP's institutional identity and culture, and how they do this. This chapter also introduced the literature relevant to the study. It was evident that this literature could be separated into two categories – literature on portraiture and literature on institutional identity and culture – which were discussed separately. Furthermore, the chapter included explanations of the theoretical framework and combination of methodologies that were used to conduct the study, and concluded with an overview of the chapters.

Chapter Two established the history, purposes and importance of portraiture during various time periods. I argued that portraits are representations that produce, carry, circulate, communicate, stand for or represent meanings, concepts, ideas and feelings – whether about the represented sitter, the artist, or the commissioning body – in a shared culture. Besides portraits being representations, the social types and stereotypes they depict are also representations. The representation of types in portraiture, through iconographical signs, aids the communicative aspects of portraits. Chapter Two

also discussed social types and stereotypes. From this discussion, it is evident that the official portraits of the University employ the visual codes of social typing. After determining that portraits reveal social types and stereotypes as a means of referring to a specific identity, there was a discussion on the concept of identity, as well as alternative concepts that can be used. The alternative concepts – categorisation and identification; self-understanding and social location; and commonality, connectedness and groupness – are used throughout the study. The chapter concluded with a discussion of institutional identity and culture, focusing on how institutions can deal with images whose legacies are controversial.

Chapter Three investigated a selection of the formal, official portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures of the University of Pretoria in the UP Art Collection. To begin with, the chapter provided a brief history of UP, after which it was established that the Institution memorialises its office-bearers in oil paintings because of a long-held belief that this medium enhances notions of authority, prestige and tradition. Chapter Three discussed four categories of formal, official portraits, and concluded that even though there are fewer portraits of female academics and public figures, and of black academics and public figures, the future diversification of the University will contribute to a change in the preponderance of white, middle-class men currently represented in the Collection. The chapter concluded that the portraits of white, middle-class men as well as the formal, official portraits stand for or represent ideas outside of the frame, such as the aims, goals, values, vision and mission of UP.

Chapter Four was divided into two main sections: a discussion of selected portraits of Afrikaner political and cultural leaders, and examples of the Afrikaner type in the UP Art Collection as depicted in the artworks by Erich Mayer. Mayer's artworks were discussed because they were some of the earliest artworks acquired by the University, while both the Afrikaner leaders' portraits and Mayer's artworks were discussed because of their contentious subject matter and ideologies. Both sections' artworks depicted the social types and specific

identities – the general and the specific – of their selected sitters. The likenesses and the types portrayed by the artists comment not only on the identities of the sitters, but also on the identity of their *volk*. As in Chapter Three, this chapter concluded with the argument that the selected portraits by Jo Roos, JH Pierneef, PA Hendricks and Mayer ought to be renegotiated by stakeholders of the University in order to contribute towards academic, social, cultural and historical safeguarding, as well as Institutional transformation.

5.3 Contributions of study

The study contributes to the analysis of the explicit and implicit messages communicated by and through the portraits in the UP Art Collection. In particular, the research brought to light the relationships between the selected portraits and the desired ‘image’, reputation, culture and identity the Institution strives to maintain and communicate. From the perspective of visual culture studies, it is important to continuously interrogate the power of visual objects to create, establish and communicate explicit and implicit meanings that either confirm or contradict the values, mission, vision and ethos of an institution.

The study also provides alternative approaches to dealing with artworks in an institution’s art collection that have controversial subject matter, histories and discourses. The practice of dealing with artworks that represent contentious ideological positions is necessary for successful and continuous institutional transformation throughout South African higher education. The established and ‘new’ knowledge that will be generated when institutions engage with these types of artworks links with Lis Lange’s (2014:5, emphasis in original) notion of “knowledge *for* transformation”, which refers to “the knowledge that needs to be produced in order to make change possible”.

This dissertation also made information on the selected portraits more readily available – information that was not easily accessible at the outset of this study – and in so doing, brought them some measure of recognition. However, the issues

of cataloguing, collecting, display and storage need to be addressed in further studies. These issues were a challenge and limitation of the study.

