

My Slave Foremother Engela van Bengalen and her Heirs

by [Peter Dreyer](#) (August 2023)



Slave Woman, Cornelis de Bruijn, 1704

The King of Arakan was alleged to own two hundred galleys capable of carrying out raiding expeditions high up along the Ganges, while there are also said to have been sixty to seventy pirate ships in the area holding as many as three thousand captives in all. A Dutch observer described the arrival of a number of these galleys at a Dutch trading post on the Bay of Bengal, with the captives, largely women and girls, bound with thongs around their necks and arms, lying stretched out on their backs under the seats of the rowers ... For a long time Bengal was Batavia's main source of slaves ... and when Van Riebeeck was trying to obtain slaves for the Cape in 1655, he asked specifically for "80 or a 100 Arakanese or Bengalese. –Karel Schoeman, Cape Lives of the Eighteenth Century^[1]

She opens her eyes, beseeching the aid of Ṣaṣṡhī, protector of children in the jungle villages of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta, and the high god Nirañjan. Blinded for a moment by the light, she supposes herself dead—might this not be the antarabhāva, the space between dying and being reborn of which the purohit had spoken? Or perhaps what Bidhātā, who writes your fate on your forehead after you are born, has ordained for her? For good measure, she prays also to Dharmarāj—and even to Allāh, though he is not a deity of her people. If she does not pray to Jesus, it is because she has never yet heard of him.

As her vision clears, several sets of shins swim into view, terminating in horny, stained men's feet, splay-toed on the bamboo decking ... There is a girl, too, under the bench in front of her, and a woman under the one behind her. She does not recognize them. She tries to speak to them, but her mouth is quickly shut by the rower's foot.

He curses in a language she does not understand.

This little girl was my earliest forebear in Africa. She learned to answer to “Ansiela,” a corruption of *ancilla*— “maid servant” or “female slave” in the Latin so often in the mouths of her Dutch buyers, who liked to give their slaves monikers drawn from classical antiquity, thus creating numerous enslaved Pompeys, Ciceros, and Telemachuses (which evolved into “Talmakkie” or “Talmakkies,” names still found in the Western Cape). In 1668, for five florins month, the emancipated Engela will one day hire a slave namesake of the famous Roman general who defeated the Carthaginians in what is now Tunisia, the resonantly named Scipio Africanus van de Malabar Cust (“Scipio Africanus of the Malabar Coast”).

Engela and Catharina van Paliacatta (Pulicat in Tamil Nadu, then the capital of Dutch Coromandel), “aka *Groote* [Big] *Catrijn*, reprieved from the gallows for killing her slave lover Claes van Malabar and banished to the Cape for life,” says Mansell Upham, arrived at the Cape, on February 21, 1657, in the same fleet, Engela on the *Amersfoort*, *Catrijn* on the *Prins Willem*, and they became friends.

“Ansiela” became Engela when she was baptized, along with *Groote Catrijn* and her own two daughters, Engela and Catharina, on April 29, 1668. Her name is often given as “Angela,” but its Dutch equivalent, Engela, is employed here, since that is what she herself used, and English would in any case not be spoken at the Cape until the early nineteenth century, long after her death.

The Bangla word for mother is *mā*, and *meye* means “daughter” or “girl.” In early modern Bangla, *mui* was “I,” and when her new purchaser in Batavia (Jakarta in Indonesia, where she was first taken after her capture) asked her name, she had perhaps

replied, *Mui meye*, "I'm a girl." She would have many children at the Cape, and was known as *Mãe* ("mother" in Portuguese) or *Maaij* (thus in creolized Dutch) Engela van Bengalen. People referred to her as "Mooi Engela" too, and *mooi* means "beautiful" in Dutch, so she was doubtless a beauty. Her daughter Anna de Koningh, whose graceful picture we have, probably inherited Engela's good looks.

Engela was bought by Jan van Riebeeck, commander of the Dutch East India Company's little halfway-house at the southernmost tip of Africa, on the way to the East Indies. Called the *Caabse* (Cape) *vlek* (Dutch for "blot," "stain," or "spot") in those days, it would one day to be better known as Cape Town, Kaapstad, or iKapa.

