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Abstract

This study examines representations of the 'enemy' found in the published and unpublished military narratives of the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars which took place in the Eastern Cape between 1834 and 1853. The Xhosa were most frequently represented as the 'enemy', however, there were also references to the Khoikhoi 'rebels' in the 8th Frontier War. It will be argued in this thesis that an elaborated discussion of military narratives could assist in an analysis of the complicated process of colonization and the establishment of British control at the Cape. The study pays attention to the accretion of representations of the Xhosa in the military narratives and it focuses on the formative military ideas which underpinned the delineation of the Xhosa and how writers adopted these ideas to describe the conditions of frontier warfare. The thesis does not focus only on the conflict it also asks how the regular army presented itself as a 'knowledge-based' institution. Further questions relate to what soldiers did besides fight and whether their 'knowledge' led to the power to enunciate on and control South Africa's indigenous inhabitants. Some narratives, such as Harriet Ward's and Edward Napier's, were deeply tendentious especially in their opposition to contemporary 'philanthropic' ideas; these polemical interventions also will be traced. Furthermore, the study will argue that representations of the Xhosa were mobile and commentary on the frontier wars fed into the metropolitan publication circuit. The substance of the military narratives was heterogeneous and the publications included passages which conveyed evidence of pronounced forms of colonial violence and a distinctly racialized vocabulary. However, concomitantly, colonial, guerrilla warfare threw up reciprocities and borrowings in that both the Xhosa and the regular army exhibited flexibility in their tactics. This meant that the insights of soldiers in the narratives were often ambivalent: regular army protagonists asserted a sense of cultural superiority but intimations of vulnerability and alienation were also revealed in the texts.

Keywords: Eastern Cape, frontier wars, representation, enemy, narrative, the Xhosa.

Declaration

I, Marian Baker declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Marian Baker

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My interest in the frontier wars sprung, in part, from my having been born in a 'frontier' town, King William's Town, where we were surrounded by reminders of colonial power; but 'King' was also a seat of resistance to more recent forms of oppression and in diverse ways I have been affected by this heterogeneous experience. I am grateful to another Eastern Cape stalwart, the Cory Library, for its wealth of accessible information and the assistance it gave me with my research.

I am indebted to my colleagues at the Wits School of Education and special thanks go to Lauren Rembach for her forbearance; it was she who helped me with collation in the final stages of the thesis and to Penny Andrew who provided consistent support and friendship. I am also grateful to my former colleague Dr Mike Kissack for stimulating discussions about military history. Thanks also to Prof Michael Titlestad and Sue Krige who were the readers for the proposal of this thesis. They set me on the path to this final submission.

Chapter One

Representations of the 'enemy' in military narratives of the South African Frontier Wars of 1834, 1846 and 1851

Introduction

Aim

A primary focus of this research is to examine how 19th century military narratives represented Xhosa oppositional forces in the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier wars in the Eastern Cape between 1834 and 1853. In general, the reviewed narratives comprise published metropolitan texts; nevertheless, there is one significant detour into colonial representations which can be found in the discussion of Godlonton's work on the 6th Frontier War. Most of the authors of the narratives were soldiers but I have devoted a chapter to Harriet Ward, a published author and the wife of an officer.¹ As a unit of study, I have focused on the three longest and most significant of the Frontier Wars, which took place between the years 1834 and 1853. Chronologically, however, the period under discussion will be less finite, as certain events preceding and succeeding these wars will be outlined to provide a frame for the central focus for the research.

I have several objectives in this research prompted by various scholarly debates about the nature of the frontier and of concomitant understandings of landscape, the impact of British colonization at the Cape and the production and circulation of knowledge within the colonial and metropolitan context. I have also examined contemporary secondary sources that have tried to capture the significance of the events on the Eastern Frontier in the early to mid 19th century. What is novel about this research is its investigation of the often contradictory and complex perspectives that members of the military forces brought to bear on accounts of Xhosa society and military encounters. Methodologically, I have engaged with theories of historical narrative as a means of way of exploring authorial intention as well as the rhetorical function of the texts. Current reflections on the Frontier Wars rarely elicit notions of historical narrativity and the discursive production of Xhosa identity. Hence, it will be argued that concessions to language and identity can enlarge and invigorate the historical discussion and can provide opportunities to include metaphorical and figurative dimensions into historical interpretation. At the inception of the research, I intended to use Hayden White's narrative theory as a conduit into an analysis of the texts. However, I have not confined myself to Whitean parameters in this study. There are a number of reasons for this divergence. Firstly, although White argues that his narrative categories can be universally applied they are in fact 'Whitean' and, arguably, exclusively 'western' literary constructs. Secondly, the narrative types and tropes he identifies can constrain analysis as most narratives are complex and are not only exemplars of the 'comedic' or 'ironic', to name but two of his four plot distinctions. Hence, the use of White's narrative theory in this thesis has transmogrified into something

¹ Harriet Ward's book *Five Years in Kaffirland* was published in two volumes post the 7th Frontier War, 1848 and 1849 by Henry Colburn, London. I also have examined the publications of Rev Francis Fleming, a military chaplain: *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, Smith, Elder and Co, London, 1853 and *Southern Africa, A Geography and Natural History of the Country, Colonies and Inhabitants*, Arthur Hall, London, 1856.

more ethereal: it has become closer to a *genius loci* than a presiding theoretical framework. During the course of the research I have found that specific chapters have required apposite and more varied theoretical insights. Therefore, the research has been supplemented by a range of theories which are concerned with notions of representation, disjuncture and identity. For instance, I have turned to authors such as De Certeau in the discussion of the frontier landscape and to Robert Young's *Colonial Desire* for his conceptions of 'culture', 'race' and hybridity.²

In a recent publication, Jeremy Black explores the 'cultural turn' in military history; according to Black responses to the notion of culture have been mixed. In general, historiographical interest in 'culture' has not found its way into military histories, famously, military history has been described as the last refuge of 'Whiggish' historiography.³ However, as Black has pointed out, cultural studies can offer a "useful angle on the leading concepts of military studies".⁴ As part of his argument for the usefulness and the limitations of the cultural turn in military history, Black proposes that culture is but one "variable in war" and it is embedded in a broader cultural context which includes aspects such as technology and the vagaries of a political regime.⁵ Culture is also evident in "understandings of appropriate military conduct, victory, defeat" and the concept makes reference "to why people fought and how they responded to issues of conflict."⁶ Black suggests that 'culture', especially that of non-western, colonized peoples, frequently has been troped in overarching and static ways by military historians. He argues that 'military cultures' are produced not only by military conflict but also because of the shifting domains of emulation and that competition tends to lead to "imitation as well as conflict" and elicits both 'adoption' and 'adaptation'. He describes 'adoption' as the borrowing of "weapons, training, organizational structures, tactics or doctrine" and 'adaptation' as the development of anti-tactics and anti-strategy "in order to lessen the advantages of opponents".⁷

This thesis will genuflect in the direction of the genre of military history, however, a major focus will be on an analysis and re-evaluation of the narratives which were associated with the frontier wars. In addition, it will be proposed that despite certain continuities found in military narratives they were by no means homogeneous. Nor did they construe the notion of the 'enemy' narrowly: a number of the narratives, for instance, included ideas about the racial composition and social status of people at the Cape and were not always unremittingly prejudiced. One of the intentions of this research is to investigate and possibly revise the assumption that military and settler discourses were monolithically 'militarist' and ideologically uniform. Individuals in the army and in the settler community, at different times, demonstrated a number of political and ideological persuasions as well as conflicting understandings of their South African enemies and the country in which they found themselves. In

² De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, 1988; Young, *Colonial Desire*, Routledge, Oxford, 1995.

³ Black quotes Denis Showalter (2002): "...military history is arguably the last stronghold of what historiographers call the 'Whig Interpretation'". Military history is defined by Showalter as 'Whiggish' because it privileges notions of war as 'progressive'. This is particularly evident in discussions around military technological 'advancements'. Black, *War and the Cultural Turn*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2012, p 3.

⁴ Black, *War and the Cultural Turn*, 2012, p 3.

⁵ Ibid., 2012, p vii.

⁶ Ibid., 2012, pp 3, 4.

⁷ Ibid., 2012, p vii.

addition, the regular army at the Cape was unable to remain aloof from metropolitan authority. The strictures they experienced due to the parsimoniousness of the British Government and the intervention from political lobbies such as the humanitarians in the British Government in the 1830s were just some of the limitations on the production of a unitary military narrative of war at the Cape.⁸ Perhaps, in addition to questions around military force, a more comprehensive understanding of military narrative could emerge from addressing questions such as: How much was the army a 'knowledge-based' institution? What did soldiers do besides fight? Did their 'expert' knowledge lead to the "power to identify, pronounce and control South Africa's indigenous inhabitants"?⁹ Hence, the research also will refer to knowledge systems and ideas prevalent in 19th Century texts and attempt to demonstrate how these ideas were sustained, or shifted, across the first half of the century.

Dubow points out that the "...relationship of knowledge to power, and its supporting claims to national identity went through four identifiable phases from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century".¹⁰ The emphasis of this research will be on the first phase of the 19th Century which was characterized by the establishment of a settler "middle class civic order" critical of autocratic, gubernatorial rule.¹¹ By 1834, the Cape was under the control of the British Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who was assisted by a Legislative Council. Although the Governors were to come and go, this system was to remain intact throughout all the frontier wars examined in this study. In 1854, a year after the end of the 8th Frontier War, the Cape acquired a representative parliament underpinned by a qualified franchise.

The Cape's close association with the British Government meant there was a strong metropolitan influence on the colonial infrastructure. But the colonies were not merely recipients of knowledge from the metropole, they also produced knowledge.¹² Similarly, military experiences at the peripheries made an impact on imperial understandings of warfare, not least of all in relation to the tactics of guerilla warfare in the Colony and various adjustments had to be made in the face of the complex forms of resistance adopted by the Xhosa. Currently, in much the same way as the diffusionist model is regarded as an over simplification of imperial economics, so the circulation of knowledge has been reassessed. As Dubow points out, "...viewing the Empire as an interconnected zone constituted by multiple points of contact offers a significant advance on older, often economic-based theories of core and periphery."¹³

The army, being peripatetic, was well-poised to play a part in the global, literary web and in the exchange of knowledge. Concomitantly, more consciously transnational understandings can cast light on the patterns of social hierarchy and power within the seemingly close confines of the Colony. It is the contention of this research that by using evidence from 19th Century military discourses, a more

⁸ Mostert, *Frontiers*, Pimlico, London, 1992; Le Cordeur, *The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch*, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1988.

⁹ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, Double Storey, Cape Town, 2006, p 4.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2006, p 4.

¹¹ Ibid., 2006, p 4.

¹² Ibid., 2006, p 6.

¹³ Ibid., 2006, p 6. Diffusionist approaches are associated, *inter alia*, with notions of the core and the periphery. The 'core' or metropole diffuses 'modernity' and 'progress' throughout its peripheries and exerts economic and political control over these territories.

complex picture will emerge pertaining to how, for instance, colonial and metropolitan status was defined and how political power was demarcated at the Cape in the 19th Century.

A further question revolves around the relationship between the military and the Eastern Cape settlers. It has been well-documented that there were economic and social ties between the colonists and the military and that the colonists depended heavily on the military for protection. In effect, the military and the settlers have been conflated into a single subjugating body by a number of historians.¹⁴ It will be argued that this commingling of identity does not address the complexity and antagonisms of the colonial interface. Insufficient care has been taken in the discussion of colonial and military societies and their component parts, their antipathies and their different self-interests. It would appear that the relationship between the military sector and the settlers frequently was disputatious and was often one of distrust rather than co-operation.¹⁵ These assumptions of political sympathy and social cohesion between the two groups have appeared in modern historiography. As Dubow points out, "...recent generations of historians have tended to lose sight of the salience of tensions between imperialists and colonists."¹⁶ A discussion of these tensions will not be central to this thesis but it will be argued that this seemingly untroubled relationship should be problematized.

A number of studies have brought into sharper focus the issue of identity and notions of contradiction and diversity have replaced the essentialisms and binaries that previously haunted notions of settler identity.¹⁷ Some colonial narratives displayed a consistent antipathy towards the colonized, whereas others were less coherent in their opprobrium or inclined towards sympathetic insight into the dilemmas that sprang from the colonial project. It will be argued that notions of culture and identity can be applied constructively to the military context as to the civil, and I shall attempt to investigate this strand by using a number of in- the- field military journals and memoirs. A further range of texts will be used in the research: these comprise specific reports about manoeuvres, commissariat reports and dispatches. Officers were trained to write reports which took a specific form and had their own rules of composition.¹⁸ The texts had authority within the army especially when they were concerned with tactics and numbers of the enemy sighted, but the question remains whether they transcended their context and became informative or influential in 'public' discourse. Foucault proposes that every mode of thinking involves implicit rules which materially restrict our train of thought.¹⁹ This notion is particularly evident in military reports which contain rules that 'discipline' the texts and that attempt to produce dispassionate, 'factual' disquisitions. In fact, because of their formality, military reports often demonstrate a dearth of representational material and it is for this reason, amongst others, that I intend to include personal correspondence and a number of journals which provide a far richer metaphorical

¹⁴ Stapleton, *Maqoma*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1994; Elbourne, 'Race, Warfare and Religion', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol 13, No 1, June, 2000.

¹⁵ Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1992; Milton, *The Edges of War*, Juta, Cape Town, 1983.

¹⁶ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006, p 5.

¹⁷ Ibid, 2006; See also Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.

¹⁸ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, Pimlico, London, 1999; Holmes, *Redcoat*, Harper Collins, London, 2001.

¹⁹ Gutting, *Foucault*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

seam. An analysis of these texts will incorporate the self-presentation of the protagonists to foster an understanding of their ideological orientations.

Notions of the frontier will also be of thematic interest to the research for a number of reasons; not least of all because, despite shifts in nomenclature, the term 'frontier wars' has persisted in current historiography. Also, interpretations of the frontier have varied over time. Governors at the Cape between 1806 and the 1830s tended to see the frontier as a 'strategic boundary' which had to be accurately delineated so as to provide something visible to protect; essentially it was seen as a line of defence.²⁰ The idea of the Frontier has been expanded in a number of 20th and 21st century studies and an aim of the research is to provide a discussion of these analyses. Notions of the frontier are pertinent to this study because of the 'real' and the symbolic centrality of the frontier in military strategy and imagination. In addition, the frontier held significant symbolic power over the settler population, it delimited their power, but because it was subject to alteration it came to represent the promise of acquisition and expansion. Although the consequences of frontier transmutation for the Xhosa were to be significantly dissimilar from those of the settlers, the frontier was to become inextricably tied to Xhosa experience and dispossession.

Limitations

This thesis does not pretend to provide an inclusive survey of the Frontier Wars. The most obvious inadequacy is the marginalization of the Xhosa in the Frontier Wars. I have not only neglected their 'voice' but also their social structures. A major reason for this limitation is that an analysis of how 19th century Xhosa were represented by military authors is central to this research; hence the Xhosa will be considered within the regimen of these representations. This does not mean that the Xhosa fade from view, far from it, because the texts were redolent with accounts of the Xhosa. However, the perspectives of the 'enemy' will be seen through the prism of dominant, lettered, anglophone discourses. As the objective is to provide a critical analysis of the texts and to demonstrate an awareness of the positionality of the narratives, the intention is not to justify dominant discursive endeavours nor is it intended to defend subjugating practices.

In this thesis the category 'Xhosa' will not always reflect, in nuanced ways, the different polities and allegiances which characterized Xhosa society. In the first half of the 19th Century, some military writers, and journalists such as Godlonton, were at pains to differentiate polities within the Xhosa.²¹ However, despite making certain distinctions they also had the propensity to represent the Xhosa as a broadly-defined 'nation' or as a 'people' especially when describing them from a military perspective.

²⁰ Lester, *'Reformulating Identities'*, Transactions, Vol 23, 4, 1998. It was also an expensive line of defence for the British government: the 8th Frontier War which was the longest and most expensive war cost in the region of 3 million pounds. See Crais, *Poverty, War and Violence*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2011.

²¹ See Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the Irruption, Parts I, II, III*, Struik, Cape Town 1965 (first published 1836); Drayson, *Sporting Scenes Amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*, Routledge, London, 1858; Lucas in *Camp Life and Sport*. Africana Book Society, 1975, p 90 (first published in 1878).

Godlonton, for instance, refers to the Xhosa in numerous ways: in generalized terms as a 'people', as a 'family' and as a 'nation'²² and in more specific ways as evidenced in the following quote:

"...the Amakosa Kafirs, whose country is contiguous to the colony, and who are the people said to be so plundered [by the settlers] are by far the richest branch of the great Kafir (sic) family."²³

Drayson, an army officer in the 8th Frontier War, also refined the category of 'Xhosa' when he wrote that:

"'Kaffir' is also a term unknown to the men so called; they speak of themselves by the designation of the tribe. Kosa is a frontier Kaffir and the plural being prefixed makes Amakosa Kaffirs; thus Amazulu, Amaponda &c."²⁴

However, despite these differentiations, in the bulk of his narrative Drayson tends to represent the Xhosa generically. Possibly the latter usage was deployed for reasons of narrative brevity. What is evident is that once Drayson commenced his narrative of colonial warfare he collapsed 'tribal' differences into one category as in the following example:

"It is a difficult thing to surprise the Kaffirs, for their spies are always on the alert, and the movements of the main body are made with great rapidity."²⁵

In fact, when representing the 'enemy' most authors did not make scrupulous distinctions between polities unless they were being referred to geographically or in relation to their 'loyalty' or 'perfidy'. I am aware that despite the sometimes subtle linguistic understandings found in the narratives of 19th Century authors this study frequently homogenizes 'the Xhosa'. A major reason for this is that it is not the project of this thesis to examine Xhosa identity. I acknowledge that Xhosa identity was complex, fluid and changed over time in the 19th Century, however, the usage of the word 'Xhosa' in this thesis will follow the generally 'fixed' terminology found in the military narratives and will reflect how the Xhosa were framed as the 'enemy' in these accounts.

The Levies

Originally, I intended to include a chapter on representations of the levies who fought on the side of the regular army and colonial forces. In the course of the research, however, the subject of the 'enemy' became so pressing and provided such a rich field of research that the levies became increasingly marginalized and were eventually dropped from the study. This is regrettable because the role of levies in the Frontier Wars requires further investigation; not least of all to assess the complex social relationship between the 'irregulars', or levies, and the colonizing forces. Socially, levies occupied

²² Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the Irruption, Parts II and III*, 1965, pp 210- 212. For example, Godlonton distinguishes various clans as in: "The tribes under the brothers Pato, Kama, and Cobus, have for many years past occupied the country westward as of the Keiskamma...." Godlonton, *Ibid.*, p 11. In the chapter entitled *Sketch of Kaffraria* we find a '*Genealogical Table Of The Kafir (sic) Tribes*' which outlines the main branches of the families of 'Kafirland'. *Ibid.*, 1965, p 209.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1965, p 211.

²⁴ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes Amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*, 1858, p 18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1858, p 29.

liminal positions in the Eastern Frontier operations. As Howe points out, it frequently was the “division and diversity” amongst the colonized populations that provided a crucial factor in the maintenance of power by the numerically small number of invading forces.²⁶ In addition, Howe proposes that the exercise of colonial power was not due only to superior technology and more efficient and disciplined troops, it also rested on local recruitment.²⁷ Indeed, if colonial conquest relied heavily on the enlistment of fighting men from among the colonized populations themselves, as Howe suggests, then the levies’ role was critical to the colonial project and demands far more attention than it previously has been accorded.

Women

Women, by and large have been relegated in the discussion, but the chapter on Harriet Ward and the 7th Frontier War provides a departure from the representations of masculinity that pervade this thesis. I have raised certain issues around categories of women but I have not provided a full account of the debates surrounding gender and colonization. My major concern in the chapter on Ward is to situate her as published author and polemicist in the 1840s.

Notes on terminology

Racial nomenclature has had a convoluted history of revision in South Africa. I shall attempt to use current, academically acceptable terminology of peoples and geography. However, I shall retain extant terminology when quoting from original sources. There has been some debate around the use of the word ‘indigenous’, with certain historians suggesting that the preferred usage should be ‘autochthonous’.²⁸ I have tended to use these two words as synonyms rather than substitute the one for the other.

The following is a note on the concepts of colony and empire. Although the word ‘empire’ in relation to ‘British’ has had a long and not particularly felicitous history, within the context of this study, I shall more frequently use the appellations of ‘colonial’ and ‘metropolitan’ rather than the more ample notion of ‘imperial’. There are chronological reasons for this decision. When I started this research I selected the word ‘colonial’ to designate those events, people, narratives which pertained to colonial territories. I consigned the descriptor ‘imperial’ to metropolitan concerns and hence tended to refer to the regular army as the ‘imperial forces’. This distinction eventually was discarded, in part, because military narratives in the first half of the 19th Century very rarely referred to ‘imperial’ matters and had a propensity to refer to the ‘colonies’ and to the ‘Queen’ as an omnipotent figurehead rather than to elaborated versions of ‘empire’. In addition, I have been influenced by scholarly debate around notions of colonization and empire. Sara Mills writes that,

²⁶ Howe, *Empire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p 95.

²⁷ Ibid., 2002, p 95.

²⁸ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006.

“Conventionally, a distinction has been made between colonial (all forms of settlement involving appropriation of land and power by foreigners in another country), and imperial (other forms of appropriation or exploitative trade with others, based on an imbalance in power relations).”²⁹

This distinction perhaps is difficult to sustain in the South African context where there was a coagulation of British expansion and exploitative trade relations. Nevertheless, the definition of colonization which Mills suggests is appropriate in relation to military incursion. Catherine Hall describes colonization as the “settlement... destruction and/or transformation of other forms of social organization and life.”³⁰ She also provides a chronological component to her definitions. She writes that, “I use ‘imperialism’ to refer to the late 19th Century/early 20th Century moment when European empires reached their formal apogee.”³¹

Thus, in general, I shall refer to the processes of colonization rather than of ‘imperialism’ and the ‘imperial’ army will be termed the British or regular army in relation to the Frontier Wars. Colonial troops appropriately will be designated as commandoes or levies or irregulars.