5.4 Limitations of study

While the study has provided readings of a selection of portraits in the UP Art Collection, for reasons of economy, not all of the portraits could be discussed and interpreted with regard to what they reveal about UP's institutional identity and culture. Also, for reasons of economy, the dissertation did not include stakeholders' opinions, perceptions or interpretations of the selected artworks, but rather focuses on my own understandings and interpretations. Certain contemporary artworks in the Collection, which could not be included, contain themes that might question topics such as identity, culture, authority, ethnicity, or the genre of portraiture. The selection of artworks reflects my personal bias in favour of two-dimensional portraits.

Easy access to the portraits was also a limitation, because the digitisation of the portraits and their information is, as yet, incomplete.¹ The digitisation of the UP Art Collection might be curated according to genres in a publicly accessible online database, that includes contextualising information such as: empirical data (artist, title, medium and date of creation); how they were acquired by the University; under which policy or ideological project were they acquired; a history of where they have been displayed or stored; and, have they been reappropriated or included in public discussions about their meaning and future at the University.

According to De Kamper (2014), what distinguishes this Collection from other public collections is that its purpose is teaching, training and research, as well as enhancing the University's campus environment. As discussed in Chapter One, my own experience of the Collection, however, is quite different from the purpose to which De Kamper (2014) refers. Conducting research on the portraits in the

¹ The University and the Collection could benefit from sound art historical documentation of the entire UP Art Collection. After realising that the database provided by De Kamper (2015) contained missing and incorrect information, it was difficult to trust this primary resource to conduct my research. It was necessary to question, query and double-check the artworks empirical data and locations.

UP Art Collection was time-consuming, and for this reason, when for the third time it became evident that not all the portraits were in either Group 1 or Group 2, a decision was made to focus on the portraits whose information was more readily available.²

5.5 Suggestions for further study

It is evident from recent incidents such as the protests over the Rhodes statue at UCT and similar events at other tertiary institutions that further study needs to be conducted on how to approach, manage and rehabilitate artworks whose histories and associated discourses are controversial. The collections at South African institutions that were created or initiated under the auspices of (or sanctioned by) powerful and divisive regimes, such as Afrikaner Nationalism, need to be examined for academic, social, cultural and historical preservation. In line with these suggestions, research needs to be conducted on how such a rehabilitation process could work at institutions, and how all stakeholders would have an appropriate part to play in (re)negotiating the role of artworks of the past in a contemporary context. In line with this study, various and random stakeholders at the University could be interviewed or asked to contribute to a survey about their understanding or feelings towards certain artworks.

Based on the limitations of the study, a possible avenue for further study could be how to incorporate artworks that reflect or comment on institutional identity and culture into the contemporary setting of an institution, or how the University of Pretoria in particular could manage, rehabilitate and exhibit artworks with controversial histories, before the Institution faces an incident similar to that which occurred at UCT. Based on this observation, another recommendation is that a future study could investigate the successful rehabilitation of artworks, and whether they are 'accepted' by previously disadvantaged or misrepresented individuals. Further study on the complete histories of the official portraits and the

² Confirmation that not all the portraits were in Group 1 or Group 2 can be found in *OP News*, 14(2), the official newsletter of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria. In the newsletter, Dr June Williams (2015:12) refers to a portrait of Prof JB le Roux, a former head of the department, that can be found in the Department of Anatomy. The portrait was not included in either Group 1 or Group 2 of the documentation received from Gerard de Kamper.

Mayer artworks at the University of Pretoria, and their acceptance or rejection, are also necessary before attempting informed discussions regarding their future at the Institution.