At that time, the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC) was the greatest commercial enterprise in the world, with its own army and fleet. Van Riebeeck bought Engela from Rear Admiral Pieter Kemp, and when he himself was transferred to the VOC's eastern headquarters at Batavia seven years later, he sold her to his second-in-command, Abraham Gabbema. The latter emancipated her in April 1666, "out of pure affection [*uit puijre genegentheijt*]," he said. "She has the distinction of being the 4th slave to be formally freed at the Cape and the 1st slave woman to be freed without being legally bound to a man," Upham reports.^[2] She was listed as a free woman for the first time in the muster roll for 1666/67, together with her three children. That year, too, she was granted a piece of land in the vicinity of what is now Castle Street in Cape Town. And on December 15, 1669, she married a free burgher, Arnoldus (Arnout) Willemsz Basson, generally known as "Jagt" (from *jagter*, or "hunter") Basson, who was perhaps of ancestral English—or, further back, Italian—origin, distantly descended from a family of émigré Venetian musicians and instrument makers employed at the court of Queen Elizabeth I. The story is a complicated one! Upham writes:

Jagt's likely paternal antecedents point to Familist origins—an English branch of Anabaptist adherents of Münster-born mystic, Heinrich Niclaes (c. 1501–c. 1580), founder of the Haus der Liebe ('Family of Love') ... In England followers of 'Henry Nicolas' operate underground. An Englishman Thomas Basson (1555–1613), from Huntingdonshire—and likely ancestor to the Dutch Basson family—flees to Cologne and settles in Leiden, becoming a prominent printer (1585–1612), bookseller, English schoolmaster and active Familist and Rosicrucian—in opposition to exiled English Puritan publishers.^[3]

Jagt himself came from Wessel in the duchy of Kleve (Henry VIII's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was also from there) in the northern Rhineland, less than a 100 miles from Leiden, the hometown of Thomas Basson's descendants.

Engela would outlive Jagt by some thirty years. He died in 1689, not yet forty—perhaps, given his nickname, on a hunting expedition. Among her many monikers, she was called Moeder Jagt: "Mother Jagt."

This little society at the very tip of Africa had far-flung connections: the baptism of Engela and Jagt's daughter on August 9, 1677, was witnessed, inter alia, by Adriana Sterrevelt, who hailed from Nieuw Nederland—Manhattan, New York, today.



Engela's daughter Anna de Koningh (1661–1734)

Engela and Jagt would “spawn a mammoth Basson clan that permeates the entire Zwartland and beyond and every aspect of colonial life,” Upham writes. She was the mother of seven sons, six of whom would live to be adults. “Marriage to Jagt, legitimises Maaij Ansel’s four illegitimate *voorkinders* in terms of Roman-Dutch common law.” One of them, Jagt’s *halfslag* (half-breed) stepson Jantje van As, was executed in 1688 for sheep stealing and the murder of a slave herder. (As a free burgher, Jantje was, in an “act of grace,” permitted to be shot with a harquebus, rather than hanged!) Engela also had three daughters. Most of her children had children themselves, who in turn had many children, who had even more children, who became ancestors of a great number today’s “white” Afrikaners and (mostly also Afrikaans-speaking) “Cape Coloureds.” Engela and Jagt were ancestors, too, of South African Prime Minister Field Marshall Jan Smuts (1870–1950), “who played a key role in establishing and defining the League of Nations, United Nations and [the British] Commonwealth of Nations” (Wikipedia). And ancestors also of the United Party member of

Parliament Japie Basson, a distant relative against whom I would canvass in Cape Town's Sea Point constituency on behalf of the Liberal Party's candidate, Gerald Gordon QC, in 1959.

Engela became a wealthy old lady, owner of two farms, one of them a vineyard, and a winery, Hondswyk in Drakenstein. Though illiterate and signing herself with a cross, she bequeathed at least eight slaves—several of them, we can see from their names, former compatriots of hers “from Bengal”—to her heirs. In 1710, Jan van Riebeeck's granddaughter Johanna Maria de Heere visited the Cape and wrote: “an old black woman has been to see me who says that she was one of my late grandfather's slaves, and that she had nursed father and all the other children. Her name is Ansiela ... In her house hang the portraits of our late grandfather and grandmother.”