Rationale

South African history has been characterized by a long tradition of military incursion and resistance throughout the nineteenth century. Much of South Africa’s historiography bears testimony to this conflict and yet the attention given by historians to the Frontier Wars has fluctuated over the years. This formative period in South African history has often been circumvented and later periods concerned with urbanization and the growth of capitalism in the north of South Africa have gained prominence. Yet, notions of the Frontier still hold emotive sway. Arguably, discourses emerging from military texts have a longer reach than the 19th century and penetrate into the 20th and 21st centuries. Motifs found in frontier histories still emerge in current discourse and find their way into understandings of land distribution, social justice and social relationships in South Africa. In the same way, land claims often bear witness to shifting frontier boundaries and the colonial acquisition of land which resulted in the displacement of indigenous peoples.

This enquiry into the frontier wars has a number of different junctures: firstly it will provide a discussion of analyses of the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars; secondly, it is an enquiry into military narratives and documents and of what can be found in these ‘traces’ concerning the relationship between the military and the ‘enemy’; thirdly it is about the wider implications of military discourse as a knowledge-based phenomenon and its interventions into contemporary political debates.

At the level of content, although there are a number of histories concerning aspects of the frontier and the frontier wars there is a paucity of research covering the army and its functioning in the 19th Century South African context.³² Likewise, the research field concerning the textual representations of the

²⁹ Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, Manchester University Press, 2005, p 2.

³⁰ Hall, in Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, 2005, p 2.

³¹ Ibid., 2005, p 2.

³² See the vastly different accounts of, for instance, Godlonton, *A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965; Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1992, and Peires, *House of Phalo*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2003.

'enemy' has not been wide.³³ My justification for pursuing this focus is that an examination of the role of the military in South Africa could lead to insights into the practices of the regular forces and into the discursive significance of military narratives and their influence on global configurations of the Xhosa. The pursuit of this research is not merely based on a paucity of content, it is also driven by the requisite to pursue recent theoretical insights. Many of the ideas selected in this study are influenced by the 'cultural turn' in history. The insights accrued from the conceptual framework of 'cultural studies' have been significant but have not always taken root in South African historiography. In order to grasp the shifts in debate around South African historiography, I shall provide a brief examination of some of the major trends in this field.

In the first half of the 20th century histories were dominated by anglophone, 'liberal' historians such as De Kiewet, Walker and MacMillan.³⁴ The majority of these historians fell out of favour with the emergence of the revisionist 'school' in the 1970s and early 1980s. In the first instance, revisionist histories were deeply critical of the tendentious nature and apologist tendencies of histories sympathetic to the apartheid government. Secondly, in opposition to both segregationist and liberal discourses, revisionist historians tended to stress class over race relations and to focus on the social and economic interdependence of South Africans within a fundamentally conflictual and unequal society.³⁵

A number of the histories written prior to the 1970s were methodologically empirical and reliant upon the meticulous collection of data and 'facts' pertaining to the historical endeavour. In contradistinction to this, revisionist historians focused on analysis and interpretation using methods developed from Marxist and neo-Marxist insights. The subject matter of these studies tended to focus on the mineral revolution and its effects on capitalist formation and concomitant racial and class stratification. Chronologically, these studies often began in the 1860s and were projected into the 20th century.³⁶ During the revisionist period, the debate widened to provide opportunities for critiques of histories that were deemed to over-emphasize state power and the damaging effects of oppressive state structures. This led certain historians, influenced by the social history movement, to focus on histories of resistance and the experiences of the 'under classes': workers, women, the marginalized and those designated as socially 'deviant'.³⁷ As Dubow comments,

"For at least a quarter of a century the most innovative directions in South African historiography have focused on history "from below" and, in particular, on recovering the voices of the forgotten and the dispossessed. The history of resistance to white power, whether expressed directly or indirectly, has been of central concern."³⁸

³³ Arndt, 'Treacherous Savages & Merciless Barbarians: Knowledge, Discourse and Violence during the Cape Frontier Wars, 1834- 1853', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol 74, 3, 2010.

³⁴ De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa*, Oxford University Press, London, 1972; Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, Longmans London, 1968; MacMillan, *Bantu, Boer and Briton*, Greenward Publishing, 1979.

³⁵ Worden, 'After Race and Class: Recent Trends in the Historiography of Early Colonial Cape Society', *South African Historical Journal*, Vol 62, 3, 2010.

³⁶ Ibid., 2010; See also Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1997.

³⁷ Worden, 'New Approaches to VOC History', *South African Historical Journal*, Vol 59, 2007.

³⁸ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006, p 12.

What could be described as a 'social history' movement grew significantly during the later 1980s and the 1990s. More emphasis was placed on 'micro-histories' and narratives, hence, diaries, iconography and oral testimony became important sources for the historian. The new emphasis on 'subjectivities' led to critiques of empirical methodologies. Not only were methodological perspectives challenged but there were epistemological shifts in what constituted history. The debates around what constituted knowledge were fuelled by positions (broadly post modern) that were antithetical towards the empiricism and mimeticism seen to be redolent in earlier interpretations.³⁹ Although the notion of 'history from below' has not been completely submerged, recent South African historiographical trends have made certain departures from social history perspectives. Evidence of these diversions can be seen in the work of Dubow and Beinart.⁴⁰ Through their work, histories of ideas, globalization and histories of settlers, ecology and agriculture also have gained impetus. Studies of the colonization have become more inflected and encompass notions of identity and performativity, as well as of global networking. More complex understandings of the colonial process are emerging from these studies. Hence, a further reason for doing the research is to demonstrate that responses to imperialism were "not simply polarized between imitation and rejection, collaboration and resistance".⁴¹ An attempt will be made in this study to investigate the area of 'complicity' and to provide fresh insights into the contention that roles were not always fixed and that alliances shifted.

Post-colonial notions of identity and alterity also have been re-evaluated. In this regard, Dubow proposes that Foucauldian and Saidian studies tend to elide colonial and imperial knowledge. He argues that the 'western gaze' does not always deal with the intricacies of colonial power relations neither does it account for the complexities of these societies. Simply to refer to the 'other' is an over-simplification, in that the "urge to know about 'others' is "closely bound up with the process of identity formation."⁴² In this sense, colonial knowledge was not just an instrumental resource, but also a way of demonstrating one's worth to one's "peers".⁴³ Recent representations of the regular army at the Cape still tend to over-generalize the role of the army as monolithically oppressive and to conflate 'imperialist', official texts with military texts. Whether military representations of the enemy were more pejorative than civilian renditions is open to examination. In either event, military narrative often ends up being marginalized or ignored as an important component of 19th century knowledge systems.

My argument is that the development of ideas around representation and narrative constitutes a neglected field in the history of the frontier. The utilization of narrative theory, such as White's, will provide a fresh interpretation of the military journals and 19th century histories of the Frontier Wars. Narrative theory allows for a discussion of these texts as 'verbal constructs', that is, as constructs which use 'ordinary language'. As expressions of ordinary language, they include the 'fictive', and are embellished by literary artifacts such as metaphor. Understanding the literary sensibilities of the text

³⁹ Worden, *'After Race and Class'*, 2010; Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, Routledge, Oxford, 2007.

⁴⁰ Dubow, *The Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006; Beinart and McGregor, *Social History and African Environments*, David Philip, Cape Town, 2003; Beinart, *The Rise Of Conservation in South Africa*, 2003.

⁴¹ Howe, *Empire*, 2002, p 98.

⁴² Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006, p 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2006, p 14.

can, according to Jenkins, assist us to “...recognize and make explicit the fictive in our histories”.⁴⁴ A number of military journals may well contain some accurate delineations of ‘evidence’ but they are also ‘ideological’. The reason for adopting this interpretation is not only to provide a less deterministic history of the Frontier Wars: it will be argued that narrative theory has been underutilized in Frontier War historiography and that its inclusion will offer a novel perspective in a field often dominated by social, economic and political concerns.

The journals and memoirs of soldiers on campaign in South Africa are fairly numerous. This in itself is a good reason for conducting the research, but there are further implications. Because of the heterogeneous composition of the army, the sources are multifarious. On the one hand they emanate from a dominant lettered class who contributed to the intellectual climate of the Cape, on the other hand written narratives have emerged from the lower ranks of the army and oral evidence from a variety of sectors has been collected by historians such as Cory. Thus the study will not make use of literate middle class texts solely; it will also assess representations of the ‘enemy’ and notions of identity from the vantage point of less prominent members of society.⁴⁵ An important component of the research will be an attempt to assess the role that the narratives played in the cultural condition of the time and whether they can be interpreted as influential in relation to social configurations at the Cape.

Recently, a number of scholars have addressed the exchange of knowledge and the interaction of different knowledge systems between the metropole and the colonies.⁴⁶ The question is whether this notion has relevance to military history. There are a number of reasons to suggest that it does. The adoption of military strategy and tactics is a particular case in point. The British army was often on the back foot because it was not always able to adapt to the guerilla tactics of the Xhosa. Likewise, the Xhosa started using a noticeable number of guns in the 6th frontier War and were using them in greater quantities during the 7th and the 8th Frontier Wars.⁴⁷ Conducting such research can demonstrate links between military knowledge and other knowledge systems. For instance, ‘knowing’ the topography and the people who inhabited it and what weapons they deployed became central to the military project.

If the armed forces in South Africa indeed were influential in the knowledge circuits of the first half of the 19th Century, they also had another contribution: central to the army’s project was, and is, violence and killing. South Africa historiography has long considered violence as the *sine qua non* of the colonial project and graphic descriptions of violent incidents have appeared in later histories of the Frontier.⁴⁸ However, this centrality often has been assumed and scant attention has been paid to the ideas and practices which informed, sanctioned and constrained acts of violence in the army. As Keegan writes, there are ‘rules of procedure’ in the army which define violence as appropriate or as ‘improper’.⁴⁹ That

⁴⁴ Jenkins, *On What is History?*, Routledge, London, 1995, p 177.

⁴⁵ Such as narratives written by the non-commissioned officer MacKay who wrote *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, Struik, Cape Town, 1970 (first published 1871). See also less successful settlers such as Stubbs in Maxwell and McGeogh *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, Balkema, Cape Town, 1977.

⁴⁶ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006.

⁴⁷ Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003.

⁴⁸ See Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1993; Stapleton, *Maqoma*, 1994; MacLennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1986.

⁴⁹ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 1999.

there were any number of acts of 'improper' violence and instances of dishonourable conduct by the military on the Frontier is without question. What has been neglected in a number of studies, however, is the recognition that notions of violence need to be complicated and more finely described. It could be argued that in some historical commentaries there are ill-formed understandings of the differentiation between 'battle' and 'soldiering' which could result in misleading assumptions and a limited understanding of the role of the army at the Cape. More refined questioning needs to be introduced around the intrinsic system of violence in the army.

Literature Review

The following overview is not chronological instead it has been constructed thematically. The following section has been included to position the research within the parameters of military history. As pointed out previously, the study is not intended to be narrowly construed as a military history but it will have aspects in common with some of the identifying features of the genre.

In his overview of military history and its 'deficiencies', in *The Face of Battle*, John Keegan argues that the extensive grasp of military history makes it liable to any number of emphases and interpretations.⁵⁰ One such emphasis is the history of generalship, such as histories of Wellington. Other histories focus less on the 'man' and more on the accoutrements, ordnance, weaponry and the regiments of war. Military history, according to Keegan, is also the 'study of institutions': of armies and navies, strategies and the ethos under which they fought.⁵¹ It has been the view of a number of historians that battle history or campaign history has "primacy over all other branches of military historiography".⁵² Within the ambit of this view, the 'battle piece' has a long and venerable history from antique, classical renditions to more recent developments. How one approaches the battle piece is subject to historiographical trends: the battle piece can be a 'featureless' and sparse description of events, or it can be an exposition of the feelings and experiences of those who participated in its turmoil. How emotion, imagination and sentiment are represented in narratives of war has become one of the central tenets of 20th and 21st century military history. Military histories have become more inclusive of the view 'from below': the private and the able seaman are now considered not only worthy of the historical record but are often central to it.

Sherry Smith has demonstrated how military historiography has broadened to encompass "...ecohistory, social history and New Western History [the American 'West'] to elicit a nuanced understanding of the power dynamics that accompanied conquest in the West."⁵³ Smith questions why historical investigations concerned with the military are frequently overlooked:

"Why the relative absence of soldiers, the army, or the Indian [American] wars in the latest synthesis of scholarship in the West? Is there nothing new to say about such people and events? Is the material hopelessly irrelevant to current concerns about the past? Are those people who are drawn to writing and reading about such topics

⁵⁰ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 1999.

⁵¹ Ibid., 1999, p 29

⁵² Ibid., 1999, p 30.

⁵³ Smith, *The View from Officers' Row*, University of Arizona, Press, 1998, p 149.

consequently old fashioned, insensitive to contemporary issues and interests and, and inclined to be pro military and anti-Indian? ...Obviously the answer to all these questions is no.”⁵⁴

As Smith argues, to discount the importance of an inclusive history can result in the abnegation of a crucial aspect of ‘frontier’ disputes; that they were characterized by relationships which extended further than government, army and official intersections. More recent correctives to the historical record have included studies of “the *relationships among* [her italics] various ethnic groups and between the genders”.⁵⁵ She argues that, a survey of the preceding relationships can elicit more refined understandings of power. As Smith points out, “Categorizing historical figures or groups as winners and losers or victims and victimizers is powerful - and problematic”.⁵⁶

These dichotomies are problematic because they reduce and oversimplify complex experiences. They also undermine certain questions around whether the colonized were completely overwhelmed, whether they had some control over their circumstances or whether they merely responded to events. In the case of the Xhosa, there are clear indications of control even if their attempts to resist and conquer the British forces and the settlers ultimately failed. The Xhosa used a number of different strategies besides military resistance which took a variety of forms ranging from verbal negotiation, threats and passive resistance.

Notions of the Frontier

I have focused on Legassick’s influential article on the eastern frontier in this section.⁵⁷ Worden argues that it was so persuasive that Legassick “almost single –handedly destroyed revisionist historical interest in the early colonial Cape for almost a generation”.⁵⁸ Secondly, while rejecting liberal interpretations, his discussion of ‘early’ liberal historians provides a useful overview of some of the major debates concerning the frontier in the 1920s and 1930s. Thirdly, from the point of view of this research it is interesting that a number of the ‘frontier’ tropes that Legassick discusses appear to remain in place in the more recent research covering the area. This is not to suggest that earlier historiography necessarily anticipated recent concerns, even though they were often prescient, but that the frontier dyads of ‘good’ or ‘bad’; economically exclusive or inclusive; segregationist or integrationist seem to have remained pervasive despite recent attempts to provide discursive interpretations of the frontier which explore symbolic and imaginative constructions of the Frontier.

Current perspectives which examine representations of the frontier and of ‘landscape’ have made important contributions to how the idea of the frontier held an emotive sway over the settler imagination and came to represent and justify land appropriation. Whereas previously, the frontier was defined in terms of its spatial and temporal limitations, recent studies of landscape have provided ‘triangulated’ analyses of place, space and power. Yet, one binary has considerable currency: the notion

⁵⁴ Smith, *The View from Officers’ Row*, 1998, p 150.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1998, p 154.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p 155.

⁵⁷ Legassick, ‘*The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography*’, in Marks and Atmore, *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial Society in South Africa*, Longman, London, 1980.

⁵⁸ Worden, ‘*After Race and Class*’, 2010, p 4.

of the open and closed frontier.⁵⁹ There are indications of historiographical qualification of this binary, for instance, Giliomee argues that a closing frontier is a zone in which a certain amount of colonization and settlement has taken place but the authority over the area is weak both politically and militarily. The zone is 'closing' because despite the weakness in administration, the settlement process is fairly advanced and the balance of power is tipped in the direction of the colonizers. Processes of closure include economic closure characterized by a scarcity of land, a shift from pastoral to commercial farming, growing social stratification and an increasingly authoritarian political structure.⁶⁰ A 'closed' frontier means that the issues of subjugation, inequality and exclusion are a central concern for most of the indigenous population and, as Saunders points out, compels them to adjust to the exigencies of the colonial regime.⁶¹

In his overview of frontier historiography, Legassick disputed the notions that white South African antagonism towards black people and the segregationist and discriminatory policies of the 19th and much of the 20th century had their origins in the Eastern Frontier.⁶² He considered the post- 1867 period, which saw the rise of industrial capitalism, as being more formative of racial identity and division. In his critical discussion of understandings of the frontier, Legassick suggests that, over time, the frontier has been construed as both a universal and a protean concept, adjustable depending on the ideological propensities of the narrator:

"It is indeed the influence of the frontier on racial attitudes which has been its most persistently argued effect: the frontiersman regarded the non-white only as a servant or an enemy. It was the frontier tradition which was responsible for the job-colour bar in industry, for opposition to the common non-racial but qualified Cape franchise, for hostility to African 'squatters'. In addition, the frontier became to be associated with the Boer's land hunger, poor agricultural methods, wastefulness and avarice."⁶³

These 'traditions' were connected to other myths clustered around the character of the frontier and the 'frontiersmen' who inhabited it in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The original 'trekboers' have been variously represented as conservative, Calvinist, isolated and purveyors of an ideology that doggedly ignored the cultural and political climate of the metropole or of the Western Cape. Romantic and mythical versions of the 'frontier' also proliferated and it became symbolic of a particular 'spirit' which incorporated rebelliousness, suspicion of authority and individualism.⁶⁴ Legassick points out that these attitudes were not necessarily adopted in their entirety by historians, many of whom moderated and corrected some of the more outlandish assumptions.⁶⁵ Historians such as De Kiewiet, Macmillan and

⁵⁹ Giliomee, *The Eastern Frontier, 1770 –1812*, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1989.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1989.

⁶¹ Saunders, 'Political Processes in the Southern Frontier Zones', in Lamar and Thompson, *The Frontier as History*, Yale University Press, 1981.

⁶² Legassick, 'The Frontier Tradition', 1980.

⁶³ Ibid., 1980, p 41.

⁶⁴ The influence of Frederick Jackson Turner's *The Frontier in American History*, Henry Holt, New York, 1921, is evident in 20th Century accounts of the frontier. Turner's work on the American frontier emphasized associations between the frontier as a 'contact zone' and the American national character. See pp 1- 4. Also see Smith, *The Officers' Row*, 1995, for an examination of "Army Perceptions of Western Indians". (Subtitle of book).

⁶⁵ Legassick, 'The Frontier Tradition', 1980, p 42.

Macrone, while not immune to a number of the influential assumptions about the frontier, also developed their historiography to provide counterpoints to 'pro-frontier' historians such as Theal and Cory. Not all liberal historians concluded that the Dutch trekboere were the only culpable protagonists on the frontier. Eric Walker, for example, places all settlers, both English and Dutch, under the rubric of the "land hungry". Likewise, most settlers were seen to play a role in the subjugation of indigenous peoples in the area. However, there were important exceptions: some missionaries, certain government officials and a number of 'rational' and liberal-minded colonists, who provided oppositional discourses to the racially prejudiced and anti-modernist 'frontier' perspective, were elevated above the mass of settlers. Both Macmillan and De Kiewiet attempted to provide alternative and sympathetic representations of the 'missionaries' in their histories. The more overtly emotional and ideological components of 'settler' historiography were considered particularly unpalatable. Liberal historiography was largely 'empirical' and concerned with social and economic aspects of history. For example, De Kiewiet, by providing what he saw as a necessary corrective to the romanticism inherent in pro-frontier accounts, comes close to bathos when he downplays any affective and partisan leanings that historians might have about the frontier. Violence, antipathy and trauma were reduced to survival and to conflict over natural resources. The social relations that emerge out of the fracas are indicative of the interdependence of black and white people in the frontier region, but as De Kiewiet's sobering conclusion demonstrates, there are tragic consequences for the dispossessed:

"In the writing of South African history, it was long customary to believe that the chronic conflict of the... frontier was the result of spontaneous hostility of a savage and treacherous people to the presence of a superior race. Actually the conflict of black and white was fed more by similarities than differences. The opposing lines of settlement struggled for the control of the same natural resources of water, grass and soil. It was not a romantic frontier like the American West or heroic like the North-West frontier of India. ...The stuff of legend is not easily found in the process which turned Ama-Xhosa, Zulus or Basuto into farm labourers, kitchen servants or messengers." ⁶⁶

The frontier was viewed as conflictual by the 'early' liberal writers, but it also was portrayed as a 'stage' of immense importance. It was there that the central players unwittingly were "...engaged in the formation of a new society and the establishment of new economic and social bonds." ⁶⁷ Hence, there emerged a reworked notion of the frontier which emphasized its adaptability in relation to labour practices and its economic integration, particularly through trade and commodity production although these practices were acknowledged to vary along the continuum of domination. Legassick himself was to renarrativize the past, by shifting the centre stage from the frontier to the mineral revolution of the north and to focus on the growth of capitalism and the relations of production that were to emerge from the late 1870s onwards. ⁶⁸

⁶⁶ De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa*, 1972, p 48.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1972, p 49.