Further studies need to be done on the entire Collection. The Collection and University would benefit from research being compiled in a book that discusses the Collection – even in a broad sense. The researchers and authors of such a book could take inspiration from *Viewpoints: The University of Cape Town and its treasures* (2013), edited by Paul Weinberg, and *Activate/Captivate: Collections re-engagement at Wits Art Museum* (2015), edited by Laura De Becker and Anitra Nettleton. These books discuss the various collections owned by the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand respectively. In a review of *Viewpoints: The University of Cape Town and its treasures* (2013), Kathy Munro (2015) observes that “Universities are custodians and repositories of many fine collections and treasures” and a “university is seen as an enduring institution and likely to survive the fractious divisions of politics and changing tastes or fashions”. The UP Art Collection is a treasure worth discussing in book format, which could include all the artworks in the Collection, reinterpreted despite their contentious histories. Munro (2015) states that “[p]resenting and preserving collections and treasures in a University setting has a mutually beneficial outcome. A collection or a museum brings international acclaim and grows the reputation of the University while the imprimatur and stamp of approval by the Institution on a particular object, that this particular art work [*sic*] is worthy of enduring ownership, gives recognition and status to a collection.”

Further studies could also look at how institutions in other countries with contentious and traumatic histories have dealt with artworks in their collections that represent controversial ideologies. A study in this direction could also research how these institutions recuperated artworks sanctioned by dubious political regimes. Research along these lines can be found in *Über(w)unden: art in troubled times* (2012) edited by L Heidenreich-Seleme and S O'Toole. The

book “investigates how writers, visual artists, theatre practitioners, musicians, filmmakers, choreographers and photographers from sub-Saharan countries, including Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan and Zimbabwe, as well as their counterparts in Germany, have creatively engaged with social traumas” (Heidenreich-Seleme & O’Toole 2012:17).

5.6 Concluding remarks

Conversing with the artworks in the UP Art Collection, which are the representations and signifiers of the Institution’s current and desired identity and culture, could lead to better categorisation and identification, where a stakeholder identifies with the University and its other stakeholders, and experiences a sense of belonging based on categorical characteristics. The discourse generated through interaction with the UP Art Collection could influence stakeholders, aid their self-understanding and give them a better awareness of their social world and how they engage in it. If stakeholders can successfully renegotiate and rehabilitate contentious artworks, they could find a commonality, become connected and experience a “sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group” (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:20). The benefits of these actions for the University include, but are not limited to, receiving national and international recognition and acclaim; attracting investments; attracting world-class researchers; encouraging diversity, multiculturalism and interracial interactions; improving teaching and learning experiences; improving University and campus climate; contributing to stakeholder participation; and aiding social cohesion.

The University of Pretoria could include controversial or contentious artworks in debates, seminars and conferences, where open-minded rigorous academic debate, renegotiation and rehabilitation could occur, in order to develop shared understandings and conceptual maps. Stakeholders who are offended by certain artworks need to be included, so that their opinions and perceived knowledge of the artworks in question may be acknowledged, addressed and perhaps even altered. The University aims for diverse contribution, where (new) knowledge is

generated based on mutual respect and acceptance. In a recent article, *Behind UCT's removed art: The writing on the wall* (2017) Ivor Powell criticised the removal of contentious artworks from the walls of UCT because certain students are offended and hurt by their subject matter, artist, location, or mere inclusion in the Institution's collection. Albie Sachs (2015) proposes an alternative approach to the UCT Rhodes statue: "My proposal, then, is that UCT lay down the principles based on the antiracist values of our Constitution, which should guide the transformation of the Rhodes statue; invite the public and professionals to produce designs for the creation of an imaginative and renovated space in which the statue should be located; and, finally, establish a broadly based panel, in which the current generation of students would have a strong voice, to choose the most appropriate entry". Sachs (2015) also describes the reappropriation of the Old Fort Prison in Johannesburg where the new Constitutional Court was built: "Instead of trying to obliterate our history, we needed to honour those who had struggled for justice, and transform the area by setting up a dialogue between the past and present."

As stakeholders of various institutions of higher education, we need to educate each other. These steps are necessary at the University of Pretoria because, currently, the represented and implicit messages of the UP formal, official portraits of office-bearers, academics and public figures work against the University's aim of fostering an identity and culture of diversity and inclusivity. It was confirmed that these portraits honour individuals, boast about accomplishments, encourage achievements, and, unfortunately, infer exclusivity that currently reveals an institution of white, male, heterosexual intellectuals. However, the few portraits of women and black sitters foretell of a future that will support the diverse and inclusive institutional identity and culture the University aims to achieve.