Anna, born in 1661, Engela's daughter by a soldier named François de Coninck, who had come to the Cape from Ghent in Flanders in August 1658, grew up to be the dignified Anna de Koningh, “mistress of one of Cape Town's greatest residences,” Groot Constantia, [\[4\]](#) formerly the estate of Cape Governor Simon van der Stel—who, like her, was of *halfslag*, “mixed,” descent—a “Cape Coloured,” as later usage had it.

They called me Khuki, [\[5\]](#) she remembers, sitting there in the kitchen drinking coffee one unusually sunny winter day in 1719, with young Isacq d'Algué. [\[6\]](#) Mijn naam was Khuki! She speaks Dutch (and Portuguese too, for that matter) with what a twenty-first century Indo-Aryan accentologist might suppose to be an East Bengali lilt. Their village was “Ganganandapur”—or something like that, she remembers, topping up Isacq's gobelet litron (a bargain from a shipload of Qing porcelain, pirated on the periphery of the War of the Quadruple Alliance).

But who can remember all this? It was so long ago! So strange that she should now be a rich old bird talking Dutch with this nice young fellow in her own kitchen, in this oddly familiar world they call the Caabse Vlek!

But what was it the sadhvi, that old woman in white robes who could read Sanskrit, had said those many years ago about how God's wonders worked?[\[7\]](#)

The March of the Couples

In 1702, Engela and Jagt's youngest daughter, Maria Basson, married a man called Christian Matzdorf. In 1710, the couple had a son named Arnoldus Maasdorp who in 1757 married Elzabé le Fébre (b. 1723); and they had a daughter in 1757, whose name became Catharina Francina Immelman when she married Daniel Ferdinand Immelman (1756–1800), the son of Justus Ludolf Immelman[n] (1723–75) and Sara Christina van Steenwyk (1725–57).[\[8\]](#)

Among these old Cape folk, there were countless such intermarriages—*chassés-croisés*, or dance moves that end up with the dancers (in this case, the families) back in the position from which they had started out, Marguerite Yourcenar calls them in her account of her own ancestors in French Flanders.[\[9\]](#)

In 1781, Catharina and Daniel Ferdinand Immelman had a son, also named Daniel Ferdinand. He grew up to marry Sophia Catharina van Baak, and in 1808, they had a son, Petrus Wilhelmus Immelman, who married Susanna Francina Le Roux in 1833; and they in turn had a son, Stephanus Abraham Immelman (1835–1880), who married Aletta Johanna Lindenberg (1837–1916); and they had a son, Petrus Wilhelmus Immelman (1863–1933), who married Isabella van Schoor (b. 1867); and

they had a daughter who was to be my glamorous Granny Murie–Muriel Linda Immelman (1894–1972), who married Johannes Hubertus Theunissen (Joe) Dreyer (1895–1938). My father was their son, Basil Melt Dreyer (1915–61).

The latest arrival in this long line, my grandson Joseph Lin Dreyer, was born just this past November in Shanghai.

Daniel Ferdinand

At the age of sixteen, Mäe Engela's grandson Daniel Ferdinand Immelman guided the Swedish botanist Carl Peter Thunberg–Linnaeus's most distinguished pupil, some say–on his first journey into the interior of Africa.[\[10\]](#) Lasting from September 1772 to January 1773, this took them as far as the Gamtoos River in what is now South Africa's Eastern Cape province. Daniel Ferdinand subsequently corresponded with Thunberg and also sent him animal skins, which he had bought with money the Swede supplied.