⁶⁸ At the same time as Legassick's analysis of the frontier was published, Lamar and Thompson edited *The Frontier in History*, 1981, which provided a comparative view of the American Western and the South African frontiers in a collection of paired articles which covered aspects such as economic and religious interventions on the frontier. Lamar and Thompson expanded on their understanding of the comparative method by drawing out 'similarities and differences' between the American and South African frontiers. Lamar and Thompson justified their use of the

Although the notion of the frontier has not retained the prominence it held in earlier historiography, there have been a number of recent forays into its contested terrain. Current versions have focused on the language and representation of the frontier and its metaphorical constitution. In his article, the *Fish River Bush and the Place of History*, Anderson discusses representations of the 'frontier bush' and he argues that landscape should be understood ideologically and should be recognized as an 'idea' that has become embedded in the historiography of the frontier.⁶⁹ I shall provide a fairly extensive discussion of the landscape and the frontier wars in a later chapter.

In her examination of the period 1850-1858, Elbourne focuses on the Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Kat River area.⁷⁰ This Rebellion had a crucial impact on the nature and duration of the 8th Frontier War and Elbourne argues it was influential in altering understandings of 'race' at that time. According to Elbourne, the 8th Frontier War has been portrayed as a 'redemptive moment' in relation to 'class and race unity' by a number of historians.⁷¹ While acknowledging the alliance between the Xhosa and the Khoi, she identifies a number of other "...interlocking areas of concern: 'manliness' and honour, the role of narrative in 'self understanding' and the relationship between religion and politics."⁷² The conscious 'unity' of Khoi and Xhosa against the British and the settlers was an exceptional development in this war, although Elbourne is at pains to separate the 'redemptive moments' from the less triumphalist aspects of this cooperation. She endeavours to understand the reasons behind the splintering of the Khoikhoi community between 'loyalists' and rebels. She also makes reference to the 'loyal' levies: the Mfengu and the Khoikhoi who remained in the Cape Mounted Riflemen (CMR).

The reason Elbourne's article has been selected for closer attention is that there are certain limitations to her article which I think lie in the incomplete attention given to military history. A richer understanding of "manhood"⁷³ could have emerged if the prominent Khoikhoi rebel leader Uithaalder's role in the CMR had been discussed in greater detail. Eye witness accounts from officers in the CMR describe the eerie feelings evoked when overhearing replications of their drill and the reveilles echoing from the rebels' camp.⁷⁴ The CMR 'rebels', who were well-drilled soldiers, persisted in performing the diurnal routines of their former regiment. Much of what was termed Uithaalder's '*koninglik*' behavior by contemporary associates in fact replicated the rituals of officers in the Victorian army. These performances were not merely expressions of his 'manliness' and honour as suggested by Elbourne. Loyalties to one's regiment as well as loyalty to one's church would have played a role in the "divided self of colonialism".⁷⁵

comparative method by positing that the approach challenged parochialism and provided "a counterpoint to narrow specialization". A number of limitations of the method emerge from the text, for example, over – generalization and a litany of 'similarities and differences. Lamar and Thompson, *The Frontier in History*, 1981, p 12.

⁶⁹ Anderson, '*The Fish River Bush and the Place of History*', *South African Historical Journal*, Vol 53, 1, 2005.

⁷⁰ Elbourne, '*Race, War and Religion*', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol 13, 1, 2000.

⁷¹ Ibid., 2000, p 17.

⁷² Ibid., 2000, p 17.

⁷³ Ibid., 2000, p 30.

⁷⁴ Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1992.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1992, p 31.

Additional themes that emerge from the writings of Ross and Elbourne are those of shame and respectability.⁷⁶ There were assertions of ‘manliness’ in the personal letters between Khoikhoi rebels and also calls for unity and nationhood in attempts to restore honour.⁷⁷ Here too, one can contend that the inclusion of military narrative will provide more nuanced understandings of these themes. Firstly, shame and ‘divided loyalties’ amongst the Khoi were compounded by ‘disloyalties’ towards the military. Not many soldiers from the CMR rebelled: they were drilled and seasoned campaigners. Elbourne does not always explain the reversal of loyalties sufficiently. Mass desertion, in this case about 25 to 30%, from a regiment was fairly rare: loyalty to a regiment, internalized discipline and fear of the court marshal usually kept soldiers in their place.⁷⁸ The landless and the indigent formed the majority of the rebels in the 8th Frontier War, but there were also ‘respectable’, mission educated rebels whose motives for desertion require closer scrutiny.⁷⁹

Keegan’s book, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*, provides an overview of the Cape Colony in the first half of the 19th century.⁸⁰ His focus is on imperial and colonial ‘structuring forces’ and as such is not primarily concerned with the details of people’s lives or with their resistance to colonization. As is evident from the title of his book, his major concern is with the origins of racial stratification of South African society. He attributes later patterns of racial differentiation in South Africa to mercantile and early capitalist relations of production that existed in the first half of the 19th century. He is at pains to distance himself from economic reductionist understandings of the 19th Century, however, his emphasis on the economy and its impact on the imperial and colonial inroads into South African society means that his thesis returns insistently to the ‘economic base’ of society. However, there is much that is useful for this research in that he provides information concerning paths of trade into the Eastern Cape as well as providing an economic overview of the Eastern Cape in the 19th century. His research on gun-running in the Eastern Cape is of particular relevance to this study.

Crais’s *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa* is concerned with “questions of culture and dominance” in the Eastern Cape between 1770 and 1865.⁸¹ The study seeks to address the “problems of context, causality and agency” in conjunction with “the programmatic and analytical vigour of the post modern critique with its emphasis on power, discourse and representation”.⁸² It is a history which purports to explore the “intricate workings of colonial power which often accompanied conquest – for example the reorganization of space and the myriad contestations over language and identity”; all of which contributed to the legitimization of the colonial project.⁸³ My study poses similar questions but I have addressed them more narrowly to military narrative and to the conflict of the

⁷⁶ Ross, *Status and Respectability*, Cambridge University Press, 2009; Elbourne, ‘*Race, War and Religion*’, 2000

⁷⁷ Elbourne, ‘*Race, War and Religion*’, 2000, p 33.

⁷⁸ Everson, *The South Africa 1853 Medal*, Samson Books, London, 1978, p 133.

⁷⁹ Elbourne, ‘*Race, War and Religion*’, 2000.

⁸⁰ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*, 1996; Legassick, *The Struggle for the Eastern Cape, 1800- 1854*, KMM Review Publishing Company, Johannesburg, 2010.

⁸¹ Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

⁸² Ibid., 1992, p 2.

⁸³ Ibid., 1992, p 2

frontier wars. My enquiry is more chronologically contained than this study as it focuses on the period between 1834 and 1853; years which were central to the adversarial conditions of colonial conquest.

Crais's purview incorporates 18th Century preindustrial relations at the Cape. He includes a discussion of British colonialism from 1806 in which he addresses issues of settler identity the increasing dependency of settlers on indigenous labour post the influx of British settlers in 1820. Subsequent sections discuss more 'ideological' concerns such as the 'naturalization' of white supremacy, which was impelled by the frontier wars, and increasingly exhibited itself in the deprecation and 'othering' of the Xhosa and Khoikhoi.

The Furies descended on the Eastern Cape during the frontier wars, spreading death and pursuing a vengeful destruction on Xhosa polities, for an analysis of the violence which permeated the conflict, I have referred to Crais's *Poverty, War and Violence in South Africa*.⁸⁴ In part, Crais's concern is to demonstrate how past colonial violence has affected current poverty levels of black inhabitants in the Eastern Cape Province. Violence was a persistent thread running through the military narratives and Crais addresses the 'prosecution of violence' during the frontier wars, in particular the 8th Frontier War.⁸⁵ He proposes that,

"One goal of this book is to reawaken interest in topics that may seem to those within the cultural turn to be decidedly old hat and uninteresting – topics such as warfare, crop history and colonial policy"⁸⁶

From my perspective, warfare and colonial policy are current and absorbing topics, even if they have an uncomfortably old-fashioned location within the historiographical arena. Crais places violence at the centre of the colonial project and broadens its scope in a consideration of the effects of war on women and children who suffered deprivation and often starvation as a result of the British army's slash and burn policies which destroyed Xhosa crops and homesteads. This thesis will examine the effects of violence on the Xhosa and how violence was construed in the military narratives. This concern will be imbricated within the discussion as a specific chapter has not been assigned to the topic.

Premesh Lalu's, *Deaths of Hintsa*, stands at an interesting juncture in relation to my research. Lalu's analysis is situated within a strain of subaltern studies which privileges a post-structuralist, discursive engagement with the historical record. Drawing on Lalu, I have found the notion of "intellectual agency" germane to my study as it helps to explain how the Xhosa particularly as tacticians were undermined in military narratives. Lalu also addresses the vagaries of the archive. He argues that the colonial archive is deeply contaminated and that historians should be cognizant of its epistemological presumptions. Lalu's analysis induces a reassessment of the archive but I have failed to view the archive in a consistently skeptical light. I acknowledge that the Xhosa were spoken for in military texts in imaginative ways which distorted, reconfigured and diminished their autonomy and their agency. In addition, although, my

⁸⁴ Crais, *Poverty War and Violence in South Africa*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2011.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p 9.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p 8.

research has addressed issues around representation and the production of narratives I have found the extraction of certain facts from the archive to be unavoidable.⁸⁷

The following section provides a brief overview of books and articles which were written specifically on the frontier wars or have included substantial sections on these wars. As Peires points out the Xhosa Wars have been considered to be far less glamorous than the Zulu War.⁸⁸ However, some of the books under review, particularly *Frontiers*, have become absorbed into the popular imagination and have influenced our understandings of the Frontier Wars and their significance in relation to social relationships in the 19th Century Cape.⁸⁹

Milton's *The Edges of War* is a concise and well-informed account of the Frontier Wars.⁹⁰ Peires describes Milton's book as "clear and accurate but rather light on analysis".⁹¹ In concurrence with this, Milton claims that he is not an historian and has not written "academic work". The book is described as being suitable for the "general reader" and presents "a new and entertaining account of the long struggle between Europeans and Africans that took place along the eastern frontier of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."⁹² In some respects the book is more than this. His assessment of the Frontier Wars provides a sympathetic perspective of the Xhosa. However, it is a 'balanced' account, as is expected of 'liberal' explanations, and he does not lose sight of the considerable hardship the British soldier underwent during the campaigns.

Mostert's *Frontiers*, has been dismissed by historians such as Stapleton as being 'journalistic' and as accepting "...much of the settler mythology which has been incorporated into most schools of South African history."⁹³ But his work remains important, it has popularized the history of the frontier and, despite its putative journalistic status, it has been cited by a number of reputable historians. The text remains distinctive for its use of a variety of primary and secondary sources and for its imbrications of local and global events. Admittedly, Mostert's prose can be florid, but his work provides a number of fruitful pointers to primary sources and can be used judiciously as a source, particularly in relation to internal settler politicking.

In his biography of Maqoma, a major protagonist on the Xhosa side in the 6th and 8th Frontier wars, Stapleton expends much effort in attempting to resurrect and rescue his subject from colonial disapprobrium.⁹⁴ His work is distinctive in that he makes use of oral sources accrued through interviewing the descendants of Maqoma in the 1990s.⁹⁵ His methodology could have set him apart

⁸⁷ Even the arch 'tropologist' Hayden White did not deny that events 'happened'. White, *Figural Realism*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2000.

⁸⁸ Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003.

⁸⁹ Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1992.

⁹⁰ Milton, *The Edges of War*, Juta, Cape Town, 1983.

⁹¹ Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003, p 395.

⁹² Milton, *The Edges of War*, 1983, Frontispiece.

⁹³ Stapleton, *Maqoma*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1992, p 190

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1992.

⁹⁵ Stapleton's account does not always demonstrate the reach of Peires's *House of Phalo*, 2003. Peires uses a wide range of sources which included colonial and metropolitan archival research and oral testimony accrued from a number of inhabitants of the Eastern Cape.

from historians who rely primarily on archival material, but, curiously, the inclusion of oral testimony does not seem to have expanded his analysis of the history of the frontier significantly and he himself relies heavily on 'settler' texts for information. Stapleton's brief overview of the literature betrays more than a modicum of subjectivity. For example, he considers the historian Samuel Mqhayi as more or less having successfully escaped "...the settler dominated history of his mission education".⁹⁶ But did Mqhayi really 'escape'? Because we also learn that he was influenced by the "writings of nineteenth century humanitarians such as Pringle."⁹⁷ This seems central to what is problematical about Stapleton, there are essentially 'good' sources or there are 'bad', and this Manichean version provides little understanding of the contradictions found in colonial texts. In addition, Stapleton's articulation of the Mfengu has come under historiographical review. According to Stapleton, the Mfengu were not refugees from the social tremors caused by Shaka (the 'Mfecane') but were in fact a category invented by British colonial structures at the Cape.⁹⁸ I have circumvented the historiographical debates which surround the 'Mfecane', in part because a detailed overview of the British military allies, particularly the Mfengu, has not been provided in this thesis. This is admittedly a regrettable omission, because military authors were keen to separate the 'Fingoes' from the Xhosa in their narratives and a lengthier discussion of the Mfengu would have helped in highlighting how polities were differentiated by 19th century authors.⁹⁹

Peires's *The House of Phalo* and *The Dead Will Arise* both contain information on the Xhosa and their material culture and discuss the frontier wars.¹⁰⁰ Peires suggests that although there were frequent raids and counter raids between antagonistic groups, wars were rare amongst the Xhosa. When there were wars they were relatively "bloodless".¹⁰¹ The question that this elicits is why the Xhosa were prepared to go to war with the colonial and imperial forces on such a catastrophic scale and with such ensuing devastation? Peires attributes much of this determination to the erosion of land rights and to the loss of honour. *The Dead Will Arise* investigates the 8th Frontier War in some detail but its primary focus is the Cattle Killing of 1856 which falls outside of the scope of this study. Peires, however, does examine the major theatres of the 8th Frontier War and his discussion points to the implications of the escalation of brutality and atrocities committed on both sides in the 8th Frontier War.

Peires includes insertions in both his books on Xhosa fighting techniques, the 'warrior', the strategy and tactics and the adoption of technology during the Frontier Wars. The Xhosa proved to be remarkably

⁹⁶ Stapleton, *Maqoma*, 1992, p 12.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 1992, p 13.

⁹⁸ See Stapleton, *Maqoma*, 1994, pp 49, 50. Stapleton argues that the 'Fingoes' were not refugees from 'Natal' instead a "...cover story was fabricated for the enslavement of the Rharhabe. Displaced by colonial cattle raids, many frontier Xhosa living around certain mission stations were described as 'Fingoes' who had fled Zulu-ravaged Natal. This allowed them to be brought into the colony and hired out to settlers – a sort of coercive labour recruitment camouflaged as philanthropy." Stapleton, *Maqoma*, 1994, p 50.

⁹⁹ On the other hand, authors did not always represent the Mfengu in exact ways and stereotypes of 'happy', 'good-tempered' and 'willing' Mfengu abound in the narratives. See Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, Africana Book Society, Johannesburg, 1975, pp 90, 91. The book was first published in 1878 by Chapman and Hall, London. Also see King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, Saunders and Otley, London, 1853, pp 101, 163.

¹⁰⁰ Peires, *House of Phalo*, 2003; *The Dead Will Arise*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2003.

¹⁰¹ Peires, *House of Phalo*, 2003, p 155.

adaptive in their tactics and their use of firearms. Peires's discussion of the political economy of the Xhosa provides insight into the material base of the Wars. For instance, both Peires and Saunders attribute the achievements of the imperial forces to superior technology and to the capacity of the Army Commissariat.¹⁰² Peires highlights the inability of the Xhosa to sustain their forces in the field without regular supplies of food, a dearth that was further undermined by the systematic burning of crops and homesteads by the imperial forces.¹⁰³

In relation to 19th century journals and narratives, Peires writes that the "War of 1834-1835 is exceptionally well documented."¹⁰⁴ However, he argues that there "is no good account of the war of Mlangeni or the 8th Frontier War."¹⁰⁵ He acknowledges that a number of memoirs by soldiers have been published, but only King, Mackay and Stubbs "have any substance" and only Lumley Graham "shows even the remotest sympathy for the Xhosa."¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, it will be argued in this thesis that biography, as a genre, has value in that it provides a route into broader social understandings and analysis. Penn argues that often the lives that do not subscribe to the social mores of the time, the marginalized and the miscreants, cast light onto the historical social fabric. Biographies can reveal the complexity of identity and the paradoxes and inconsistencies that can be manifested in one person's life separated by time and space or by shifting events.¹⁰⁷ I do not wish merely to provide empirical evidence from the narratives and diaries under scrutiny. I intend to try to elicit a sense of the cultural identity and the constraints and prohibitions imbricated within these discourses. I also wish to demonstrate the divergence and connectivity of military, metropolitan and colonial narratives.¹⁰⁸

Methodology

My organization of the narratives examined in this thesis will be chronological and thematic. Certain chapters will address topics such as the landscape, ethnography and the 19th Century publishing domain. The three Wars require some distinction because they were specific in their 'origins', length, and the progress: Xhosa and regular army strategy and tactics took different paths and revised settler attitudes emerged in the aftermath of the Wars.

Jenkins in *Rethinking History* suggests that historical narratives require internal coherence and consistency but whether strict methodological rules can be established is dubious and misleading if one hopes that these rules can lead to the 'truth' concerning the past. In effect, history as a discipline is subject to reordering and is a contested rather than a fixed discourse. Recent developments in

¹⁰² Peires, *House of Phalo*; 2003; Saunders, "Political Processes in the Southern Frontier Zones", 1981.

¹⁰³ Peires, *House of Phalo*, 2003.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 2003, p 283.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 2003, p 283.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 2003, p 395.

¹⁰⁷ Penn, *Rogues, Rebels and Runaways*, David Philip, Cape Town, 2003.

¹⁰⁸ The following journals and published narratives of the Frontier Wars constitute some of the more prominent sources: John Bisset, *Sport and War*, Murray, London, 1875; Thomas Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975; King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853; Lumley Graham, *Memoirs 1851- 1853*, Unpublished manuscript, NAM, London. Godlonton's *A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes* (1965) is considered influential in the shaping of settler attitudes in the Eastern Cape.

historiography, described by Jenkins as 'post modern', open up possibilities of resisting 'certaintist disciplinary procedures' in the writing of history and provide historical approaches which are more concerned with discontinuity and difference.¹⁰⁹ In his theory of historiography as metahistory, White argues that any historical work is manifestly a 'verbal' structure which takes the form of a narrative prose discourse. The theoretical import of this statement lies in White's recognition of the prefiguration of histories by historians into argued, ideological and encoded narratives. He argues that, "...we cannot regard the historical text as an unproblematic, neutral container of content, supposedly given its entirety by a reality which exists beyond its confines."¹¹⁰ Even though White's narrative theory is concerned with histories, specifically secondary sources, rather than with diaries and personal narratives, it will be argued that the 19th Century narratives under review attempted to provide 'histories' of their times and that White's theories can be applied to these works with some modification.

According to White, historians begin with 'traces': records, data which are then interwoven into a 'story' which becomes a narrative. Historians work on their explanations by argument, ideology and emplotment. White proposes that there are four narrative elements of argument used by historians, those of formism, organicism, mechanism and contextualism. White also suggests that historians need to be 'culturally resonant'. In this sense, historians, by necessity should draw on "culturally provided mythoi within their social formation" so that the history resonates with its readers. In order to do this a history tends to be emplotted or encoded by making the narrative consistently and sufficiently 'archetypal' to enable it to be grasped by its readers.¹¹¹ A number of the narratives that will be examined in the following chapters portray at least some of these aspects and although White's theory no longer holds a dominant theoretical position in this thesis, I shall present a selective account of narrative theory.

White proposes that the 'poetic act' of prefiguration by the historian includes the following devices: elements of emplotment which comprise modes of romance, comedy, tragedy and satire; ideology which comprises anarchy, conservatism, radicalism, liberalism, and four tropes: metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy and irony.¹¹² The four most familiar plots found in western culture are romance, which is characterized by a triumph of good over evil, for example, the defeat of Hitler by the Allied forces; satire: people are captives of the world and have little or no agency, death is the universal nemesis; comedy: there are trials and tribulations in the world but these are overcome and there is a happy ending - after all society is a better place for these tribulations; and finally, there is tragedy: things invariably go wrong, there will always be greed and corruption and aspirations are circumscribed by human frailties.¹¹³ Ideologies are of four different varieties: liberal, conservative, radical and anarchist. Each position has specific views on change and the pace of change.¹¹⁴ Finally, there are the four tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony. Tropes are used by historians because 'events' of the past

¹⁰⁹ Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, Routledge Classics, Oxford, 2007.

¹¹⁰ White, *Figural Realism*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2000, p 25.

¹¹¹ Jenkins, *On What is History?*, Routledge, London 1995, p 160.

¹¹² Ibid., 1995.