If the portraits of Afrikaner political and cultural leaders and by Mayer are not rehabilitated and renegotiated they will continue to be signifiers of contentious and problematic ideologies. When viewed through lenses of the past, the Mayer

portraits could represent elitism, oppression and exclusivity. The Boers portrayed in Mayer's artworks also fought for independence (from the British), but unfortunately became known as the oppressors and forefathers of racial segregation and apartheid. The sitters and their portraits are visual examples and reminders of marginalisation and oppression. Through rehabilitation and renegotiation, the portraits in this dissertation could memorialise individuals; reveal and celebrate identities; boast about how far the University has come in productively and successfully dealing with contested artworks, as well as changing ideologies associated with the Institution; reflect on past discrimination and vow to communicate diversity; infer inclusivity; and describe and encourage equality, academic innovation and acceptance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of permission to conduct research from the Head of the Department of UP Arts, Prof Theo Van Wyk



Department of UP Arts
Faculty of Humanities
Lynnwood Road
Hillcrest
Pretoria
Gauteng
0002

19 October 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby officially grant permission for Ms Salome le Roux (10618156) to conduct research on the portraits in the University of Pretoria's Art Collection. I also give Ms Le Roux permission to take photographs of the work and include these images in her study.

I understand that the final research document will be submitted as a MA (Visual Studies) entitled *The face of the University of Pretoria: a critical investigation of selected portraits in the UP Art Collection*. I also understand that the findings of this study, or parts thereof, may also be submitted for publication in an academic journal.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theo van Wyk'.

Prof Theo van Wyk

HoD: UP Arts

Appendix B: Letter of informed consent from curator Gerard de Kamper



Dear Gerard de Kamper,

You are invited to participate in a Masters study conducted by Salomé le Roux, from the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of this research study is to determine what the portraits in the UP Art Collection reveal about the University of Pretoria's institutional identity and culture and to examine how they do this. In other words, is it possible to suggest that the portraits are a visual representation of the institutional identity and culture the University of Pretoria aims to establish and maintain?

You were selected as a participant in this study because you are the Chief Curator of Ceramics and Collections Management.

If you decide to participate:

- You will be interviewed, from time to time, by Salomé le Roux at a time and place of your convenience, or via email
- The interviews will be semi-structured questions
- The interviews will be informal and conversational
- Salomé le Roux will take notes during the interviews
- Your thoughts and opinions on the UP Art Collection and the genre of portraiture will be used in the written dissertation

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions on your understanding and thoughts on the UP Art Collection, the genre of portraiture, as well as identity and culture. You may skip any question you feel unwilling to answer, or if a one-on-one interview is not possible, you will be able to answer the questions in a written document (via email). The data collected from your participation will be used, and with your permission, your identity will be revealed in the study. The data will be used for academic purposes and will be stored and archived at the Department of Visual Arts in audio and field note format for a period of 15 years.

No compensation will be offered for participating in this study and I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research, but the hope is that your participation in the study will contribute to the understanding of portraiture in South Africa, portraiture in relation to identity (especially institutional identity) and trends in South African portraiture, as well as give insights into the University's institutional art collection. I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Any questions you have about this study can be directed to Salomé le Roux at 072 213 8238 or salomecampher@gmail.com, or the supervisor of my dissertation, Jenni Lauwrens at 012 420 4164 or jenni.lauwrens@up.ac.za.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.




[Handwritten signature]




Subject statement of voluntary consent:

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this Letter of Informed Consent has been given to me.

Participant signature: 
Print name: Gerard Christiaan de Krom
Date: 2016/01/15
Place: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA, PRETORIA

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of person obtaining consent: 
Print name: Salomé le Roux
Date: 2016/01/15
Place: University of Pretoria, Pretoria

Appendix C: Examples of interview questions for curator Gerard de Kamper

1. What is the buying strategy for the UP Art Collection?
2. What is the purpose of the Collection?
3. How does the Department classify genres within the Collection?
4. What makes the Collection unique?
5. What makes the UP Art Collection different?
6. What is the difference between a departmental collection and the official collections of UP?
7. How does the UP Art Committee decide to acquire an artwork?
8. Why has the UP Art Committee decided to continue the tradition of a formal painted portrait of chancellors and vice-chancellors and principals?
9. Who is responsible for funding the formal portraits?
10. When are the portraits of the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor and Principal exhibited?
11. What are the guidelines for the official portraits?
12. When would official portraits be repainted or recommissioned?