In 1775, Daniel Ferdinand was easily persuaded by another Swedish naturalist, Anders Sparrman, to undertake a trip into the interior again. His father gave his consent readily enough, but his mother, Sara, and his lovely (Sparrman was much smitten with her, it seems) sister, Anna Christina (who later married Isacq d'Algué/Dreyer's grandson J. A. Bresler), were harder to persuade; they finally agreed on grounds that a long journey on horseback was just what Daniel needed to strengthen his weak lungs, especially in company of a medical man like Sparrman, and that pulmonary disease was a greater threat to his life than wild animals or the indigenes. Daniel likely suffered from tuberculosis–he is later described as spitting blood–for which exercise on horseback was the therapy then recommended. In this case, it would seem to have worked, because he lived to father at least thirteen children, one of them my great^{x4}-grandfather, also called Daniel Ferdinand,

baptized in January 1781.

Justus Immelman died on July 28, 1775, however, and his father's last illness led Daniel to delay his departure; he joined Sparrman about a month later at Bad agter de Berg, later called Caledon, where I would be born 164 years in the future at the Caledon Baths Hotel.

The expedition's baggage included a small cask of brandy in which to preserve biological specimens, and near Riviersonderend (River-without-End), Sparrman sent their Khoekhoe (i.e., "Hottentot") wagon driver on alone, while he and Daniel stopped at a farm, where they were given a feast of broiled Cape Bishop Birds (*Coliuspasser capensis*). Following after the wagon, Sparrman writes, "we met with a drunken European, who was not ashamed to offer himself to be my servant, after having acknowledged that, in company with my Hottentot, he had been getting drunk with the contents of my brandy-cask." When Sparrman and Immelman caught up with the wagon and made camp, they found that the driver had "filled several bottles, in order to treat himself and a couple of rascals of his own kidney, a bastard and a slave, who had come thither." Sparrman took away the brandy, "but they had already drunk themselves to such a pitch of frenzy and boldness, as to give me to understand, that ... they thought of nothing but revenge and murder." It was decided to wait until they had cooled down in the morning; Sparrman meanwhile spent the whole night guarding his brandy, catching cold for his pains. The next day, he and Immelman found a "serpent" and threw it alive into the brandy cask in front of the "pot-companions." Daniel "told them, they might drink as much as they pleased, and added ... he should hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing them burst with poison." The drinkers replied "that they envied the venomous creature the pleasure of being drowned in so delicious an element."

Sparrman and Immelman looked so odd that a pair of farmers from "Agter Bruntjes-hoogte" (near present-day Somerset East)

gazed at them in amazement. Sparrman writes: "They found me with ... my hair braided into a twist, my side-curls hanging down strait and fluttering in the air ... [and] coat ... variegated with blood, dabs of gunpowder, and spots of dirt and grease." Beneath his breeches, which were turned up at the knees to keep cool, his stockings dangled over "Hottentot shoes."

Mr. Immelman, who, in fact, was a handsome young fellow, with large dark-eyebrows, at this time wore a beard ... which was now beginning to curl in a very conspicuous manner ... he figured on horseback in a long night-gown, with a white night-cap ... As to our beards, we had both of us in a merry mood, formed a resolution not to touch a hair of them either with razors or scissors, till we should either get into company again with the Christian lasses, or should have an opportunity of dissecting a hippopotamus. Added to this, we wished to try how a long beard would become our juvenile years [Sparrman was then 27; Immelman, 19]. "It is a present made to us by nature," said we to each other, "let us keep it by way of experiment. Our beards, perhaps, prevent our catching cold, and getting defluxions [runny noses] and the tooth-ache in cold nights; at least it is probable, that in this climate they defend the face from the scorching rays of the sun; and who can tell what respect and consideration it may acquire us from the beardless tribes we are likely to meet with in the course of our expedition." This resolution of ours, which we pertinaciously adhered to, gave rise ... to many ludicrous conversations ... Being an African by birth, he [Immelman] was not afraid of being sun-burned; on which account, likewise, in order to keep his hair out of his eyes, he generally rode in his night-cap.