¹¹³ Ibid., 1995.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 1995, p 164.

cannot describe themselves and their 'relationships', it is the historian who has to make the unfamiliar familiar through figures of speech.¹¹⁵

Whitean explanations would seem to present a litany of incontrovertible quadruples and this raises certain difficulties and limitations in White's theory, as he is adamant that all narratives contain examples of or compounds of at least some of these traits. In fact, if one thinks within the orbit of White, one is going to encounter any number of criticisms. The major objections directed against White's approach to historical discourse are the following. Firstly, the theory commits historians to linguistic determinism and to being trapped within the confines of language. Secondly, the focus on the figurative aspects of language relegates history to 'fiction', hence the 'objectivity' of the historical study is undermined in that there can no longer be an appeal to the 'facts' to justify or criticize an historical interpretation. Thirdly, "...in suggesting that a story can only be a construction of language and a fact of discourse, appears to undermine the legitimacy of the claims of scientificity, the tropological theory of historical discourse also dissolves the traditional narrative historian's claiming to have provided a story that is true rather than imaginary."¹¹⁶ In countering these criticisms, White argues that an acknowledgement of the fictive, instead of undermining the theory of tropology, points to the significance of engaging with contested notions of the truth and with providing a critique of the positivism, mimeticism and empiricism which are evident and often taken for granted in historical narratives. In addition, tropological theory does not collapse the difference between fact and fiction but redefines the relations between them within any given discourse. We are cautioned by White not to confuse facts with events: "events happen, whereas facts are constituted by linguistic description."¹¹⁷

The limitations of White's narrative theory have prompted me to engage with notions of representation, identity and alterity. The notions of 'othering' and the 'western gaze' are most frequently associated with Edward Said. An intention in his prominent text, *Orientalism*, is to fracture the Eurocentric assumptions underpinning the representations of the 'east'. The question of representation remains central to Said's analysis. As young points out,

"Orientalism argues that a complex set of representations was fabricated which for the west effectively became the 'Orient' and determined its understanding of it, as well as providing the basis for its self appointed imperialist rule."¹¹⁸

Said has been a major theoretical force in postcolonial writing and his notion that it was not only physical force that maintained the empire but also powerful representations of the 'other' found in a variety of discursive endeavours has remained influential. For instance, colonial ideas around what constitutes an enemy, allow individuals and groups to define themselves against the barbarism, impudence, unruliness, murderousness they see in the 'other'. As indicated earlier this is by and large a 'cultural' study and within this context attempts to deploy the methods of history alongside those of discursive analysis. Young proposes that the Saidian 'turn' within the realm of literary and cultural

¹¹⁵ White, *Metahistory*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1973, p 34.

¹¹⁶ White, *Figural Realism*, 2000, p 15

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 2000, p 18.

¹¹⁸ Young, *White Mythologies*, Routledge, London, 1990, p 126.

studies provided a significant shift towards colonialism's 'discursive operations' and precipitated a disengagement from the dominance of the material sphere.¹¹⁹ He writes,

"...an intimate connection between the language and forms of knowledge developed for the study of cultures and the history of colonialism and imperialism. This meant that the kinds of concepts and representations used in literary texts, travel writings, memoirs and academic studies...could be analysed as a means for understanding the diverse ideological practices of colonialism."¹²⁰

Said's indebtedness to Foucauldian concepts enabled him to privilege the 'imaginary' and the subjective in his exposition of colonialism in ways that allow for the influence of material conditions but do not necessarily concede a determining role to the economy. On the contrary, according to Said, it is the economically autonomous 'cultural sphere', which plays a determining and substantive role in the construction of colonial societies.¹²¹ In addition, Said proposes that it is the western imaginary or the phantasmagorical that shaped the 'Orient'. The 'Orient' only existed within the minds of colonizers and how they desired to see it. In this construction the well-worn topographical Marxist model of social base and superstructure is forced to make way for what amounts to the constitutive force of the 'imaginary'. This means that the discursive rendering of the 'Orient', or the colony, takes on a life of its own and bears little resemblance to the actuality of the physical 'Orient'.

This position has faced concentrated criticism from a number of sources: it has been contended that Said's approach that the Orient as a western 'fantasy' does not allow for the specificities of geography, the detailed conditions of colonization, nor for the great variety of colonial incursions.¹²² For instance, missionary invasiveness in the colonies took on a different form and had different consequences from the propulsion of an imperial army. Furthermore, Said's own basilisk stare on the 'west' has its own blind spots: in Saidian terms the 'west' tends to be rendered in hypostasized ways and secondly, specifically in his study of Orientalism, an under-representation of subaltern voices is evident. However this lacuna has been balanced by the burgeoning field of subaltern studies which focuses on the repressed and their narratives. Young suggest that,

"The most productive revisions of Said's work have therefore focused on the question of representation, mediated with analyses of counter-histories or the effects of colonialism on colonial subjects and the forms of their subjectivity."¹²³

This study will grapple with the exigencies of metropolitan, 'western' representation as it cannot claim to resurrect the subaltern voice in any sustained manner.

Gender

Although gender, specifically masculinity, is not a central component of the research, it is a constitutive part of identity one needs to recognize that comportment, styles of demeanour all played a role in the

¹¹⁹ Young, *Colonial Desire*, Routledge, Oxford, 1995, p 159.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 1995, p 159.

¹²¹ Ibid., 1995, p 159.

¹²² Ibid., 1995, p 160.

¹²³ Ibid., 1995, p 161.

composition of military status and identity. Gendered studies of travellers such as Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* have provided important insights into notions of social and masculine status. In his article, *Men, Science, Travel and Nature in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Cape*, Beinart argues for a "more fluid approach to masculinity and science."¹²⁴ While acknowledging the contributions of Pratt and others have made to understandings of male domination in natural science, he contends that scientific endeavours at the Cape were not only extractive and exploitative and that masculinity expressed through travel writing was more complex, various and alternative than is sometimes portrayed in the work of authors such as Pratt. Beinart also re-evaluates Pratt's contention that travelling naturalists omitted to include 'indigenous voices' in their records and by referring to the journals of Sparrman and Burchell amongst others, he argues that Pratt's claims are 'exaggerated' and that naturalists in the 18th and 19th centuries frequently named and described the indigenous people they employed or encountered.¹²⁵

He concludes that even though "masculinity, scientific enquiry, exploitation of nature, European expansion and colonial domination have a complex interconnection", one needs to complicate understandings of masculinity as some of the writings contain elements of alternative, disjunctive discourses such as humanitarianism and anti-colonialism and provide expressions of vulnerability and informality.¹²⁶ There are certain parallels between travel writing and military journals which will be considered in this study. Firstly, the familiar and masculinist tropes of the 'adventure story' and the 'hunting yarn' permeate both these genres.

In summation, enquiries into the narratives will be driven by a number of research questions concerned with issues of identity and masculinity, representation of the enemy and aesthetic responses to the environment. Hence, the nineteenth century sources or 'traces' will be approached from perspectives which engage with ideas emanating from cultural studies and literary criticism. The research will also address the form of 19th century military narratives. Attention to the form of a text or to systems of figurative language could be construed as a means of avoiding the many-headed hydra of evidence, that is, by examining the lineaments of a text one does not have to engage in battle with the 'facts' and their authenticity.¹²⁷ However, some of my research questions have drawn me ineluctably into using the texts as 'evidence'. Finally, a defining aspect of the 19th Century army is that it was a global enterprise: troops at the Cape might have emanated from Britain, but they were seasoned by encounters in other countries such as India and Madagascar. Thus the Cape will be construed within a global context in an attempt to reconfigure its conventional portrayal as an isolated colony with an attenuated relationship with the British imperial government.

¹²⁴ Beinart, 'Men, Science, Travel and Nature', 1998, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 24, No 4, 1998, p 775.

¹²⁵ Forbes, *Anders Sparrman, A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1977; Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Longman, London, 1824.

¹²⁶ Beinart, 'Men, Science, Travel and Nature', 1998, p 799.

¹²⁷ See White's discussion on tropology in *Figural Realism*, 2000, p 10.

Outline and Structure of Chapters

I spent some time agonizing over the sequencing of the subsequent chapters. I wavered between placing them in chronological order or opting for a thematic approach. The final structure was a compromise: I have retained a semblance of chronological order in that I shall start with the 6th Frontier War and end with the 8th but I have interwoven chapters which are thematic in content. I originally intended to place Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 at the end of the thesis; this decision then saw a dramatic reversal and they now constitute the introductory chapters of the study. A major reason for this reshuffle is that the chapter on the army and its organization provides an overview of military terminology and operations and, I hope, goes some way to being a corrective to the elisions, and the imprecision, which sometimes encumber current accounts of the Eastern Cape.

Chapter 2

The regular army at the Cape during the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars: their weaponry and tactics

This chapter holds something of an anomalous status in that it is not directly concerned with the representation of the enemy. Rather it stands somewhere between Chapter 5 which considers the questions of landscape in military narratives and Chapter 8 which investigates representations of the Xhosa as fighters. This chapter examines the weaponry used by the regular army; its tactical adaptation to conditions on the frontier and how these were narrated in published and unpublished journals. This discussion seeks to examine the complex, and at times mimetic, interrelationship between the army and resisting indigenous communities on the frontier. However, the notion of complicity does not necessarily imply that there was a sense of ‘common suffering’ in the wars in that both sides experienced hardship but in different ways and with different outcomes; nor does it imply that social interaction was free of racially defined, subjugating practices.

Chapter 3

Military ‘pens and pencils’: frontier war narratives and their imagined public

The second part of the chapter turns away from the regular army and its tactics and examines what military authors wrote about the frontier wars. This introductory section addresses the vagaries of military narrative publication during the period 1834- 1853. In addition, it will attempt to identify that elusive, indistinct throng: the reading audience. To this end I have become a fervent reader of *Prefaces* which often revealed at least some of the authors’ ideas about their reading audiences and provided hints of personal information. I shall focus on the social context of these publications and their migration to their reading public: a public which in this discussion will be interpreted as being ‘imagined’ as much as it was also ‘real’.

Chapter 4

“The air bubble floating down the stream”: Godlonton’s representations of the ‘enemy’ and the 6th Frontier War

This chapter examines the 6th Frontier War (1834 – 1835) and is illustrative of a departure from metropolitan military texts in that its focus is on one of the principal colonial authors of the frontier wars: Robert Godlonton. Godlonton covered all three of the wars in articles for the *Graham’s Town Journal* in his capacity as editor. He produced two books about the wars: *The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes* which was published in 1835 and *Narrative of the Kaffir War 1850-1852* first published in 1853. This chapter will focus predominantly on *The Irruption of the Kaffir Horde*. The chapter is intended as a theoretical elaboration of some of the propositions covered in Chapter 1 but it also aims to capture Godlonton’s representations of the enemy and his ‘settler’ constructions of the enemy as fighters and as ethnographic subjects. It will argue that Godlonton’s perspective on the frontier wars differed in significant ways from military authors.

Chapter 5

Landscape and the frontier wars: “The gloomy and profound thickets – the rugged and frowning precipices”

This chapter examines representations of the landscape in military narratives and dispatches emanating from the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars. A primary focus in military texts was on the pragmatic function of landscapes and their provision of vital topographical information for military expeditions. However, it will be argued that engagement with the landscape was not only about military control of the topography; a closer examination of the texts demonstrates that the narrative uses of landscape were multifarious. Responses to the landscape ranged from aesthetic renderings to uneasy accounts of “gloomy and profound thickets”. This paper also will explore how the landscape was troped to provide insight into the exigencies of a campaign: landscape frequently denoted inaccessibility and *travail* for the troops and was suggestive of why regular soldiers often failed to prevail over the Xhosa.

Chapter 6

The 7th Frontier War: The Narratives of Harriet Ward and Edward Napier

Two authors stand out in this war: Harriet Ward and Edward Elers Napier both of whom displayed a heightened lack of sympathy towards the Xhosa. This chapter discusses the rhetoric which resounded from the exigencies of the 7th Frontier War. Ward and Napier provided ‘conservative’ narratives of the 7th Frontier War and I shall juxtapose some of their arguments with those of contemporaneous ‘philanthropic’ accounts. I shall argue that Ward and Napier were influential in projecting acutely negative representations of the Xhosa into the metropolitan domain. My focus is primarily on Harriet Ward and the chapter attempts to capture something of her role and context as a woman author and polemicist in the 1840s.

Chapter 7

Ethnographic representations of the Xhosa

How the Xhosa were represented as 'ethnographic' subjects lies at the heart of this chapter. Nearly every military narrative devoted a chapter or two to the 'culture' and 'habits' of the Xhosa.

Representations of the 'ethnographic' chapters sometimes stood in stark contrast to chapters devoted to skirmishing and campaigning which were prone to invoke experiential knowledge with regard to the Xhosa. It will be argued that the 'ethnographic' chapters stood outside of the campaigning components of the narratives. Reasons for this demarcation are predicated on the argument that the ethnographic accounts were more 'theoretical', inter-textual and authors made use of a selection of earlier sources. There were also continuities: most authors used Prichardian themes which privileged monogenesis to explain Xhosa culture. It will be argued that because of the iterative nature of the works and the practices of cross-referencing something of a grand narrative emerged; that is a more 'composite' picture of the Xhosa started to take root in this period.

Chapter 8

Representations of the Xhosa as fighters in the 8th Frontier War

I have chosen the 8th frontier War as the focus of this chapter as it was the longest and most sanguinary of the three wars. This chapter will examine representations of the Xhosa as fighters. It serves to complement the former chapter on ethnography. For most members of the regular army, colonial war was represented as one in which one fought 'savages', not gentlemen. However, there were additional, often incomplete, expressions immersed within military texts. In noteworthy ways the imperial lexus was undermined by its narrative form: the military texts were largely miscellanies, both in form and content, and because of the episodic nature of the books their lack of coherence meant that they could accommodate commentary that was not universally condemnatory of the enemy. I shall address this perplexing and contradictory component of military narrative.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study. The effects of the wars will be addressed and I shall identify areas which have been not been covered in sufficient depth in the thesis with a view to future research.

Chapter 2

The Regular Army at the Cape during the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars: their weaponry and tactics

Introduction

At first glance this chapter will appear to be a digression from the topic of representation; however, military representations of the 'enemy' were integrally tied to the tactics they deployed in the various theatres of war. Enemy tactics provided regular army and colonial authors with a diverse set of images from which to construct their narratives of the wars. However, it was not only representations of the 'enemy' which contributed to the multifarious readings of colonization; weaponry and tactics also informed how the regular army envisaged itself within this context. A purpose of this chapter is to consider military organization in colonial South Africa. British regiments had similar hierarchies and discipline but there was also a divergence of practice and of 'image' in the colonies. For this reason it is necessary to address the issue of military representation in the colonies independently from the metropolitan centre. This chapter has several objectives: a primary one is to provide an overview of the variety of weapons used during the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars from 1834 to 1853. In addition, the discussion will refer, more briefly, to weapons used by the Xhosa during the wars. The Xhosa were adept at modifying their tactics and a crucial component of this adjustment was their adoption of 'western' firearms which were used in increasing numbers over the duration of the three wars.¹ The discussion will not be concerned with the minutiae of small arms and artillery but aims to provide an overview of the modifications in technology and the concomitant adjustments to tactics during the campaigns in the colony.

Although a discussion of armaments is indisputably tied to the political economy of the first half of the nineteenth century, it also invites interpretations which de-emphasize this aspect, in that weaponry and tactics can provide understandings which engage with such diverse constructs as culture and identity. The British Government had a bearing on the frontier particularly in relation to funding decisions and to broader strategies such as the shipping of troops. However, it was the regular forces 'on the ground' who confronted a variety of conditions and adapted their tactics to counter military obstacles.² Remote theatres of operation meant that the officer class became increasingly more 'professionalized'; as these men were induced to make their own changes and decisions concerning tactics in the field.³ This meant that colonial officers invariably did not take orders directly from the army command in London, the Horse Guards, which was under the control of the Duke of Wellington as Commander-in-Chief until his death in 1852.

To some extent, colonial warfare in South Africa was the stepchild of the Napoleonic campaigns. Firstly, a significant contingent of officers and all the Governors from Sir Benjamin D'Urban to Sir George

¹ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996.

² Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985; Porch, *Wars of Empire*, Cassell, London 2001.

³ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985.

Cathcart, with the exception of Sir Henry Pottinger, had fought in these campaigns. Black relates that the French army changed after the Revolution and displayed a “battle culture of forbearance to one of attack”⁴ This has important implications for how the campaigns were fought in the Eastern Cape: even if the infantry were accused of ‘bunching up’ these criticisms suggested that there were other ways of fighting- loose order, skirmishing and fighting was not supposed to be in squares or columns or lines any more. Tactics shifted to adjust to the colonial arena, for instance, the integration of units from the infantry, cavalry and artillery, was to become a salient feature of ‘irregular’ or guerilla warfare in the colonies. But this integration was not new: it had been developed by Napoleon on his campaigns during which he had established a system based on combined units. The Napoleonic intention was to break up an enormous, conscripted army into smaller units. Needless to say this was not an imperative on the frontier where the regular army was relatively small, generally a few thousand men, but the combination of cavalry and infantry into fighting corps persisted and was in general use during the frontier wars.⁵

Colonial warfare also exhibited some fundamental differences from the conduct of regular European warfare. According to Citino, Napoleon used “three basic operational manoeuvres” in battle.⁶ These comprised complicated systems of formations and combined arms which were not practicable in the colonies where numbers of regular army forces were relatively small and enemy tactics irregular. In the colonies there was a marked shift from the European battle scenario which, very broadly, comprised the use of artillery, infantry in line, or in squares, followed by the deployment of cavalry at the end of a battle ‘to clean up’, in that casually brutal phrase, the broken squares or lines of enemy infantry. There were very few set battles in colonial warfare and indigenous people learnt very quickly to avoid this type of encounter.⁷ So what was different about warfare in colonial South Africa? Generally, the skirmish predominated in frontier warfare; however, this too was a Napoleonic development. During the Napoleonic campaigns, infantry were deployed to fight in spread-out, irregular groups of skirmishers, the *tirailleurs*, to worry the enemy before lines of heavy infantry were introduced to provide rolling firepower.⁸ In the case of South Africa, regular tactics were dominated by the topography, as will be discussed in a following chapter, and they were influenced by the Xhosa techniques of ambush and avoidance. Artillery was deployed as a matter of course but it was not considered by all members of the regular army to be consistently effective, particularly in mountainous areas. In addition, the Xhosa learnt to circumvent artillery fire in the field.⁹

⁴ Black, *Tools of War*, Quercus Publishing, London, 2007, p 18.

⁵ The numbers rose to nearly 9000 regular army soldiers in the 8th Frontier War. See Crais, *Poverty, War and Violence*, 2011, p 43.

⁶ Citino, *Decisive Victory*, University Press of Kansas, 2002.

⁷ Porch, *Wars of Empire*, 2001, p 67. In the Frontier Wars only one encounter was ‘dignified’ by the British with the appellation of ‘battle’: the ‘Battle of Gwangwa’, correctly Gwangqa, in the 7th Frontier War.

⁸ Citino, *Decisive Victory*, 2002.

⁹ See Berning, *The Historical “Conversations” of Sir George Cory*, Maskew Miller Longman, 1989, p 109. The following is from a conversation with ‘Maseti’ in 1910: “[We] then for the first time came into contact with cannons but [we] did not think much of them as they killed so few, while the Fingoes killed so many.” This might have applied to skirmishing episodes but British artillery fire wreaked havoc on Xhosa villages and resulted in the

Weaponry

A further objective in this chapter is to discuss the significance and the efficacy of weaponry in the colonization of South Africa during the first half of the 19th Century. The assumption is that western weaponry and technology provided an advantage in territorial colonization, however, this understanding has been questioned by a number of military historians.¹⁰ In the South African context, an undifferentiated reading of 19th Century military technology could obfuscate the limitations of weaponry, such as artillery, on the frontier and slide over the increased usage by the Xhosa of firearms. A discussion of weaponry and tactics could extend and qualify understandings of the frontier wars because campaigning also induced certain collusions which generated a number of imperatives for the British forces to adapt, in part, to the tactics of the Xhosa. By the same token, the Xhosa were both resisters, and fellow-travellers especially in relation to military technology, such as firearms, in the frontier region.

The firearms of the first half of the 19th Century demonstrated marked differences from those which superseded them in the 1850s. During the first half of the century, most regiments were reliant on muzzle-loading musketry.¹¹ The majority of infantry and cavalry carried smooth-bore firearms during the 6th Frontier War. These were replaced by smooth-bore percussion firearms in the 7th Frontier War, although rifled weapons were used by the Rifle Brigade in both the 7th and 8th Frontier Wars. It was only after the mid-1850s, with the introduction of the breech loading rifle and the use of ammunition such as the Minie bullet, that a technological advantage in weaponry was asserted in the colonies. As Strachan points out, it was from the mid-1850s in the Crimean War period that, “....the crucial determinant of tactical development became technological change, which affected a revolution in the power of small arms and promised another in that of artillery.”¹² The 1870s and 1880s in particular were to see an increase in western imperialism, during the era of the so-called Scramble for Africa, and a greater sophistication in weaponry technology.

It is easy to overlook the role of weaponry in the colonization of South Africa but it is also tempting to exaggerate its significance. In the latter instance, conventional wisdom suggests that the regular army succeeded in South Africa because of its access to superior technology. In fact, two dominant, and conflicting, themes emerge in secondary histories with regard to military intervention on the frontier. The first assumes advanced British military prowess and the technological superiority of the British army. One such example is provided by Saunders:

deaths of the elderly, women and children. See Crais, in *Poverty War and Violence*, 2011, for the effects of the frontier wars on civilians. On the other hand, artillery was not always effective in skirmishes especially in the mountainous Waterkloof and Amathole regions.

¹⁰ Porch, *Wars of Empire*, 2001; Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985.

¹¹ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1985, p ix.