Appendix D: Letter of informed consent from artist Frikkie Eksteen



To whom it may concern,

You are invited to participate in a Masters study conducted by Salomé le Roux, from the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of this research study is to determine what the portraits in the UP Art Collection reveal about the University of Pretoria's institutional identity and culture and to examine how they do this. In other words, is it possible to suggest that the portraits are a visual representation of the institutional identity and culture the University of Pretoria aims to establish and maintain?

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have created works of art that deal with the genre of portraiture and because the UP Art Collection contains artworks you have made.

If you decide to participate:

- You will be interviewed by Salomé le Roux at a time and place of your convenience, before the end of December 2015.
- The interview will be semi-structured questions.
- The interview will be informal and conversational.
- The interview will (approximately) take two hours to complete.
- The interview will be audio-taped.
- Your thoughts and opinions on the genre of portraiture will be used in the written dissertation.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions on your understanding and thoughts of the genre of portraiture, as well as identity and culture. You may skip any question you feel unwilling to answer, or if a one-on-one interview is not possible, you will be able to answer the questions in a written document. The data collected from your participation will be used, and with your permission, your identity will be revealed in the study. The data will be used for academic purposes and will be stored and archived at the Department of Visual Arts in audio and field note format for a period of 15 years.


No compensation will be offered for participating in this study and I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research, but the hope is that your participation in the study will contribute to the understanding of portraiture in South Africa, portraiture in relation to identity (especially institutional identity) and trends in South African portraiture. I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Any questions you have about this study can be directed to Salomé le Roux at 072 213 8238 or salomecampher@gmail.com, or the supervisor of my dissertation, Jenni Lauwrens at 012 420 4164 or jenni.lauwrens@up.ac.za.


You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

Subject statement of voluntary consent:

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this Letter of Informed Consent has been given to me.

Participant signature: 
Print name: TRIKKIE AKSTEEN
Date: 23/11/2015
Place: Pretoria

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of person obtaining consent: 
Print name: Salomé Le Roux
Date: 23/11/2015
Place: Pretoria

Appendix E: Examples of interview questions for artist Frikkie Eksteen

1. What do you think is the purpose of portraiture?
2. What constitutes a portrait?
3. Why is portraiture still such a popular genre of art?
4. When did you first start to paint portraits?
5. How have you dealt with the genre in your own work?
6. Do you still paint portraits?
7. Why or why not?
8. Portraiture follows three avenues of depiction, namely physiognomic depiction, psychological depiction, or a combination of the two; would you agree with this statement?
9. Which avenue do you pursue?

(Show the selected artworks from the UP Art Collection by the artist)

10. Do you still feel the same about portraits as when you painted the following artworks?
11. What were your intentions with each artwork?
12. What is identity?
13. Are 'portrait' and 'identity' mutually inclusive concepts?
14. Brenda Schmahmann (2013:13) maintains that universities are able to use their visual realm to explore what they are and what they aim to become. Do you use portraiture for the same reason?
15. Do portraits reveal the identity and culture of a society or an institution?
16. If so, how do portraits reveal the identity and culture of a society or institution?
17. Do portraits, owned by institutions, say something about the identity and culture of the institution?
18. How do you see the University of Pretoria's identity?
19. How do you perceive the University of Pretoria's culture?
20. Do your intentions with the creation of the artwork align or correspond with the University's identity and culture?
21. What does the inclusion of one of your artworks in the UP Art Collection mean to you?
22. What does it say about the University that one of your artworks is included in its collection?
23. Is portraiture still relevant in contemporary art?
24. Will you continue with the genre?