Like everyone else who could, they shot all and everything they cared to: lions, rhinos, and hippos were being exterminated at a great rate, both by settlers and by indigenes, some of whom now also wielded guns. Still, in the dark, they heard "a concerto of lions" roaring all night. "I must do my Hottentots justice to say, that they did not shew the least fear; though they conceived the old and commonly-received notion to be absolutely true, that both lions and tigers [i.e., leopards] would attack a slave or a Hottentot, before they will a colonist or a white man [note the distinction made between the two]. Consequently, Mr. Immelman and I had no such great reason to be in fear for our own persons, unless more than one lion should come to attack us." While Sparrman was dissecting the corpse of a rhinoceros that had been shot by some Khoekhoe, Immelman narrowly escaped a charge by another. The pair of them went back to try to get a look at it, and "being but fifteen paces off, I heard a rustling noise ... Immediately upon this appeared a rhinoceros, with its horn projecting over one of the bushes. I now thought it high time for us to turn back ... and we rode away as softly as possible ... This adventure made us afterwards suspect, that every bush harbored a rhinoceros."

Sparrman (like his compatriot Thunberg, in fact, who notes with what seems obvious distress, "Wild beasts are destroyed without mercy, consideration, or oeconomy [*sic*], in so much that some are killed for amusement ... ") had a distinctly more modern view of animals than contemporary South Africans did, but he was still a man of the primordial kind. Pursuing a wounded Cape buffalo into a wood where it had taken refuge, they found it

advancing again in order to attack us, when Mr. Immelman ... shot him in the lungs. Notwithstanding this, he had still strength enough to make a circuit of a hundred and fifty paces, before we heard him fall: during his fall, and

before he died, he bellowed in a most stupendous manner; and this death song of his inspired every one of us with joy, on account of the victory we had gained: and so thoroughly steeled is frequently the human heart against the sufferings of brute creation, that we hastened forwards, in order to enjoy the pleasure of seeing the buffalo struggle with the pangs of death. I ... think it impossible for anguish, accompanied by a savage fierceness, to be painted in stronger colours than they were in the countenance of this buffalo. I was within ten steps of him when he perceived me, and, bellowing, raised himself suddenly again on his legs ... I fired off my gun ...

However, there was a certain degree of empathy: Sparrman notes that the colonists looked upon it “almost as horrible an action to eat the flesh of an elephant as that of a man,” and that he would have been looked on with contempt had he done so, because according to them, the elephant is “a very intelligent animal, which, when it is wounded and finds that it cannot escape from its enemies, in a manner weeps; so that the tears run down its cheeks.” After many further adventures, Daniel and Sparrman reached the Great Fish River. They returned in April 1776. Later that year, when he was twenty, Daniel married the nineteen-year-old Catharina Maasdorp, who died in 1786, most likely giving birth to the last of their children. Sparrman went on to sail with Captain Cook to Antarctica and would become a prominent opponent of the slave trade. He and Daniel corresponded for years.

Gijsbert Hemmy

Among the descendants of Engela van Bengalen and Jagt Basson was their great-great-grandson Gijsbert Hemmy, or Hemmij (born at the Cape on June 16, 1746), the author of a work on the

history of the Cape, *Oratio de Promontorio Bonae Spei* (Hamburg: Dietrich Antonius Harmsen, 1767), and of a book titled *De testimoniis Aethiopum, Chinensium aliorumque paganorum in India orientali* [Testimony of the Ethiopians, Chinese, and other pagans of East India] (Leiden: Luzac, 1770). Hemmy, Upham observes, was “South Africa’s 1st ‘person of colour’” to write about his native land and its inhabitants.” Highly conscious of his own slave roots, and of his “irrepressible” maternal great-great-grandmother, Engela, Hemmy wrote:

[It] is a very dangerous practice to pass judgment on the intelligence, judgment and conscience of other men (much less on peoples one does not know and who speak a language unknown to one) because the faculties of men are adjusted to their manner of life ... If Newton had been born at the Cape he would have thought much like the Hottentots, and if some Hottentot had happened to be born in England at that time, he might have excelled by far the most outstanding men in Mathematics, Philosophy and Astronomy.