“Thanks to technological innovations in Europe, white military muscle grew substantially; to the small bands of white settlers was added the organized might of British regiments and behind the British presence lay, at least in theory, the relatively limitless resources of the empire.”¹³

In addition he suggests that,

“Whites [also had] up-to-date firearms, the knowledge of how they might be best used, and a relatively plentiful supply of ammunition, but their parties were often extremely small and, being scattered over large areas, cut off from their fellows.”¹⁴

Thus the success of colonial incursion is attributed to superior, ‘western’ technology and even though the regiments are ‘scattered’ the assumption is that they will prevail. Military intervention unquestionably provided the blunt edge of oppression in the colonies but military historians have suggested that the regular army in the first half of the 19th century was not a consistently effective force in the colonial arena; at least not as a result of its superior technological access and ability. Porch asserts that, by and large, it was the wide-ranging organizational ability of the British Empire and in particular the reach of the British navy, which ensured a stream of provisions from the centre, and enabled the continued existence of imperial forces in the colonies.¹⁵ His analysis also contains an examination of how colonial subjects adjusted to western technology, particularly in the field of armaments. Thus his thesis, without demonstrating the triumphalism that sometimes mars such accounts, is cognizant of the significance and potency of indigenous resistance and its impact on metropolitan tactics. A second trope found in a number of histories is that the British army, at times, suffered defeat at the hands of the Xhosa because of its incompetence. This ineptitude was induced by a lumbering commissariat, the stifling and ostentatiously red uniforms worn by both men and officers in certain regiments; the fear and disorientation induced by an alien environment; their inappropriate tactics which were designed for set battles and an overweening military leadership’s ruinous lack of skill. In this instance, Stapleton provides a portrayal of the inherent limitations of the British army:

“The heavily forested ravines... contributed significantly to Jongumsobomvu’s ability to confuse and torment the British soldiers who were trained to fight large, set-piece battles in the open.”¹⁶

Furthermore he suggests that,

“Perhaps the greatest tribute to Maqoma’s military skill was that he humiliated the famous British Army and forced rather conservative officers to adapt to new African methods of fighting.”¹⁷

Stapleton’s position ignores one of the fundamentals of warfare which is that tactics frequently are turned back on the enemy and that the enemy requires to be ‘read’ before this can happen. This discussion seeks to examine the complex, and at times mimetic, interrelationship between the army and

¹³ Saunders, ‘*Political Processes in the Southern Frontier Zones*’, in Lamar and Thompson, *The Frontier in History*, Yale University Press, Massachusetts, 1981, p 156

¹⁴ Ibid., 1981, p 156.

¹⁵ Porch, *Wars of Empire*, 2001.

¹⁶ Stapleton, *Maqoma*, 1994, p 220.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1994, p 221.

resisting indigenous communities on the frontier. This complicity does not imply that there was a sense of 'common suffering' in the wars; nor does it imply that social interaction was free of racially defined, subjugating practices. In addition, as will be explored in later chapters, not all nineteenth century military narrators acknowledged that commonalities between the 'sides' existed in frontier warfare.

The regular army has been represented as both technologically proficient and as an inept, atrophied body. A more diverse picture emerges from 19th century military texts which incorporate themes of bravado and ruthlessness but also evoke hesitant narrations which, at times, reflect the disorientation of the regular forces in the field in South Africa. Indisputably, European methods of warfare often were not suitable to the 'peculiar' conditions of the frontier and western ordnance was not always practical in the bush. As Strachan suggests, "Each area of operations presented a radically different set of climatic and topographical conditions and the military organization of the indigenous populations passed through a similarly bewildering series of combinations."¹⁸ These 'impediments' also fed into certain conjectures and oversimplifications of the Xhosa: that they were more attuned to their environment; they did not suffer inordinately as they were inherently tough; they always found a path through the densest of bush and their minimal equipment meant that they were perpetually war-ready.

The British regular army was forced to adapt to colonial conditions and fresh troops especially were disadvantaged when confronted with an unfamiliar topography. Goldswain's account of an inexperienced officer posted from Mauritius to the Cape during the 1846 Frontier War is indicative of the ensuing dread and loss of face; especially when events were framed by the proscenium arch of the African bush. In recorded in his diary:

"The 90th. &c. tuck [took] up thear Quarters cloce under the Krantz and we [and] the burghers tuck the out side so so that had the Kaffers been following us we should have to stud the blunt [brunt] of the Kaffers [attack]. Leaut Walters was so fritned that he did not know what to do: he had never been out before on patrol as he had but jist rived from the Merrishes and had never been accustom to the wile senrey of Afrec and truly it did looked most offel having travled from daylight to dark thure the bush the hole of the time. Bradshaw and I was standing to gather planning out wich would be the best way to place our sentreys wen Mr Walters came up to us and soon after taped me on my shoulder: I turned to him and we left Bradshaw. He then asked me if I woud come and sleep with him as he was unaquanted with the Kaffers and if they did fall on ous he would not know how to act in the night as [going against] the Kaffers was not like going against a countrey like our selves"¹⁹

Goldswain was quick to contrast regular army indecision with settler competence in the field, so his account requires some filtering.²⁰ It also would be a mistake to assume that all fresh, regular troops and their officers were shaken by their experiences in the Eastern Cape bush. What frequently is omitted in frontier historiography is that the British army had had a long, global history of colonial warfare from at least the 18th Century in America and India and had learnt to adjust its methods of fighting long before its involvement in the South African frontier wars.

¹⁸ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1984, p 12.

¹⁹ Long, *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1949, pp 63, 64. The orthography and syntax are Goldswain's.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p 64. Goldswain ended up assisting the sergeant of the guard in the placement of the sentries.

'Savage' warfare

This section will return to some of the issues introduced above and will give more sustained attention to configurations of colonial warfare in the narratives. Boyden and Guy argue that, "long before its involvement on the Cape frontier the British army had accumulated ample experience in the waging of 'small wars'".²¹ Even though there might have been a lack of formalized doctrine on colonial warfare until the publication of the first edition of Colonel C E Caldwell's *Small Wars* in 1896, this did not mean that there was a lack of knowledge about this type of warfare as, "...it is clear that in a culture where military theorizing was predominantly oral, the British Army had learned on the job by adapting to conditions...."²² Not only was there a revision of tactics shaped by colonial experience but understandings of what distinguished strategy from tactics were also crystallized. Strachan observes that,

"Manoeuvre was circumscribed [in the colonies] and the nineteenth century colonial general understood strategy as little more than the organization of marches."²³

Hence, if the term 'strategy' was employed in the first fifty years of the 19th Century it generally indicated the wider conditions that fashioned the organization of campaigning such as marches and supply. Strachan's comment is perhaps too pithy: it certainly curtails the notion of the 'operational plan' which frontier war Generals, such as D'Urban, cherished even if they were unable to succeed in their broader strategic intentions. It also conceals the contestation around tactics that emerged during campaigns. During the 6th Frontier War of 1835-36, the Cape Governor, D'Urban, and Colonel Smith, his Chief-in-Command, had diverging ideas on how to conduct the campaign. In a letter to Juana, his wife, Smith provides a fragment of a conversation with D'Urban, whom Smith privately called 'Master':

"We are just going to take a ride – Master, me and escort- upon the road to the Kei with some of our guides...the dear old gentleman...thinks my guerilla ideas are far too wild. Today he said, "In your view of the case there is no combination. All is trusted to a blind succession of chances." So I bristled up and said, "General, war in itself is a succession of chances, like all other games. But science must be its basis, and the great science of war is to adapt its principles to the enemy you have to contend with and the nature of the country. If you do not, you give *him* so many chances of the game." This rather posed him. "Oh, certainly, I do not deny that on the contrary, I agree with it."²⁴

If one accepts this theatrical exchange, Strachan's reading which emphasizes the *ad hoc*, piecemeal approach to colonial warfare is probably accurate: 'operations' in the colonies were painted in broad brushstrokes and Harry Smith's perspective which emphasized 'guerilla' warfare generally prevailed over D'Urban's more formal, theoretical approach to the campaign. There was a tendency in colonial warfare to circumvent the planning and organization that went into set battle pieces. Improvisation, or the *coup d'oeil*, a sweeping glance of the terrain to assess its tactical capabilities, was considered to be the more pragmatic approach in the colonial arena. However, such practices sometimes precluded the effective

²¹ Boyden and Guy, *'ashes and blood'* (sic), National Army Museum, Clifford Press, Coventry, 1999, p 51.

²² Ibid., 1999, p 51.

²³ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1984, p 2.

²⁴ From *Extracts of Harry Smith's Letters to his Wife during the Kaffir War 1835*, Appendix IV, University of Pennsylvania, Online.

coordination of the different arms and undermined the functioning of the commissariat; factors which were to hamper the functioning of the regular army throughout all three wars. The 'sweeping glance' also underestimated the strength of the Xhosa as opponents, who often were unobservable, and this was to prove costly in terms of men, animals and commissariat stores for the regular forces.

The conversation between D'urban and Smith on strategy requires a short contextual location. Notions of strategy and tactics are so embedded in military narrative they have become 'normalized' and are often, erroneously, used synonymously. Yet, it was only at the end of the 18th Century that narratives of warfare became more disposed to theoretical study. It was then that notions such as strategy, which included large-scale planning and political decisions, and the concept of tactics, how to fight battles, became more closely defined. According to Van Creveld, the definition of strategy was linked to technological modifications in warfare and communications but was also contingent on developments in cartography when the army became less reliant on sketches and more dependent on maps based on triangulation.²⁵ Jomini, a Swiss officer in the service of Napoleon, consolidated this notion of strategy²⁶ in his first work published in 1804/5 and in his later book, *Precis de l'art de la guerre*, in 1830. Jomini did not consider strategy only within an abstract, two-dimensional space; he was also "...prepared to take into account such complicating factors as roads, rivers, mountains, forests, fortresses and the like which facilitated manoeuvre or obstructed it."²⁷ However, for Jomini, the primary device was to discover a 'system' or 'schema' which could guide the commander in these manoeuvres. The majority of enlightenment accounts privileged systems and rules over human foibles, variables and chance and Jomini's discourses on strategy were indebted to this insistence on rationality. Jomini attempted to promote a 'science' of war which meant that warfare was a rational, teachable activity' and palpably not subject to providence.²⁸ We see vestiges of this thinking in D'urban's adherence to the notion of deploying a combination of forces.

Barenhorst, a contemporary of Jomini, devised a theory which was to provide a counterpoint to systematized understandings of warfare. His writings were informed by ideas which were indebted to the intellectual climate of the 'Romantic Movement' and concepts such as genius, irrationality, unpredictability and the power of the human will prevailed in his writing.²⁹ According to Van Creveld both of the above strands of thinking found their way into Clausewitz's *On War* which was first published in Prussia.³⁰ Clausewitz tended to disparage the "effect of manoeuvre, surprise and stratagems of every kind" but he also emphasized adaptation to conditions on the ground and the qualities of improvisation and imagination were considered to be crucial to successful warfare.³¹ Hence there was a duality in Clausewitz's approach which incorporated the requirements of 'civilized', organized war, but also allowed for improvisation and adaptation. For Citino, Clausewitz's

²⁵ Van Creveld, *The Art of War*, 2000, p 106.

²⁷ Ibid., 2000, p 106.

²⁸ Ibid., 2000, p 111.

²⁹ Ibid., 2000, p 109.

³⁰ Clausewitz's *On War* was published posthumously between 1832 and 1834; see Strachan, *Clausewitz's On War*, 2007, p 1.

³¹ Van Creveld, *The Art of War*, Cassell, London, 2000, p 116.

understanding of war was the antithesis of Jomini's. Clausewitz emphasized the metaphysical aspect of war which meant it could not be reduced to a 'science' or a formula. Hence war was immeasurable, prone to chance and famously "merely a continuation of policy by other means". The latter point signifies that war is inextricably linked to politics and political will and cannot be isolated from these imperatives.³²

One component of 'civilized' warfare that emerged during the 19th Century was that the notion of force was insuperable: war was conceived of as a 'duel' between two commanders and armed forces were to be 'smashed' and capitals captured.³³ On the frontier, the decentralized nature of Xhosa society made this an impossibility: in a number of military texts Xhosa 'capitals', that is where a chief was situated, were variously configured as 'Great Places', 'kraals', 'dens' and 'lairs' and groups of armed resisters were often designated as 'banditti'. Hence, regular army frustration was a common response not only to Xhosa fighting techniques but also to Xhosa political notions of a dispersed leadership.

Ideas about military tactics were not merely transplanted onto the colonies and there were cross-colonial and metropolitan encounters in this sphere. By the nineteenth century, the idea of tactics tended to develop around smaller-scale engagements such as the skirmish. This was an action which was to become the norm in colonial warfare where there was little place for the advancement in columns and the formation of squares.³⁴ By the end of the nineteenth century, Callwell was to write that whilst climate and terrain ceded certain strategic advantages to the enemy, tactical advantage invariably fell to the invaders.³⁵ Porch however, counters this suggestion by arguing that invaders might not possess a tactical advantage, especially if the enemy declined to fight in a manner that favoured the close-order drill characteristic of most regiments of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. As mentioned previously, most of the fighting in the frontier wars revolved around the skirmish, however, drill patterns died hard and Lucas in his account of the 8th Frontier War, *Camp Life and Sport*, criticized men in the regular regiments for fighting in 'clumps'. He attributed this 'closing-up' to their regimental training which purportedly discouraged autonomy and initiative.

Weaponry at the Cape

As far back as the early 1970s, Marks and Atmore, in *Firearms in Southern Africa: A Study*, proposed that "the role of the firearms in southern Africa deserves at least a major study...."³⁶ No study emerged from the revisionist school over the ensuing years, however, Storey's *Guns, Race and Power in Colonial South Africa* published in 2008 seeks to fill this lacuna. Storey has mobilized the subject of guns or firearms to

³² Jomini, who died in 1868, would have been the more influential military theorist certainly during the 1834 frontier war. Clausewitz's *On War* was translated into English only in 1871. Strachan writes that, "... Clausewitz was little read outside his native Prussia." This was partly due to the fact that German was "a less accessible language to the literati of Europe than French." Strachan, *Clausewitz's On War*, Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 2007, p 9.

³³ Van Creveld, *The Art of War*, 2000.

³⁴ Porch, *Wars of Empire*, 2001; Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985.

³⁵ Porch, *Wars of Empire*, 2001.

³⁶ Marks and Atmore, *Firearms in Southern Africa*, 1971, *Journal of African History* XII, 4, p 517

discuss issues of race and identity and his book seeks to “...bring together social, political and cultural history with technological history.”³⁷

Marks and Atmore’s 1970s contribution provides a portal into the topic but in effect the article is confined to presenting a broad purview of the conflict between settlers and indigenous peoples between the 17th to the 20th centuries. There is little discussion of the weaponry used by resisting groups, such as the Xhosa, which would have demonstrated, at the very least, the complexity and unevenness of weapon allocation and usage. In addition, there is a limited interrogation of the technological changes that took place in 19th Century weaponry. What the article does offer is an overview of conflicts in southern Africa and it touches on the African weapons trade. They note that the increasing use of firearms by indigenous peoples such as the Khoi and the Xhosa in the 19th Century and attribute this to the increased ‘interdependence’ of settlers and indigenous groups. Because of this ‘interdependence’, “...the quality and quantity of firearms in South Africa were on a scale unprecedented in sub-Saharan Africa.”³⁸ They attribute the Cape Khoikhoi’s knowledge of firearms to their periods of settler service: drivers and herdsman were armed and indeed we see them in contemporary engravings holding long muskets. Yet the authors make no reference to the Cape Corps which subsequently became the Cape Mounted Riflemen (CMR). This regiment absorbed a number of Khoikhoi men and would have been one of the more effective training grounds for the use of weaponry and the transmission of shooting skills. Also, knowledge of weaponry would have been accrued through the duties of the Khoikhoi in the provisional levies during the frontier wars.

Marks and Atmore acknowledge that the exigencies of war forced the Xhosa into a usage of firearms. They write, “As a result of the long duration of the warfare, the Xhosa were able to adapt their tactics and deal with and utilize firearms.”³⁹ Contemporary sources, however, were divided as to the firearm proficiency of the Xhosa but it was generally agreed upon that the Xhosa had improved their handling of firearms by the 8th Frontier War.⁴⁰ Observers of the 8th Frontier War commented on the influence and support of rebellious Cape Mounted Riflemen, Khoikhoi levies and civilians during this war. One interviewee, ‘Tanco’, in Cory’s *Conversations*, confirmed the shooting skills of the ‘Hottentots’ in the 8th Frontier War:

“In this war the Hottentots joined the Kaffirs of their own accord. I do not think they were asked to do so. The Hottentots had deserted from the English. All of them had guns and some of them could shoot very well.”⁴¹

There was a wide assortment of firearms present in the frontier regions and, as we shall see, who owned what was generally based on social class and military or colonial status. The firearm used by the infantry on the 6th Frontier war was the muzzle loading smooth bore musket, the Brown Bess. This weapon continued to be used intermittently at the Cape until at least the 1850s. The Brown Bess was

³⁷ Storey, *Guns, Race and Power in Colonial South Africa*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008, p 5.

³⁸ Marks and Atmore, *Firearms in Southern Africa*, 1971, p 529.

³⁹ Ibid., 1971, p 522.

⁴⁰ See Gordon Brown, *The Narrative of Private Buck Adams*, Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1941; Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875; Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975.

⁴¹ Berning, *The Historical “Conversations” of Sir George Cory*, 1989, p 127.

inaccurate and its firing range was short, in fact, muskets such as the Brown Bess were so inaccurate that they had no sights. The men were not drilled to aim them but 'to present' which meant pointing in the enemy's direction and firing a volley. In theory they were taught to level their weapons for different ranges, firing at the enemy's waist at very close range and the chest when further away. In practice when firing began most soldiers focused on loading as quickly as possible and discipline tended to break down. The thick smoke also made it difficult to aim accurately. Despite these shortcomings, the Brown Bess was to remain the most widespread and effective weapon in Europe until the percussion cap firearm was introduced.⁴²

The frontier wars followed at least one of D'Urban's principles and that was the practice of employing 'combined' forces in the colonies. One of the most striking features of British colonial war in South Africa was the evidence of an integrated military effort: the regular army used the more conventional forces of infantry, cavalry and artillery but they also incorporated irregular 'burgher' forces which comprised settlers and Khoikhoi people usually on horseback and allied Mfengu and Khoikhoi levies more commonly on foot although there were instances of levies being mounted such as Napier's 'irregular cavalry' which was made up of Mfengu levies in the 7th Frontier War (1846) and Armstrong's Horse, a Khoikhoi unit, in the 8th Frontier War.⁴³ The use of white settler militias was not always seamless: Godlonton writing in 1835 about the 6th Frontier War suggested somewhat disingenuously that,

"...the Cape owed a great deal to the tenacity and resolution of the imperial forces...the redcoats depended equally on the armed support of local populations. For what was fought was a frontier war which the world over has been a primitive form of total war. The spoils are land, crops and stock."⁴⁴

Indeed, the 'spoils' of war were to remain constant throughout the three Frontier Wars but Godlonton's claim about the involvement of local populations requires qualification. The settler population might have been more involved in fighting in the 6th Frontier War but by the 7th and 8th Frontier Wars most of the settlers were unenthusiastic about joining 'burgher' levies and were certainly not 'equal' participants in the wars. From the British regular position, there were a number of reliable colonial units: Stubbs's 'Rangers' from Graham's Town being one of the most prominent of these, but generally settlers tended to evade their military responsibilities and their places were taken by 'native levies'. However, the participation of the levies was intermittent: Mfengu levies remained constant allies during the 7th and 8th Frontier Wars but a significant number of Khoi allies, for instance from the previously 'loyal' Kat River area, allied themselves to the Xhosa in the 8th Frontier War. However, despite this alliance between the Khoi and the Xhosa, large numbers of levies, both Khoi and Mfengu, from areas such as Port Elizabeth and the Western Cape were to play a crucial role in the fighting. In the 1846 War a company of 'Bushmen' (Khoisan) was used and a further addition to the British forces was a regiment of West African liberated slaves whom Ward referred to as "West Coast Negroes".⁴⁵ Lucas's description of a patrol in the 8th Frontier War provides a sense of the heterogeneous nature of a colonial force:

⁴² Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001; Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985.

⁴³ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, 1849, p 117.

⁴⁴ Godlonton, *A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965, p 25.

⁴⁵ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848.

“Picture to yourself, gentle reader, in addition to these, the regular soldiers of the line, from twelve to thirteen hundred levies of every caste, colour, country and complexion, in the same style of rig, only ten times more worn and ragged, and arm them with long Brummagem single- barrelled guns, add to these a hundred Fingo warriors, their only clothing a blanket and a woollen night cap...heat up as they say in the cookery books, with a warm African sun, and you will have an excellent receipt for the composition of a patrol about to start from any frontier town for the purpose of annihilating the Kaffirs.”⁴⁶

The infantry were by far the most numerous army regulars to fight in the three Frontier Wars. Of the nineteen regiments involved in the three wars, fifteen were infantry. In fact the Cape Mounted Riflemen, as a mounted infantry regiment, was something of an indeterminate colonial hybrid, their duties were most frequently executed on horseback but they were paid as infantry, that is, at lower rates than cavalry. The two cavalry regiments which took part in the 7th and the 8th Frontier Wars were the 7th Dragoons and the 12th Lancers. Regiments such as the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers and the Royal Sappers and Miners were mainly responsible for road building and the construction of fortifications.⁴⁷ Over one thousand Naval and Royal Marine personnel were also involved in the wars: their major role was the conveyance of troops and ordnance and stores but a number of marines were put ashore and were deployed in a variety of operations in the field.⁴⁸ I shall commence the following overview of the various regular ‘arms’ which participated in the frontier wars with a discussion of the cavalry and the mounted infantry.

The Cavalry and the Mounted Infantry

In the colonies, the function of the infantry and cavalry often proved to be interchangeable and as long as colonial warfare was predominantly a war of movement, cavalry was to remain crucial to military operations in the frontier wars and it was to play a determining role in tactics at the Cape. The specialization of the cavalry into ‘heavy’ and ‘light’ components came to be seen as redundant in the colonies and more emphasis was placed on the obligations of light cavalry, that is, on skirmishing, reconnaissance and vedette, or outpost sentry, duty.⁴⁹ In theory there was a distinction between heavy and light cavalry: the major responsibility of the former was intended to break enemy infantry or cavalry by a charge, whereas light cavalry was expected to play a more defensive role. By the 1840s this distinction had become blurred and the function of the two bodies became conflated in that they were expected to execute the battle charge and perform duties such as patrolling outposts. In the colonial wars of the first half of the nineteenth century cavalry remained an indispensable adjunct to the regular forces as long as the army remained reliant on the horse as a means of conveyance.⁵⁰

I shall initiate this discussion with the Cape Mounted Riflemen (CMR). This was the only permanent, locally raised, regular army unit on the frontier. Lucas, who was a captain in the CMR, described it thus:

⁴⁶ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa*, 1975, p 145.