In May 1792, Hemmy was appointed senior merchant on Deshima, an islet off Nagasaki where the Dutch had a limited trading concession in Japan. While there, he twice visited the ruling shogun in Edo (today’s Tokyo). At the time of the second visit, he was ill, however, and he died at the castle town of Kakegawa on June 8, 1798, aged 52. “The VOC’s last superintendent (1782–1798) at Deshima, Hemmy is the highest educated *opperhoofd* or *kapitan* in Japan. This cultivated man, classicist, lover of music and clarinet-player, bibliophile (his library boasts a copy of Mary Wollstonecraft’s latest work on the French Revolution), is also the only *opperhoofd* to be buried there,” Upham observes. “[T]he Japanese buried him at Tennenji Temple with the posthumous name *Tsū-tatsu-hō-zen-*

ko-ji—‘Accomplished and Righteous’.” Over the years, his tomb was visited by Dutch envoys, tourists, and even by the empress Teimei in 1922. Restored, it was declared a city monument in 2006.

The Beekeepers

One might suppose the name Immelman perhaps to refer to ancestral worshippers of an avatar of Odin’s called Immel, or Imo, the immense. It almost certainly derives from *Imme*, a German dialect word meaning “bee,” which mostly fell out of use after Luther’s translation of the Bible privileged the alternative word *Biene*. And *Imme* in fact contains *Biene*, deriving from the Old High German *imbi*, Old English *ymbe*, “[swarm of] bees.” The name Immelman (it is also found as Immeman and Immerman), thus means “bee swarm man,” or “beekeeper,” and since it probably springs from a diminutive (the little old German world being so fond of them), “little bee swarm man.”

The word *Imme* also embodies the sky god, Immel, or Imo. It is onomatopoeic, alluding to the great humming of swarms of bees darkening the summer skies of ancient Saxony, under which the ancestral Immelmänner tended their hives. Shields associated with the names Immel, Immlin, and Hummel all depict rows of bees. [\[11\]](#)

[\[11\]](#) Schoeman, *Cape Lives of the Eighteenth Century* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2011), 102. The italicized passage that follows this epigraph is fiction, since we cannot know how or when or by whom Engela was enslaved, simply that she was. She “is even likely to be a tribal autochthon or an untouchable or pariah ... [or possibly] a member of one of the hunter-gatherer hill peoples dispersed throughout north-west Burma [Myanmar],” Mansell Upham says in “Respectability Regained—Moeder Jagt’s

Triumphant Reversal of Her Slave Past,” <https://mansellupham.wordpress.com/2022/05/21/respectability-regained-moeder-jagts-triumphant-reversal-of-her-slave-past> (posted May 21, 2022, accessed July 15, 2023); quotations in this essay otherwise unattributed are from this invaluable source. And see also “The First 50 Years of the Cape | Mansell Upham,” interview, October 29, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdKQ9MA7kBw> (accessed July 15, 2023). The erudition drawn on here in respect to things Bengali is entirely that of Professor Tony K. Stewart of Vanderbilt University, the latest of whose distinguished publications is *The Needle at the Bottom of the Sea: Bengali Tales from the Land of the Eighteen Tides* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023).

[2] See, e.g., www.stamouers.com/index.php/stamouers/surnames-v-z/21-van-bengale-angela; even the document manumitting her is to be found, www.wikitree.com/photo.php/d/d1/Van_Bengale-1.jpg (both accessed July 15, 2023).

[3] Upham, “Respectability Regained.” And see J. A. van Dorsten, *Thomas Basson, 1555–1613: English Printer at Leiden* (Leiden: Published for the Sir Thomas Browne Institute by the Universitaire Press Leiden, 1961). Basson is neither a Dutch nor English name. The Italian word *bassone* (French *basson*) clearly identifies the double-reed musical instrument called a “bassoon” in English, notwithstanding that *fagotto* is now common usage for that in Italian. See also David Lasocki, with Roger Prior, *The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531–1665* (Aldershot, England: Scholar Press; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1995). *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1952) says of the family: “They were so numerous and their names were entered so carelessly in court records that it is impossible to establish a genealogy for them. Among the instruments they played were lutes, trombones, recorders, hautboys, flutes and violins, and some were singers.” The town of Bassano, where the family had a house until at least 1571, is in the foothills of the Alps, about

forty miles from Venice, of which it was a dependency.

[4] Anna J. Böeseken, *Resolusies van die Politieke Raad*, pt. 1 (1651–69), p. 278, cited https://mansellupham.wordpress.com/2022/05/21/respectability-regained-moeder-jagts-triumphant-reversal-of-her-slave-past/#_ftn29 (accessed July 15, 2023).

[5] Again, this italicized passage is a fictional reconstruction. *Khukī* is a common affectionate diminutive in Bangla-speaking lands for the youngest girl in a family. It can ultimately become a *ḍāknām*, or nickname (the name, *nām*, by which one is called, *ḍāk*), and can mean “little girl,” *choṭo meye*, or “young lady,” *bālikā*, a girl under the age of sixteen, or simply be an affectionate name for any girl.

[6] For a partly fictionalized account of Isacq d’Algué’s adventures, see Peter Dreyer, *Isacq: A Novel* (Charlottesville, VA: Hardware River Press, 2017).

[7] The *sadhvi* might well have been a *feringhee*—a Portuguese nun. There are said to have been over 20,000 Portuguese in lower Bengal at that time.

[8] Justus Loedolf Immelman, born on January 6, 1723, at Grasdorf, near Hannover, the son of Arend Heinrich Immelman and Maria Elisabeth Rudau, arrived at the Cape, as a soldier in the regiment of Major Isaak Meinertzhagen in December 1741 aboard the 650-ton VOC ship *Voorduijn*, commanded by Captain Fredrik Schouten, after a voyage of almost five months from Texel. In 1766, he was promoted to lieutenant, and in 1768 commanded over 100 men. He married Sara Christina van Steenwyck (b. 1756) and the couple farmed at Bottelary, near Stellenbosch, on a place called “Houd-den-Beck,” originally owned in the early eighteenth century by the notoriously corrupt governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel (and today the Bellevue winery); or, just conceivably, on another “Houd-den-Beck” in the Koue Bokkeveld area further into the western Cape interior. Justus died on July 28, 1775.

[9] In a *chassé-croisé*, one dance partner *chassés* right and then left, while the other *chassés* left and then right. Marguerite Yourcenar, *Archives du Nord* (Paris: Gallimard,

1977): “Ils sont mes parents du fait d’avoir existé” (86–87). “Genealogy ... leads first to humility, through the sense of how little we are amid these multitudes, then to vertigo,” she writes (47).

[10] For Daniel Ferdinand’s adventures recounted here, see Carl Peter Thunberg, *Travels at the Cape of Good Hope, 1772–1775*, ed. V. S. Forbes (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1986), 53, 74n, 81, 88n246, 90; “some are killed for amusement,” 197; and Anders Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, towards the Antarctic Polar Circle, round the world and to the Country of the Hottentots and the Caffres, from the Year 1772–1776*, ed. V. S. Forbes, 2 vols. (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1975), 1: 288, “tears run down its cheeks”; “Mr. Immelman ... was a handsome young fellow,” 2: 106–7; “unless more than one lion should come to attack us,” 40–41; “[suspect that] every bush harbored a rhinoceros,” 91–92. See also the Swedish academician Per Erik Wästberg’s biographical novel *The Journey of Anders Sparrman* (London: Granta, 2010). Daniel Ferdinand visited the hot springs at the Bad agter de Berg (“Bath behind the Mountain”), where I was born at the Caledon Baths Hotel in 1939, with both Thunberg and Sparrman. A bath house was built there in 1797, and a village called Swartberg sprang up around it, which was later renamed Caledon after Du Pré Alexander, 2nd earl of Caledon, appointed governor of the Cape in 1806 after its second conquest by the British.

[11] *Grosses Wappen-Bilder-Lexikon der bürgerlichen Geschlechter Deutschlands, Österreichs und der Schweiz*, ed. Ottfried Neubecker (Augsburg: Battenberg, 1992), 440.

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Future of Treason (New York: Ballantine), *A Gardener Touched with Genius: The Life of Luther Burbank* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan; rev. ed., Berkeley: University of California Press; new, expanded ed., Santa Rosa, CA: Luther Burbank Home & Gardens), *Martyrs and Fanatics: South Africa and Human Destiny* (New York: Simon & Schuster; London: Secker & Warburg), and most recently the novel *Isacq* (Charlottesville, VA: Hardware River Press, 2017).

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