⁴⁷ Everson, *The South African Medal*, 1978.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1978. Also King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853.

⁴⁹ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1984; Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001. Vedette duty included the placing of mounted sentries at various outposts; it was their role to warn the main company of soldiers of an attack. The outposts were also sometimes referred to as vedettes.

⁵⁰ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1984.

“The anomalous position of the Cape Mounted Riflemen as a cavalry regiment, to all intents and purposes, though it was only endowed with infantry rank and pay, marked it out as essentially different from any other corps in Her Majesty’s service, whilst its mixed Coloured and European elements, eminently fitting for it for performing with advantage the skirmishing tactics as useful in savage warfare, carried it still further out of the usual category.”⁵¹

According to Everson, the CMR had about 300 troops and officers in the 1834 Frontier War and its total strength after the 1846 campaign grew to 570 men and 40 officers.⁵² The regiment was mainly used for scouting and skirmishing and the CMR companies were stretched across the frontier and were widely employed. The strength of the regiment was to grow to over 900 officers and men during the 1850-53 campaign. By examining contemporary pay lists, Everson estimates that about a fifth of the Khoikhoi members of the CMR defected to the Xhosa during this war.⁵³

The CMR had certain advantages over other regulars in the colonial field: many of the troopers were familiar with the local terrain and they were equipped with a practical green uniform and armed with a double-barrelled carbine and swords which, in general, were used less frequently than their firearms. According to Young,

“All the Cape Mounted Riflemen carried swords and muskets (muzzle loaders). They made as a rule fine shooting with them up to a hundred yards. They always kept them loaded, because on occasions their lives depended on their shooting....The riflemen carried powder in the horn of an animal or a powder flask, and carried his wads and bullets in the pouches of a leather bandolier. He also carried a bush knife with a blade of about 15 inches long, and the officers carried flintlock pistols.”⁵⁴

The CMR were trained to shoot on horseback and were noted for their ability to load and shoot from this position. There are accounts and depictions of riders who combined shooting and hard riding but this co-ordination of movement would have been rare and the shots would probably have lacked accuracy. Most troops shot from stationary horses or were dismounted. For instance, in one of his sketches, Lucas has depicted members of the Cape Mounted Rifleman seated on reined-in horses while shooting at the ‘enemy’ in the bush.⁵⁵ There were obvious advantages for dismounted troops in a skirmish: it meant that there was less body surface for the enemy to aim at and the horse gave cover and steadied the rifle which meant that they could take aim more accurately. Despite its use in the

⁵¹ Lucas, *Sport and War*, 1975, pp v, vi. The first ‘Hottentot’ company to be formed at the Cape started off as the Corps of ‘Bastaard Hottentotten’ (1781-1782), this developed into the Corps Pandoeren or the ‘Pandoors’ (1793-1795). During the First British Occupation it was renamed the Hottentot Corps or the Cape Regiment (1796- 1803). During the Second British Occupation the Cape Regiment (1806-17) was formed and then renamed the Cape Corps of Infantry and Cavalry (1817 – 1827) and finally it experienced its most sustained incarnation as the Cape Mounted Riflemen from 1827/8 – 1870. Confusingly some of the previous nomenclature remained in use during the course of the nineteenth century, and the members of the CMR, intermittently and inaccurately, were called the Cape Corps. See Young, *Boot and Saddle*, Maskew Miller, Cape Town 1955.

⁵² Everson, *The South African 1853 Medal*, 1978. Cavalrymen were termed ‘troops’ or ‘troopers’; the infantry were variously described as ‘men’, ‘soldiers’ or ‘the foot’.

⁵⁴ Young, *Boot and Saddle*, 1955.

⁵⁵ Lucas, *Sport and War*, 1975.

colonies, the cavalry was to experience a steady decline of stature in the battlefield throughout the 19th Century. There were a number of reasons for this post- Napoleonic, fading allure: technological advances in weaponry and the equivocal status of the cavalry on the battlefield tended to moderate its role. The cavalry charge during the Napoleonic Wars had not always proved effective in the face of obdurate squares of infantry armed with muskets and bayonets and supported by artillery.⁵⁶

One of the earliest attempts to bolster the reputation of the British cavalry was the introduction of a regiment of lancers in 1816 in imitation of the Polish lancers who had fought for Napoleon. It was hoped that the reach of the nine foot long lances would be able to penetrate the infantry squares and prove to be an effective force in the breaking these formidable defences.⁵⁷ As mentioned above, the 12th Royal Regiment of Lancers was sent out to South Africa during the 8th Frontier War, The regiment, in their capacity as lancers *per se*, was to prove to be particularly unsuitable at the Cape and conditions forced a reconsideration of its role in the colonial arena. Their lances were inappropriate for guerilla warfare on the frontier and they often ended up being used for more mundane purposes and periodically became temporary ridgepoles for 'makeshift tents'.⁵⁸ The lancers' flintlock pistols also proved cumbersome and a number of the officers and men were re-issued with carbines and rifles. Contrary to the Lancers' symbolic significance, for their role was not only combative they were also expected to conjure up an image of chivalric medievalism, they performed what were considered to be the 'routine' duties of colonial warfare: the burning of crops and the capture of cattle.⁵⁹ Baines admired their flashy magnificence but he was sufficiently pragmatic to comment on the improbability of their weapons:

"The head of the column now appeared; the sun shining in full brilliance upon the glittering lances, gay, red and white flags, and gold embroidered blue uniform of the Twelfth...and there is not the slightest doubt that, apart from its connection with the days of chivalry, the lance with its fluttering pennon is a more picturesque weapon than the musket, over which, perhaps it posess the advantage that its bearer cannot 'keep merely firing at a foolish distance'. Still, I was glad to observe that a large proportion of the men were armed instead with double-barrelled carbines, and that officers patronized long-range rifles rather than funny little spikes on fairy wands, which a Kaffir would consider but a poor equivalent for an assegai." ⁶⁰

To digress momentarily from the Frontier Wars, the 12th Lancers were also involved in the action against Moshesh on the Berea plateau in November 1852 which came to be known as the 'Battle of Berea'. This discussion has been included because the Lancers' setback in this battle encompassed but one of a number of instances of mimicry which were to afflict regular armed forces in the frontier wars. It occurred when Lt Col W. Napier who was commanding a column of men "....was surprised by well-mounted enemy horsemen wearing caps and lances captured from [his own] column."⁶¹ These men on closer inspection turned out to be Basuto warriors. Napier and his column were in for a further reversal when the lancers and the Cape Mounted Riflemen, who had captured a large herd of cattle, were charged by the Basuto horsemen. This skirmish led to a number of British casualties. "Many were cut

⁵⁶ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1984.

⁵⁷ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 1999.

⁵⁸ Everson, *The South Africa 1853 Medal*, 1978.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1978.

⁶⁰ Kennedy, *The Journal of Thomas Baines*, Vol II, Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1964, pp 263,264.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1964, p 33.

down, for in close work nine-foot lances were no match for assegais and the light axes which could be used as swords or throwing weapons.”⁶² After a desperate skirmish, a combined effort from the CMR and the surviving lancers managed to deflect the Basuto cavalry charge. It was the 74th, an infantry regiment, which eventually managed to push back the redoubtable Basuto in what was to provide a further vindication of the post-Napoleonic, jaundiced view of the cavalry. James McKay, a sergeant major in the 74th (Highland) Regiment and an eyewitness wrote that,

“It was painful to see the 12th on their return....During the desperate charges in which they had been engaged many had their lances broken...some had no lances at all; others were without caps, but had handkerchiefs tied around their heads, besmirched with blood; and some were horseless, showing the severe struggle they had with the enemy.”⁶³

British cavalry was never induced to engage with Xhosa cavalry in battle. The Xhosa used mounted men but more often than not they were deployed as decoys to draw enemy troops into terrain more favourable to the attackers. Mimicry was not an uncommon tactic in guerilla warfare: it was a ruse used to lure the enemy closer so that they could be caught off guard and ambushed.⁶⁴ The following is an example from the 6th Frontier War:

“On the afternoon of Tuesday, eight wagons which were on their way from Graham’s Town to Kafir Drift, under an escort consisting of twelve men, were attacked immediately after they had descended the Graham’s Town hill, by a large body of Kafirs, of whom *fifty, who were in advance, were clothed, mounted and armed with guns.* [His italics] These were at first taken to be taken to be a patrol of colonists, but as they came nearer, several Kafirs on foot were observed amongst them. On this the escort halted and, and was immediately fired on by the enemy, but at too great a range to be effective.”⁶⁵

Such tactics bore a particular threat which went beyond the tactical ruse, as Young suggests:

“Compared to ambivalence, which describes a process of identification and disavowal, mimicry implies an even greater loss of control for the colonizer, of inevitable processes of counter-domination produced by a miming of the very operation of domination, with the result that the identity of colonizer and colonized becomes curiously elided.”⁶⁶

Mimicry was especially unnerving because, as Young points out, as a notion it articulates an essence of identity but it also simultaneously alienates identity from this essence. Drawing on Bhaba, the ‘mimic man’ can be described is a colonial subject who is recognizably the same as the colonizer but still different, in Bhaba’s inimitable phrase: “not quite/not white”.⁶⁷ Bhaba’s illustration of a mimic man is the Indian civil servant who is educated in English and who “mediates between the imperial power and

⁶² Kennedy, *The Journal of Thomas Baines*, Vol II, 1964, p 32.

⁶³ McKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, Struik, Cape Town, 1970, first published in 1871, p 260. Twenty-seven men and non-commissioned officers from the 12th Lancers were killed during the action: a high figure for regular troops in a colonial skirmish and one which seems to point to their inability to repel similarly mounted opponents.

⁶⁴ Van Creveld, *The Art of War*, 2000.

⁶⁵ Godlonton, *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965, p 33.

⁶⁶ Young, *White Mythologies*, 1990, p 148.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1990, p 147.

the colonized".⁶⁸ His mimic man is both reassuring and unsettling in that "mimicry is at once resemblance and menace".⁶⁹ The practice of mimicry clearly bore a different sense in the context of combat: our Basuto 'mimic men' were 'well-mounted men' wearing 'caps' and bearing lances, all signifiers of a regiment of lancers. The Basuto had reduced their appearance to the lean essentials of the image of the lancer: the substance was captured and some details were discarded to provide an effect which carried a menace of clear intent. These 'mimic-men' were not a vague nuisance or an aberration, rather they were closer to *doppelgangers*, for once the ruse had been penetrated by the regulars, the combat ensued and led to inevitable fatalities. The Basuto intention was to disarm the enemy psychologically and to draw them physically closer so that they could attack them in hand-to-hand combat. Yet, their mimicry of the British regulars was also about memorization and of capturing what stood out as the essentials of a regiment, no matter how ridiculous they might have seemed to the Basuto and to the Xhosa.

A second component of mimicry, according to Bhaba, is that "the observer becomes the observed".⁷⁰ Observation was pervasive in warfare: the surveillance and emulation of either side's tactics was essential for any campaign and, as discussed above, there were adjustments in tactics and the use of weaponry as a consequence of these practices. However, the imitation of a 'look' or of a posture was to remain one-sided in the frontier wars. There are no accounts of British soldiers masquerading as Xhosa or Basuto fighters. Notwithstanding issues of metropolitan status and dignity, an obvious deterrent to mimicry was that one of the defining features of Xhosa warriors was their 'nakedness'; although their bodies were covered in protective ochre. The only external covering of the Xhosa was the karross which was used as a defense against missiles. Their only ornament was a head dress of feathers generally reserved for chiefs and headmen, hence there were few symbolic markers to emulate and thus deceive the enemy from a distance. Baines emphasizes this point in a letter to his brother Harry in which he outlines the details of an 8th Frontier War sketch which Harry was to cut as an engraving:

"...the figures among the rocks under the Euphorbium tree are *all* Kafirs and entirely naked and without ornament, except perhaps a powder horn or cartouche belts of the most simple character – those near the huts are Hottentots firing from behind the barricades of loose stone – nothing is seen of these but the flash of their guns."⁷¹

As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the impenetrability of the bush or precipitous mountain passes also determined a change in tactics for the cavalry which was usually forced to dismount when battling up paths or through bush. Not only did the terrain compel a change in tactics, the cavalry also adapted their weaponry in the frontier wars. The edged- weapon issued to cavalrymen was most commonly the sword. In 1853 a new sword was issued to all cavalry regiments: heavy and light. In addition to the sword, most cavalry at the Cape were requisitioned with some sort of firearm, usually a short- barrellled musket: the carbine. The 'Cape' carbine proved to be the preferred weapon; it was converted pervasively from a flintlock to percussion weapon in the early 1840s and by the 1850s, the percussion

⁶⁸ Young, *White Mythologies*, 1990, p 147.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1990, p 147.

⁷⁰ Bhaba, 'Of Mimicry and Man', In *October*, Vol 28, Spring 1984, p 129.

⁷¹ Baines, In *Africana Notes and News*, Vol IX, No 3, June 1952, p 83.

lock carbine was in general use in the regular army.⁷² The length of the carbine facilitated its placement into the rifle bucket at the side of the horse an arrangement used in the 1850s but before that the gun generally would have been slung over the user's shoulder. Lucas's description of his equipment when on patrol is imbued with the violence, pragmatism and insouciance that was typical of a number of the military narratives of the Frontier Wars.

"In addition to my ordinary undress uniform I wear a light forage cap and a comfortable patrol jacket, and besides my cavalry sword I carry a double-barrelled gun, attached to the saddle in a leathern bucket on the right side, a pocket pistol loaded with French brandy is slung over my shoulders a, a slice of jerked beef in lieu of a revolver in my holsters, and a broad strap buckled around my waist supports a good sized pouch for bullets and cartridges, and a smaller one for caps, my military cloak is rolled on the saddle in front and a tin pot or 'tot' in colonial parlance adorns the horse's crupper."⁷³

Muzzle loading was difficult on horseback and if the barrel was rifled, loading it was even more arduous and time-consuming. A breechloader would have been more suitable for loading on horseback, but the technological development of the rifled breech loader was tardy and even in the mid-19th Century, they were in short supply.⁷⁴ Strachan writes that "practical experience in the field" forced regiments to confront the reality that loading carbines or rifles on horseback was not practicable and in 1848 the Horse Guards commented that "it never was proposed or expected, that they [troopers] were to fire much less to load these rifles on horseback, but to ride up and fire on foot, or across their saddles whenever they could contrive to get up within range."⁷⁵ One man in three usually held the horses while his comrades dismounted to skirmish on foot. This practice was confirmed by Lucas who describes this episode in the 8th Frontier War:

"The ground being impracticable for riding, I have left my horse, at the beginning of the fight, with one of my men, and am returning with the ruck at a much slower pace than I set out. I have lost one my spurs, my clothes are torn, and I have a pleasant smack of gunpowder in my mouth, and my lips are glued together with thirst."⁷⁶

With the introduction of the percussion lock, muskets became more reliable and the innovation led to a dramatic decrease in misfires and to greater accuracy of aim. But percussion caps were slow to take off in South Africa, mainly because the caps were expensive and in short supply. As Tylden points out, colonial pragmatism often prevailed, "...a cap only fired one shot while a good flint imported from England would fire thirty or more rounds and at a pinch a stone picked up locally could function as well..."⁷⁷ During the frontier wars, the Xhosa were to become particularly adept at improvisation and at times used bits of roof sheeting, roof nails and printing press lettering as ball.⁷⁸

⁷² Boyden and Guy, *"ashes and blood"*, 1999, p 210.

⁷³ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, pp 150, 151.

⁷⁴ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985, p 85.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1985, p 8.

⁷⁶ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 157.

⁷⁷ Tylden, *Shoulder Firearms in Southern Africa*, *Africana Notes and News*, Vol XII, 1957.

⁷⁸ Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875; Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol II, 1849.

The Infantry

The infantry comprised the 'rank and file' of the regular army. In the Napoleonic era, the infantry was to become associated with doggedness and the ability to turn potential defeat into victory.⁷⁹ Napier in his account of the Peninsular Campaign intimated that British victory was due not only to "... superior tactics or better armament but endurance and discipline, attributes rooted in the national character".⁸⁰ Throughout much of the first half of the 19th Century, there was considerable debate around the wellsprings of national character and its influence on military comportment. Questions emerged which were concerned with whether the qualities of infantrymen were inherent or educable. Napier put down their success to an intangible 'morale', but the significance of drill and firearm practice amongst regular British regiments remained undisputed. Foucault famously has asserted in *Discipline and Punish*, that one of the aims of discipline was to produce 'docile bodies' and he suggests that the derivation of the social disciplinary practices of schooling and of urbanization is to be found in the mechanical world of the drill parade and the planned spaces of the barracks. He writes,

"What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its element, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so they may do what one wishes, but so they may operate as one wishes, with the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies."⁸¹

The 'practised' body in the army found its apotheosis in the trained soldier but it was the recruit who had to endure the physical rigours and mental endurance of the transformation from tyro to accomplished soldier. At its inception, training to be a soldier was not necessarily about creating a fighter; rather the training that took place in the barrack square focused on discipline and on choreographed, physical routines. The recruit found himself,

"...first mastering foot drill and then going on to march, stepping out so that his foot slid so low over the ground that the instructor could not glimpse the sole of his shoe. His normal pace was 75 steps to the minute but he was taught to step out at 120 when 'quick march' was ordered...."⁸²

Drill was 'rigorous and repetitious' and the average recruit spent at least six months on the parade ground. From there he entered a more complex training regimen which included learning the "vocabulary of close-order battle" and a variety of manoeuvres.⁸³ More advanced training also incorporated firing at targets, the formation of squares and learning the complicated movements from line to column and back to line. According to Foucault, the invention of the new 'political anatomy' in the 18th Century was not a 'sudden discovery'. Rather, it comprised a "process of a multitude of minor events, decisions, which 'overlap' repeat each other, imitate one another distinguish themselves and

⁷⁹ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 1999.

⁸⁰ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985, p 16.

⁸¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Penguin Books, London, 1977, p 138.

⁸² Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001, p 275.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 2001, p 275.

gradually form a 'blueprint' of a 'general method'".⁸⁴ Discipline in the army was about the minute control and discipline of the body, with the introduction of firearms, finger movements, stance, positioning of the head became part of the drilling of soldiers so that the movements became reflexive.

Other forms of control took the form of enclosure: army barracks were similar to monasteries in that they were often walled and separated from the civilian community and masculine. Discipline revolved around timetables, signals, reveilles and attendance and absences were monitored. In Burton's *The Highlands of Kaffraria*, there is a plan, dated 1875, of the 'Military Reserve' in King William's Town which is germane because it shows the reserve to be enclosed by walls and self-sufficient in that it had its own hospital, gardens, store and provost.⁸⁵ The plan demonstrates a spatial hierarchy: the infantry barracks were lined up like dormitories and the officers' quarters and mess, although not ostentatious, were set away from the rank and file. Such sites could be described as the epitome of control and social exclusion, but they were also "useful" spaces and could save peoples' lives if well-organized and could provide a measure of social security.

The 19th Century soldier's life indisputably was dominated by the 'general method' of drill which was considered crucial to military discipline, to the inculcation of 'spirit' and to soldierly bearing. But it had an added advantage in that it was considered to be life-saving during battle. Even though drill patterns did not usually survive in battle, "battle field manoeuvres could normally be achieved rather faster with drill than without it."⁸⁶ Holmes proposes that the "efficient movement of large numbers of men, often across difficult country and sometimes under fire, demanded that the individual elements if the mighty whole responded promptly and identically to commands."⁸⁷ The notion of 'efficiency' meant that there was often more emphasis placed on drill than on education in the army of the first half of the 19th Century. The reasoning behind this approach was that soldiers had to be coerced into obedience. In fact, even training soldiers in the use of firearms was seen, in some conservative quarters, as inadmissibly progressive.⁸⁸

In the context of the frontier, the infantry was to be tested in its ability to improvise and to adapt to colonial conditions. The extent and uneven terrain of the Eastern Cape meant that some companies of infantry were mounted.⁸⁹ In the 1846-47 War, the Rifle Brigade mounted a company at the Cape and in the 8th Frontier War several bodies of mounted infantry were formed including infantry men from the 43rd and 74th Foot.⁹⁰ Hence the situation emerged in the 19th Century colonies whereby infantry and cavalry adapted to each other. Strachan suggests that,

"....while the European school in Britain tended to denigrate the employment of mounted infantry, those with colonial experience were more flexible. A smaller body of mounted men could garrison and patrol vast tracts of country more efficiently than a larger force of infantrymen. But much of the ground was either broken or heavily

⁸⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1977.

⁸⁵ Burton, *The Highlands of Kaffraria*, Struik, Cape Town, 1969. The copy of the plan forms part of the cover page.

⁸⁶ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001, p 215.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 2001, p 32

⁸⁸ Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, 1984.

⁸⁹ Everson, *The South Africa 1853 Medal*, 1978, p 90.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 1978.

wooded as in Canada or covered in bush as in South Africa. In this terrain skirmishers with accurate firearms were wanted. Mounted infantry therefore filled a military necessity in colonial terms.”⁹¹

The distribution of ‘accurate firearms’ was piecemeal during the frontier wars. In the 6th Frontier War the regulation infantry firearm was the smooth bore musket, the Brown Bess. This was superseded from 1842 by a smooth-bore musket ignited by a percussion cap. From 1853 the percussion rifle became more widely used and a number of regular army soldiers were provided with percussion firearms, not rifles, in both the 7th and 8th Frontier Wars. The 8th Frontier War saw the introduction of the minie rifle and the minie bullet. Conical minie bullets replaced musket balls and when used in conjunction with rifled barrels they were accurate and deadly. Lumley Graham’s diary entry on Saturday 1 May, 1852 provides some details of the training and of the number of rifles provided per company. The regular army at this stage, possibly due to parsimony, did not allocate the new weapons widely. Graham writes,

“We also brought out the new minie rifles, six per company. Officers commanding companies chose a corporal and five privates of each company [a company is roughly 120 men] for marksmen. We took these [men] in [to King William’s Town] to exchange their firelocks for the new gun. All loaded without sponging out the barrels which we discovered, when too late, to be full of grease. When we attempted to fire them they naturally gave us some trouble....A long General Order about the new arms: the chosen men are to fall in with their companies, no two to form a file. At the word *marksman to the front* they are to spring out and be prepared to act independently.... The weapon promises well; it is a pound lighter than the new musket, but carries a ball half an ounce heavier. The ball is conical with a hollow and an iron cap at the bottom, which iron cap causes the lead to expand into the grooves on the piece being fired, thus giving it the accuracy of the rifle without the difficulty of loading....We have only one hundred and twenty five rounds for each minie besides 60 in the pouch, only twenty five of which are allowed in practice.”⁹²

The Xhosa and their Khoikoi allies perceived the advantages of the minie rifle and there were incidents when army commissariat transport wagons were attacked and minie rifles, according to reports without some of their components, were seized.

The Xhosa and firearms

According to Keegan, by the 1830s the firearm trade was a significant although illegal component of trade on the eastern frontier. Until 1832 there was a government monopoly on the supply of gunpowder but from 1832, merchants could import and sell ammunition at the Cape. Keegan writes that,

“Although the prohibition on selling arms and ammunition to African peoples was maintained, it was brazenly ignored....This resulted in an enormous increase in officially recorded imports of gunpowder. In 1833, 30 000 lbs were shipped into Cape Town alone in a period of 6 months.”⁹³

It was paradoxical that the traders should be gun-running to their ‘enemies’ and providing them with arms to fuel their resistance. As Keegan points out, “...profits spoke volumes to these men and guns and

⁹¹ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985, p 88.

⁹² Graham, *Memoirs, 1851 – 1853*, p 9.

⁹³ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 135.

powder fetched incomparable profits after the collapse of the beads and buttons market.”⁹⁴ Stubbs’s point about traders in relation to the 7th Frontier War:

“I know in England it was believed that the people on this frontier liked a Caffer war better than peace. I must say I believe so too. That is , those who were always looking out to make money: but not as a general thing for I am sure if those very men had had half the hard work and risked their lives, as I and others did, and had seen the suffering and distress, they would have been ready to cry out for the war to be over.. I could if I wished enumerate a great many who owe their present positions [to] the Caffer wars.”⁹⁵

‘Conversations’ which were conducted by Cory in the early 20th century confirmed the existence of the firearm trade. ‘Tanco’ who fought in the 8th Frontier War recollected that they bought firearms,

“....cheaply from the traders and Dutchmen. There were certain shops where we knew we could always get them. As far as I know there were no restraints. Guns cost from 3 to 5 pounds each. We sometimes paid in cattle and sometimes in money.”⁹⁶

Keegan points out that firearms belonging to the Xhosa,

“...were of a very inferior description, being usually obsolete, and were no match for the armoury of the British and colonial forces. The Xhosa were also wholly untrained in using them, typically firing indiscriminately from the hip.”⁹⁷

When firearms were captured from the Xhosa they were considered by regular army officers to be of poor quality and Lucas writes that most Xhosa fighters carried,

“....a Brummagem-looking gun, which might be purchased in any civilized country for ten shillings. His pouch of rough untanned leather, will probably contain some twelve or thirteen zinc or lead bullets, badly cast...”⁹⁸

However, even a ‘Brummagen’, according to Tylden, could be formidable at close range.⁹⁹ It would appear that the Xhosa were well aware of the limitations of their firearms as they displayed considerable initiative in capturing arms and attacking baggage trains as they seized opportunities to augment and to improve their own weapon stores. Godlonton wrote of the 8th Frontier War, and he might well have been exaggerating, that ‘returns’ demonstrated that “...three thousand stand of arms and five or six millions of ball cartridge were possessed by the enemy, and that he could moreover bring

⁹⁴ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 136.

⁹⁵ Maxwell and McGeogh, *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, Balkema, Cape Town, 1977, p 136.

⁹⁶ Berning, *The Historical “Conversations” of Sir George Cory*, 1989, p 127. Sijako, an interviewee was recorded as saying that: “The natives bought their guns from the Hottentots [in the 8th Frontier War].”

⁹⁷ Keegan. *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 136. Keegan’s comment echoes that made by Buck Adams about the 7th Frontier War. Adams writes that, “I may here remark that the Kaffirs at this time had but very little knowledge of the use of firearms. Very few of them fired their gun from the shoulder but discharged it from the hip, with the muzzle elevated so much that their shots nearly all went over our heads...” Gordon-Brown, *The Narrative of Buck Adams*, 1941, p 181.

⁹⁸ ‘Brummagen’ is a corruption of Birmingham and was used to denote something tawdry and ill-made. Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 140.

⁹⁹ Tylden, *Shoulder Firearms in Southern Africa*, 1957.

into the field upwards of half a million of assegais.”¹⁰⁰ He adds that, “...there were a few restrictions [on the firearm trade], but these were impotently enforced....Hottentots, Fingoes and Gonahs were allowed to purchase guns....these people were merely acting as agents for the less privileged Kaffirs...”.¹⁰¹

By the 1853 war, opinions differed in relation to Xhosa firearm proficiency.¹⁰² The Xhosa experienced certain drawbacks in that they did not have substantial stores of arms and there were few opportunities for target-practice. Powder was obtainable, but the Xhosa did not always have sufficient stocks of ball, despite Godlonton’s claim.¹⁰³ This deficit was made up by imaginative improvisation: smoothbore muzzle loaders could accommodate a round stone and the Xhosa made use of zinc from roofing and sometimes used balls of printing type and wadding from mission station bibles.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

Military experiences in the colonies made an impact on the strategy and tactics of guerilla warfare in the colony and various adjustments had to be made by the regular army in the face of the complex forms of resistance adopted by the Xhosa. Colonial warfare was the domain of intuitive and pragmatic understandings of the ‘enemy’: both the Xhosa and the regular army used intelligence networks at their disposal to observe and emulate enemy tactics.

It has been argued in the chapter above that the subject of colonial warfare should be addressed from a nuanced perspective and that its purview needs to be extended beyond assumptions of regular army technological superiority or Xhosa indomitable skill. In general, the dictums of formal military training were not appropriate in terms of colonial war. Massive terrain and material constraints worked against both the regular army and the Xhosa; despite Xhosa knowledge of the local terrain and the initial benefits of not being lumbered with an officious and cumbersome commissariat. In the event, it was the lack of a commissariat which was to be the nemesis of the Xhosa. The ‘total war’ policies of the British meant the Xhosa were unable to sustain themselves sufficiently and the imprisonment of numbers of women and children also meant that their supply lines were hampered.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Godlonton, *Narrative of the Kaffir War 1850 - 1852*, 1962, p 41.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 1962, p 41.

¹⁰² Graham, *Memoirs, 1851- 1853*. Lumley Graham considered the Xhosa to be good shots.

¹⁰³ King claims that his regiment found in the Waterkloof area: “...several of the enemy’s caches, containing axes, bullet moulds, lead, and cast bullets...” King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, Saunders and Otley, London, 1853, p 86.

¹⁰⁴ Gordon Brown, *The Narrative of Private Buck Adams*, 1941.

¹⁰⁵ Maxwell and McGeogh, *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, 1977; King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853.

Chapter 3

Military 'Pens and Pencils': Authors and Narratives of Frontier Warfare.¹⁰⁶

Introduction

Captain King of the 74th Regiment wrote that while in the Amatholes,

"Our letters from home, doubly welcome in our mountain solitude, kept us up till a late hour. The Illustrated News and Punch, never before seen in those regions, were wisely economized for another day, as we could not afford to exhaust a month's amusement in one sitting."¹⁰⁷

It was not only the delivery of metropolitan journals such as *The Illustrated London News* and *Punch* that sustained the imperial project in the colonies and filled the 'empty' months endured in isolated outposts. The British military establishment in South Africa provided a flow of journal articles and books of their own to a transnational and receptive public. The intention in this chapter is to insert these military publications into their contemporary publishing landscape and to recognize their integration within a particular knowledge and power nexus which helped to shape metropolitan notions of the Xhosa and to delineate colonial relations with the Xhosa. This 'knowledge' was translated into publications and then re-translated by those who read the books and articles which elicited a type of public which Warner refers to as "...the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse". Military narratives, which formed a part of this concatenation of texts, transmitted a type of knowledge about colonies; they also demonstrated broader affinities in relation to global trends. The narratives which told the 'frontier war story' were bolstered by a fairly long history of published textual and illustrative representation concerning the Xhosa.¹⁰⁸

Narratives were permeated by influences emanating from the metropole and from other parts of the empire. For instance, the texts provided analogies pertaining to landscape of other colonies and comparisons were made in relation to military organization. One finds a number of dark asides proffered about the lack of organization of the commissariat in South Africa as compared to its counterpart in India.¹⁰⁹ Hence, the 'knowledge-base' of the books and journal articles can be regarded as intertextual and indicative of both the geographical dispersion and interconnectedness of colonial 'knowledge'.¹¹⁰ From this perspective, the publications also portrayed a 'horizontal' movement between, for example, India and the Cape. There were other routes: many publications demonstrated the more predictable

¹⁰⁶ 'Pens and Pencils' has been filched from the title of Thomas Lucas's book: *Pen and Pencil Reminiscences of a Campaign in South Africa*, Day and Son, London, 1861.

¹⁰⁷ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 120.

¹⁰⁸ This topic will be covered in a following chapter on 'ethnology' (Chapter 7).

¹⁰⁹ See MacKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970, pp 11, 21.

¹¹⁰ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, Zone Books, New York, 2002.

north-south course which was evident in narratives which were printed in the influential metropolitan centre of London.¹¹¹

This account serves as an adjunct to the previous chapter which provided an overview of the regiments and the weaponry of the colonizing forces at the Cape. The focus of this chapter is narrower in that it presents a discussion of military authors who published accounts and journal articles on the frontier wars. The chapter also will address the vexed questions of 'audience', that is, who read the narratives? How did the authors imagine their readership? In this chapter, I shall argue that military publications were part of many nodes of transnational circularity within the 19th Century ambit. For Michael Warner questions around the circulation of texts are central to how publics are formed and to their reflexivity, that is, what publics thought about the texts and their meaning. Published texts transmitted 'knowledge' about the Xhosa and pronounced on the Xhosa as ethnographic subjects and as fighters; categories which will be revisited in succeeding chapters. Furthermore, as we shall see in the chapter on Harriet Ward, the frontier war campaigns were represented tendentiously. Readers were absorbed into accounts of the Cape and were interpellated by authors as misguided 'philanthropists' or as 'realists' depending on their construal of the subjection of the Xhosa.

A primary concern of this chapter is to provide an overview of some of the more 'eminent' military authors. It also engages in a far more difficult project which is to try to divine who constituted the 'audience' of the books. An enquiry which attempts to quantify the audience of publications is doomed because empirical evidence of what constitutes a readership is slender.¹¹² What is more accessible is an investigation of the publishing trajectory of books and journal articles on the frontier wars. Hence this chapter will provide a discussion of the route of some of the texts and how they fed into the colonial milieu. The legacy of the narratives is significant in that soldiers considered that their stories laid claim to certain truths about the Xhosa and warfare on the frontier. With hindsight we might consider these 'veracities' to be hidebound and idiographic and almost certainly 'western' and 'supremacist'; but the publications tried to "seize rhetorical space" in the first half of the 19th Century and as such held sway within a corner of the discursive realm. An additional task of this chapter is to fill some lacunae. Military texts are often overlooked in contemporary historiography which is baffling because they formed an important component of the discursive renderings of the colonization process.

Overview of publications

One theme that will be investigated in this and the following chapter is whether there was a noticeably 'military' imprint on the representations of the Xhosa. How different were military texts in form, content and feeling from those written by civilian authors? The military publications reflected the turmoil and the afflictions of colonial warfare but they also made themselves commercially viable by including a miscellany of sporting tales, natural history and the adversity of travelling in 'foreign' countries. Not that the portrayal of misery was an unmarketable proposition. The campaign narrative portrayed the

¹¹¹ A number of military narratives about the Frontier Wars were published by established publishing houses in London.

¹¹² Dubow considers it problematic to quantify 'readers' of journals and newspapers because circulation figures of newspapers for instance do not reflect the community of readers who shared the publications. Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006, p 72.

endurance of the 'suffering tourist' at its most extreme and in circumstances which were constructed as dangerous and insalubrious.¹¹³ In military narratives, coerced travelling was troped as 'duty', forbearance and manliness but for the reading public the narratives fed into the Victorian armchair desire for exotic travel and catered to that mild form of *schadenfreude* associated with the perusal of the afflictions of others. I shall pursue this question in the chapter on Harriet Ward who was adept at representing herself in complex ways as both sufferer and a plucky survivor.

In this chapter, I shall revisit King's book, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, and I shall consider aspects of James McKay's publication, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*; Thomas Lucas's *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa* and Alfred Drayson's, *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*. The latter were all campaign narratives which derived from the 8th Frontier War.¹¹⁴ In addition to the former authors, John Bisset fought in and narrated all three of the wars in his book, *Sport and War* and Lakeman wrote a book, which is possibly best described as priapic, but which provides insight into the brutality of the 8th Frontier War.¹¹⁵ There were diverse reasons for the proliferation of publications concerning the 8th Frontier War. There were significantly more members of the regular army at the Cape than in previous campaigns and it was a protracted and expensive war; as a consequence it was given more metropolitan attention. Renditions of the war fed into the popular, middle class imagination via journals, such as *Punch*, which groused about the fiscal burden of the 8th Frontier War. The *London Illustrated News* also covered the war in a number of articles and these were accompanied by etchings contributed by artists such as Thomas Baines.¹¹⁶

All three of the wars saw the production of published military narratives which included articles published in journals such as *The United Service Magazine*.¹¹⁷ Although publications concerning the 6th and 7th Frontier Wars were less numerous, they influenced those that followed. James Alexander was probably the most significant published author of the 6th Frontier War. The 7th Frontier War is covered by the books of Harriet Ward and Edward Elers Napier both of whom were referred to by writers of the 8th Frontier War.¹¹⁸ Buck Adams contributed articles concerning the 7th Frontier War to the *Naval and Military Gazette*, *East India and Colonial Chronicle* between 1853 and 1856 using the pseudonym: *Rooi Badje*. The editors of the Journal seemed keen that Adams, a private in the army, contribute to their pages. One of the editions of the journal contains this message: "Rooi Badjie. – We shall be happy to

¹¹³ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

¹¹⁴ All the books referred to here were written by officers with the exception of James McKay.

¹¹⁵ Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875; Lakeman, *What I Saw in Kaffirland*, Blackwood, Edinburgh/ London, 1880. In a contemporary publication which combined journalism, military and settler reports, Godlonton and Irving provided an 'overview' of the 8th Frontier War in their *Narrative of the Kaffir War 1850 -1852*.

¹¹⁶ Kennedy, Thomas Baines, *Journal of Residence in South Africa, 1842 – 1853*, 1964. The *London Illustrated News* used a number of Baines's sketches.

¹¹⁷ Journal articles included the *United Service Magazine*, edited by Henry Colburn. The latter also published Harriet Ward's *Five Years in Kaffirland, Volumes I and II* on the 7th Frontier War. Other journals which contained articles on the frontier wars were Ainsworth's *The New Monthly Magazine*, *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* and the *Colonial Intelligencer*.

¹¹⁸ Drayson, in *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*, 1858, quotes from Napier's book, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I*, 1849, at some length, pp 22-25.

receive the offered communication.”¹¹⁹ What this suggests is that privates and non-commissioned officers also held the attention of the public. This interest can be traced to the period following the Napoleonic Wars when a number of memoirs emerged which were narrated by ‘humble’ soldiers who sometimes used an amanuensis to record their stories. A prominent example of this genre was Surtees’s narrative of the Napoleonic Wars which was told to the public with “Defoe-like sincerity and simplicity”: a style evidently considered to be appropriate for soldiers from the ranks.¹²⁰

Despite this romantic interest in the common man, the majority of authors were officers. King was a Captain in the 74th Highland Regiment and Drayson was a Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, however, by the time his memoirs had been published he had been promoted to the rank of Captain as the title page of *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa* denotes. Lucas was a Lieutenant in the Cape Mounted Riflemen. Officers were the most likely members of the regular army to be published, as they were literate, trained in the skill of topographical drawing and generally better socially connected than men in the ranks: they had what the Victorians termed ‘friends’. Most of the authors discussed in this chapter went on to write books other than their frontier war narratives. The most prolific author was Alfred Drayson who published books on a number of topics from practical military surveying and sketching, to ‘the art of practical whist’, to ‘popular treatises’ on astronomy.¹²¹ Military surgeons also were also to contribute to the web of colonial knowledge production and were instrumental in the writing of reports on regional climates and ‘medical topographies’ which designated areas as salubrious, or not, for troops.¹²²

The campaign narrative was the main vector conveying information and commentary on the wars in the Eastern Cape but a number of writers used their experiences at the Cape as background for subsequent novels or for analogous purposes in later anthropological and scientific studies.¹²³ One such author was King who had at least three books published: *Campaigning in Kaffirland* was his first. This was followed by a book on Canada, *The Sportsman and Naturalist in Canada* (1866) and his third was a published paper on India which was read for the Anthropological Society in 1870, entitled, *The Aboriginal Tribes of the Nilgiri Hills*, (1870) in which he makes analogies between the people of the ‘Nilgiri Hills’ and the ‘Hottentots’ at the Cape.¹²⁴ Lucas’s *Camp Life and Sport* (1878) was the second of his three books

¹¹⁹ Gordon-Brown, *The Narrative of Private Buck Adams*, 1941, pp 277, 278.

¹²⁰ Taylor, *A Memoir of Robert Surtees*, George Andrews, Durham, 1852, p iv. An interest in narratives from the ‘common man’ flowered in the Romantic period.

¹²¹ Drayson had at least 18 books published in his lifetime. His experiences during the Frontier Wars clearly made a mark on him as he published 5 books relating to South Africa over and above his first, *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs*, 1858. One of these books was a novel entitled, *Adventures of Hans Sterk, the South African Hunter and Pioneer*, Griffith and Farran, London, 1869.

¹²² See Alexander Barclay’s unpublished *Report on Kaffraria, 1851 – 1853*. Barclay was a surgeon in the 43rd Regiment. The subheadings of the Report provide an index of common army concerns: these included Topography; Fighting Difficulties; Posts; Climate; Disease. Also see Assistant-Surgeon Black’s publication on the Fish River Bush, first published in a journal in 1853.

¹²³ King used ‘evidence’ about autochthonous South Africans to make analogies with the peoples of ‘Nilgiri’ in his anthropological study of 1870, *The Aboriginal Tribes of the Nilgiri Hills*, Longmans and Green, London.

¹²⁴ King, *The Sportsman and Naturalist in Canada*, Hurst and Blackett, London, 1866; *The Aboriginal Tribes of the Nilgiri Hills*, 1870.

covering his experiences in South Africa. The first was entitled *Pen and Pencil Reminiscences of a Campaign in South Africa* (1861) and his last, possibly intentionally published in the year of the Zulu War in 1879, was entitled *The Zulus and the British Frontiers*. Both Lucas and King were amateur artists as well as authors and their books were illustrated with lithographs of their sketches.¹²⁵ Lumley Graham, who left an unpublished diary covering the 8th Frontier War, wrote two books covering military issues: *Mountain Warfare* (1879) and *The Tactics of Infantry in Battle* (1881). He also translated an influential book on the Franco-Prussian War by Albert Boguslawski: *Tactical Deductions from the War of 1870 – 71*. Graham might not have published his campaign narrative but a selection of his sketches, along with those of a fellow officer Hugh Robinson, were published in 1854 under the somewhat cumbersome title of *Scenes in Kafirland and incidents of the Kafir War of 1851-53 from sketches by Two Officers of the 43rd (Monmouthshire) Light Infantry*. This publication contained what was described as, “21 brilliant coloured lithographs of the scenery and incidents of the war in large folio”.¹²⁶

Themes in the published books

The details of the military campaign narratives might have varied but certain constructs such as an assessment of tactics and the character of the enemy remained integral to the texts. Ethnographic detail in the military narratives was predominantly based on published travellers’ narratives and on established ethnographic studies which adumbrated historical, philological and theological explanations concerning the origin and ‘distinguishing features’ of the Xhosa peoples. The former fields were employed by military authors as a way of providing authority to their discussions on the Xhosa, and to their published works, even though the sources they used were infrequently cited. Concomitantly the published works provided an endorsement of the presence and power of the British at the Cape: their content was directed towards a general readership and the very prevalence of the publications pointed to the imbrication of the Cape frontier and its autochthonous inhabitants into a widening international literary arena.¹²⁷

Many of the authors directed their books towards the diurnal aspects of colonial campaigning and some of the richest representations of the Xhosa occur in descriptions of recurrent skirmishes and ambushes on the frontier. The latter more immediate and ‘dramatic’ encounters described in the texts, along with tales of hunting and camp life, took up most of the narratives whereas the ethnographic sections and direct commentary on the ‘culture’ of the Xhosa usually was confined to one or two chapters. Both ethnographic and campaign narratives were filtered through schemas which privileged notions of western cultural superiority and theories of eighteenth century ‘progress’ and civilization inherited by the authors. Dubow’s study draws attention to the increasing prejudice and racialization of colonial texts during the 19th Century:

¹²⁵ See also, Drayson’s *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*, 1858: “Illustrated by Harrison Weir from designs by the Author”, Title Page.

¹²⁶ Green, ‘Early South African Pictures and their Painters’, in *Africana Notes and News*, Vol VII, No 3, 1950, p 91.

¹²⁷ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol I, 1849.

“From about the 1830s and 1840s, as scientific institutions were implanted in the country, knowledge became increasingly bounded and exclusive, even though it took the better part of a century to become thoroughly professionalized and disciplinary-based.”¹²⁸

Indeed there were shifts in attitude towards the Xhosa over the span of the three wars, however, as will be discussed in more detail, representations of the Xhosa remained multivalent. Most members of the regular army were prone to have metropolitan rather than colonial loyalties which meant that books bore the marks of a transitory association.¹²⁹ Military authors indubitably played a role in the process of delineating colonized peoples and followed a form of narration which was to become common in the genre of the colonial travelogue. In fact the texts were close to being formulaic: the style and form of military texts by and large emulated 19th Century travel writing as this Northern American example indicates:

“The travel narratives, however close the author’s personal relationship with Indians, were products of empire, and as such conformed on one level to the requirements of an official genre. They aimed for a disinterested, detached style, as this helped establish the author as a reliable, truthful witness, making his prose a source of information that officials, historians and men of science could rely upon to guide dealings with Indians. The genre demanded a generalized summary of Indians’ manners and customs, under thematized headings, even if the rest of the narrative told of the vagaries of a precarious personal relationship.”¹³⁰

By the mid-19th century, the vocabulary and emplotment of the frontier war narrative had become culturally resonant to a western readership that relied on a contextualizing chapter or two on the ‘manners and customs’ of autochthonous peoples and then expected this to be followed by a cracking good yarn about a military campaign. On the other hand, the publications tended to privilege the idiographic and strove to present a record of the unfamiliar or the newly adopted habits and fighting techniques of the Xhosa. Military texts were also positioned as ‘guidebooks’ to other military personnel: they sort to provide information about the topography and natural history of the Eastern Cape and to offer insight into the represented ‘vagaries’ of the Xhosa as a ‘people’ and as ‘fighters’.¹³¹ In relation to the latter theme, it is difficult to estimate precisely how many officers and soldiers read previously published campaign narratives about the countries in which they were to be stationed. There are snippets of information in diaries which provide a sense of what officers read and we can be fairly secure in assuming they read something about the countries to which they were posted and we know that Drayson, for instance, read Elers Napier because he quotes him at length in his book on the 8th Frontier War.¹³²

¹²⁸ Dubow, *The Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2005, p 13.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p 14. Dubow makes the point that the notions ‘colonial’ and imperial’ are frequently and erroneously considered to be co-terminous. In fact the experience of the army in the colonies bears this out. They might have had broad sympathies with the colonial project but their relations with individual colonists often were antagonistic and soldiers in general were regarded with opprobrium by colonists.

¹³⁰ Fulford, *Romantic Indians*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p 60, 61.

¹³¹ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, Smith, Elder and Co, London, 1853.

¹³² Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858.

In *Publics and Counterpublics*, Warner is concerned with what he terms the 'real paths' of circulation which included the publishing houses, bookshops, circulatory libraries and so on.¹³³ The 'public' in this sense is not entirely an imaginary construct, there are also tangible aspects to its domain and the circulation of publications is central to how the public configured itself and how, in some instances, it became a reflexive agent for social change. There are also limits to circulation: in the 19th Century these were manipulated by social class and more obliquely by epistemic limitations. In relation to officers, the 'real' paths that led to publication by a London publishing house were their 'friends', affiliation to influential societies such as the Royal Geographical Society and their officer status.

The domain of readership was confined by the economics of publication: books were expensive in the first half of the 19th Century. The lists which advertised new editions at the back of Harriet Wards' book, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, demonstrate that three bound volumes cost an average of 21 shillings (one guinea) and novels which were catalogued as a "*Cheap Library of Entertainment*" cost 6 shillings each.¹³⁴ To put these prices into perspective, a mid-nineteenth century private's pay in the regular army was a shilling per day and after stoppages this was reduced to sixpence per day. Hence a soldier would have received an average of one pound five shillings per month. Some soldiers who were liable to additional stoppages only received a penny per day or at times nothing at all: to control this parlous situation it was stipulated in 1847 that all soldiers had to receive a minimum of one penny per diem.¹³⁵

Which narratives delighted and edified the mid-nineteenth century reader with deep pockets? As suggested above, most soldierly titles demonstrate that it was the combination of exotic location, adventure, sport and war which drew the attention of the public. The fact that colonial war and hunting could inhabit the same title provides some idea of the status in which colonial wars were held. But the frontier wars were not merely troped as another event on the hunting calendar. Even though there were allusions to 'jolly picnics' and brandy flasks, the books were permeated with the realities of war and drew attention to the death of comrades, and the horrors of injury and hardship.¹³⁶ The books also sort to educate the British public, particularly about the Xhosa and to inform them about the progress of colonial wars. Titles which included hunting hinted at the peculiarities of 'frontier' topography and its fauna and most books included information about the natural history of the Eastern Cape. This miscellany of topics was presumably used to lure the Victorian reader into the popular and lucrative travel and natural history publishing market.

A number of authors used their books to raise criticisms of torpid military training and practices. The criticisms concerning regular army uniforms found their apotheosis in the Xhosa who were construed as examples of 'light infantry' who managed to fight effectively without uniforms.¹³⁷ Also, their ability 'to bloody the noses' of the British army on the frontier was used as means to direct criticism towards the policies of the Horse Guards in London. Descriptions sent from the colony of the Xhosa and their methods tactics fed into metropolitan critiques of the British regular army.

¹³³ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2002.

¹³⁴ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland Vol I*. Advertisements for books on unnumbered pages.

¹³⁵ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001.

¹³⁶ See Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975.

¹³⁷ See Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858.

Military reading habits

It is difficult to detect the breadth of reception of military books by the public. In part, this was because books within the military context were frequently shared and placed in regimental libraries or officers' clubs which resulted in more far more readers than purchasers of books.¹³⁸ In his article on military writers in India, Peers suggests that "officers and surgeons constituted the single largest community of consumers and hence their tastes and interests influenced publishers and booksellers." Regimental clubs in India were also were purchasers of books and journals. Most of the clubs had "well-stocked libraries" and most cantonments had their own book clubs.¹³⁹

We are fortunate that one officer left a record of his reading habits in his unpublished diary of the 8th Frontier War. Although he cannot be considered as characteristic, Lumley Graham, a Captain in the 43rd Monmouthshire Regiment, was something of a bookworm and from his lists we know that he read, amongst others: Gibbon, *Jane Eyre*,¹⁴⁰ Macaulay's *Essays*, Macaulay on Milton, Hallam's history of Hampshire and a collection of his essays and *Heidenmans* by Fennimore Cooper.¹⁴¹ Amongst his litany of daily activities he presents us with an account characterized by his use of understatement:

"Life here pleasant enough but very monotonous: minnow and perch fishing, pottering about with a gun, sometimes scaring a hadeda or a dove, drawing, reading Gibbon, and killing fleas are my diversions. Weather pleasant, but generally rather too hot."¹⁴²

From Graham's journal we can assume that officers conducted some research on South Africa before they went on campaign. Graham at least continued reading about the colony for his repertoire included John Barrow, Arbousset and Daumas¹⁴³ and Godlonton's 'Kaffir War'.¹⁴⁴ An extract from his diary provides substance for this:

"Tuesday, 20 April 1852: Read Clark's travels in Russia, interesting accounts of Cossacks and Tartars. My library consists of Shakespeare, Lives of Poets, Life and Works of Burns (a mutilated edition to suit *proper* [his italics] people), Barrow's Autography, an interesting collection of sketches of the embassy in China, his residence at the Cape and his career as Secretary of the Admiralty. He describes Hottentots as a trustworthy people; how different our experience of them."¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ Peers, 'Colonial Knowledge and the Military in India', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol 33, No 2, 2005, p 162.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p 164

¹⁴⁰ Graham, *Memoirs, 1851- 1853*, p 10. "Days now hot, mornings and evenings chilly. Wrote letters to England and rode out. Read *Jane Eyre*; interesting character, well drawn. Rochester interesting, but St John an cold hypocritical beast; other characters common enough except of course Jane; she is a *rara avis*."

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 1851 – 1853, p 48.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1851 – 1853, p 59. Graham writes: "*An Exploration Tour to the North East of the Cape of Good Hope Colony*" by the Revs. Arbousset and Daumas."

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1851 – 1853, p 71. "Post arrived late this evening. Several interesting despatches in the *Graham's Town Journal*."

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1851 – 1853, p 71

Graham also referred to the *Graham's Town Journal*. The latter newspaper was evidently read on the frontier by officers and possibly by a percentage of men in the ranks. A number of officers contributed reports of the campaigns and of individual skirmishes to the *Graham's Town Journal*.¹⁴⁶

Journals

Articles covering all three wars were included in the *United Service Magazine* edited by Henry Colburn who also published Harriet Ward's Volumes on the 7th Frontier War. One of the most prominent metropolitan military journals to emerge was Colburn's *United Service Magazine* which between 1829 and 1875 published over 700 articles about India.¹⁴⁷ There were also numbers of journals and newspapers which were published by the "literary and scientific" societies that flourished in Britain and India and to a lesser extent in South Africa.¹⁴⁸ The less 'specialist' press also received contributions from Indian Army officers and these included *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and the *Calcutta Review*.¹⁴⁹ Research investigating the military and literary network of India suggests that:

"Intellectual life in colonial India should not be viewed as simply a pale imitation of what was happening in Britain, mimicking trends and recreating the kinds of institutions which were flourishing in the metropole. There were important linkages between British literary and intellectual fashion and what was developing in India. For example, by the late 1840s, books and magazines were arriving in India within six weeks of being published in Great Britain."¹⁵⁰

Warner in his exposition of the 'public' narrows down some of these precepts to provide an understanding of the circularity and organization of texts, both current and past, and their relationship with a reflexive reading public. He suggests that:

"Publics are essentially intertextual, frameworks for understanding texts against an organized background of the circulation of other texts, all interwoven not just by citational references but by the incorporation of a reflexive circulatory field in the mode of address and consumption."¹⁵¹

Journals played a noteworthy role in the circulation of texts and this section will focus on the 'modes of address' that existed in these publications during the first half of the 19th Century. The journal articles produced by soldiers were not distinguished as being mass, translatable texts¹⁵² in that their audience was more specialized and largely metropolitan. However, one can detect a number of transnational literary intersections in particular those which were found in the Cape's relations with India during the 19th Century. In response to questions around the influence of military texts in India, Peers proposes that they were central to the imperial production of knowledge and played a "critical role in the collection, analysis and dissemination of knowledge in colonial India."¹⁵³ He also suggests that, "... much of the colonial [Indian] knowledge that was generated during the first century of colonial rule was tinged

¹⁴⁷ Peers, *Colonial Knowledge and the Military in India*, 1780 – 1860, 2005, p 160.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 2005, p 160.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 2005, p 160.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 2005, p 164.

¹⁵¹ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2002, p 16.

¹⁵² See Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2004.

¹⁵³ Peers, *Colonial Knowledge and the Military*, 2005, p 157.

with military values and it was sometimes framed in language redolent of the army.”¹⁵⁴ In his discussion, Peers argues that the army in India has received historiographical recognition in relation to its political and economic influence but “...insufficient attention has been paid to the army’s legacy in intellectual, cultural and imaginative terms.”¹⁵⁵ He argues that military officers and surgeons provided information on India in a number of different spheres: the most obvious being the ‘practical’ knowledge required by the army which assisted in the determination of districts favourable to the survival of British troops. There were also works which focused on representations of Indian culture which included ethnographic and philological studies. Climatic and topographical reviews and reports on indigenous populations were not always commissioned by the army but were ‘encouraged’ by that body.¹⁵⁶ Regions were also designated and assessed for the potential recruitment of allies from indigenous populations or they assessed in terms of their belligerence.¹⁵⁷

In part, these literary endeavours were integral to the increasing professionalization of the officer sector. Strachan, in his study of the Victorian army, has pointed out the professionalization of the officer class became established in the first fifty years of the 19th Century and the colonies by dint of their distance from the metropole were significant conduits for this, generally, middle class professionalism.¹⁵⁸ If one considers the composition of the officer class in the Frontier Wars, one is struck by the prevalence of sons of the landed gentry in certain regiments.¹⁵⁹ However, middle class representation amongst officers increased over the 19th Century and it was from this class that the narratives of the Frontier Wars generally emanated.¹⁶⁰ Peers points out that:

“The first half of the nineteenth century was a period in which professionalism offered an alternative to aristocratic pedigree as an avenue to respectability. Officers with sufficient wealth could buy their way out of regiments bound for India, leaving the field open for those officers who could not afford a transfer and who consequently sought advancement and standing through professional activity.”¹⁶¹

Middle class men found opportunities in the army for technical training (such as in the Royal Engineers) and for travel that would not necessarily have been open to them, particularly if their family incomes were modest.¹⁶² Publishing, rather than merely jotting down a chronicle of a campaign in a pocket diary, could result in a rise in social status. The writers of these ‘diaries’ either expanded their ‘scribblings’ into publishable texts or the chronicles remained trapped in that graveyard of intriguing and elusive commentary found in the archives of regimental museum libraries.

In contrast to the publishing whirl around India, it would be easy to claim that the Cape faded into literary insignificance in the 19th Century. But this would be to ignore the imperial, transcontinental

¹⁵⁴ Peers, *Colonial Knowledge and the Military*, 2005, p 157.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 2005, p158.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 2005, p 159.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 2005, p 159.

¹⁵⁸ Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava*, 1985.

¹⁵⁹ Everson, *The South Africa 1853 Medal*, 1978.

¹⁶⁰ Drayson, King, Lucas and Harriet Ward all came from the middle class.

¹⁶¹ Peers, *Colonial Knowledge and the Military*, 2005, p 174.

¹⁶² Strachan, in *Wellington’s Legacy*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984, describes the professionalization of the army during the 19th Century.

nature of army contributions to the publishing world. We have already seen that the journal to which Adams contributed not only attempted to 'unite' the twin services of the army and navy but also incorporated the 'colonies' in a way that identified both South Africa and India as 'British'.¹⁶³ What we find emerging through journal articles is an imperial identity which spanned the continents but there was also evidence of a protective 'localism' present in the texts. The Cape never matched the proliferation of journals and texts which emanated from India both in terms of the army and civilian contributions. However, as Dubow has demonstrated there was a wellspring of societies and during the 19th Century a number of journals emanated specifically from the Cape.¹⁶⁴ Local journals at the Cape manifested a variety of affiliations. The most famous was the *South African Commercial Advertiser* published by Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn in the 1820s which espoused notions of liberty and, importunately, the establishment of a free press at the Cape. Later the *South African Journal* emerged in 1824 which represented both Dutch and British interests at the Cape. The Cape Monthly Magazine established in 1857 did much to bring together the 'associational worlds' of clubs, societies and institutions at the Cape. It was a means for the conveyance of colonial social developments and provided its readership with a representation of a nascent South Africanism.¹⁶⁵

Dubow argues that journals, and social institutions such as literary clubs and museums, were significant in that,

"Proof of worthiness and respectability was essential in order to combat disparaging metropolitan attitudes towards 'colonials', to attract investment and to validate claims to political freedoms and autonomy."¹⁶⁶

So publication was not only about fostering the colonial economy, it also was imbued with notions of middle class status and civic virtue which went beyond the Cape Town hub.¹⁶⁷ Peers argues that military journals also created a shared identity, that of 'military men' and journals tended to promote the notion of the 'gentlemen' scholar which in turn invoked references to social status.¹⁶⁸ In contradistinction to the colonist, officers were already 'gentlemen' and they did not have to endeavour to achieve that status. Unless officers were members of the aristocracy or baronets the appellation 'Gentleman' was recorded on Officers' Commission documents which were all personally signed by Queen Victoria. Holmes points out that a commission was "proof of gentlemanly status and military authority".¹⁶⁹ One also had to have a healthy income to buy a commission: two-thirds of commissions were purchased until the British Army reforms of 1871.

The military also created their own information networks: soldiers provided an 'audience' and they were consumers of military publications. They were also a 'clannish' entity and their affiliations should not be immediately conflated with those of the colonists. Even though there were confluences around issues

¹⁶³ An example of this is the *Naval and Military Gazette, East India and Colonial Chronicle*.

¹⁶⁴ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 2006, p 71.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 2006, p 35.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 2006. By 1858 there were 8 newspapers published in Cape Town and a number of up-country newspapers, such as the *Graham's Town Journal*.

¹⁶⁸ Peers, *'Colonial Knowledge and the Military'*, 2005, p 60.

¹⁶⁹ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001, p 157

of identity, professionalism and an assertion of middle class status, the agenda of the colonial middle classes did not necessarily coincide with that of the military. If individual soldiers were sympathetic to the colonial 'cause' they did not always hold the same aspirations nor did the colony have an emotive sway over them.¹⁷⁰ Officers, in general, did not nurse the feelings of provincial inferiority that assailed colonists. They might have complained about being out in the sticks but there was always the chance of returning to the metropole.

Military narratives and their 'public'

The impermanence of the regimental presence on the frontier meant that the textual positioning of soldiers was closer to the idiom of the traveller or the temporary sojourner. However, the claim that soldiers 'just passed through' the Cape is accurate only in part. Regiments such as the 2nd Queen's Royal Infantry Regiment and the 6th Warwickshire Infantry Regiment spent almost ten years in the colony. Over the period 1828 - 1858, regiments were located in the colony for an average of 8 years and 4 months.¹⁷¹ This did not mean that the same personnel were at the Cape for the full duration of the regimental tour of duty, as fresh detachments arrived from time to time and relieved others. The point is that their stay at the Cape was not fleeting and their texts were not merely impressionistic. Harriet Ward famously stayed 'Five Years' with her husband's regiment, the 91st, during the 7th Frontier War and King spent more than two years on the Frontier with the 74th Highlanders in the 8th Frontier War.¹⁷² McKay, also in the 74th Highlanders, was one of the few non-commissioned officers who left accounts of the frontier wars and who returned to live in the Eastern Cape after he had retired from the army.¹⁷³

Nineteenth Century military writers had a well-formed sense of their 'public'. Most Prefaces demonstrate that 'friends' in the metropolis were commonly invoked as the motivating spirits behind the books.¹⁷⁴ It was purportedly their interest that encouraged the initial dinner-party anecdotes to be translated into texts and made available to a generalized readership. Other authors appealed to a more private muse: their diaries became their source: "...written during leisure hours, in a lonely fort, or by a camp fire after the fatigues of the day".¹⁷⁵ Despite the self-conscious seclusion of the diary form, the import of the events soldiers experienced by soldiers clearly became too emotionally pressing to linger in the private domain and the motif of 'shared experience' was incurred. King for instance wrote, "Should any comrade who shared its dangers and hardships peruse this account, it is hoped he will also share the feeling which first prompted the Author to record them in the field and now to present the narrative to the public."¹⁷⁶ Readers were not only construed as 'comrades', they were configured in a number of ways by authors: most often as men, almost certainly as British and the audience was positioned 'at home' rather than in the colonial arena even though colonial readers were part of the audience.

¹⁷⁰ See Lester, *'Reformulating Identities'*, 1998.

¹⁷¹ These figures were calculated from Everson's *The South African 1853 Medal* which lists the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier War medal rolls, hence only survivors are listed.

¹⁷² Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland Vol I*, 1848; King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853.

¹⁷³ MacKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970.

¹⁷⁴ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858.

¹⁷⁵ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, Preface, 1853.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1853.

Military authors apostrophized their readership in various ways: sometimes ironically as “Gentle Reader”¹⁷⁷ at other times as fellow soldiers.¹⁷⁸ However, they did not address an exclusively masculine readership. Drayson provides us with a common conceit in campaign writing which was to patronize an imagined, metropolitan readership:

“There is a great mistake prevalent in the minds of most English people, and that is, their habit of underestimating the Kaffir as a foe....Nearly every frontier Kaffir is now provided with a gun, thanks to the English traders, and very many have horses.”¹⁷⁹

The quote suggests that metropolitan readers are ignorant of colonial conditions and require a man ‘on-the-spot’ to elucidate the ‘real’ circumstances on the Frontier. This sense of immediacy linked with insider knowledge is a refrain found in most of the publications about the war; the title page of Harriet Ward’s book, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, for instance includes the legend: “Written on the Spot”. The authors of military books were also promoted as travellers and people of action: both King’s and Ward’s books bear an apologetic note from the publishers that the authors were ‘abroad’ and hence unable to revise “the proof sheets before they were committed to press.”¹⁸⁰ Drayson’s observation also conveys the impression that the metropolitan readership was not always imagined as an ideal ‘audience’. The intention in the texts was to make residents of the metropole feel uneasy and faintly inadequate compared to robust colonial adventurers. Drayson’s narrative also portrays a certain man-about-the-frontier flair to colonialism which excludes the effete, metropolitan fop:

“One very soon gets over the prejudice of colour, and having looked for some time on the rich black of a Kaffir belle, a white lady appears bloodless, consumptive and sickly in comparison.”¹⁸¹

This demonstrates something of an inversion of the sickly, diseased colonized ‘other’ and comments such as these were not uncommon in military writing. As Warner points out, publics were, and still are, largely ‘imagined’ by those who address them. Whether the ‘publics’ of military writers constituted comrades-in-arms or the members of a particular social class, they were positioned in a realm that included an imagined, extensive and appreciative readership. No writer would have wanted to see his or her creation wither on the branch. In what ways did military writers imagine their publics and how were their texts made intelligible to them?¹⁸² One path to answering this question is to consider what is meant by a ‘public’: Warner’s investigation of the ‘public’ has focused on its textual and its historical conditions, he writes:

“A public is inevitably one thing in London, quite another in Hong Kong. This is more than the truism it might appear, since the form must be embedded in the background and self-understanding of its participants in order to work. Only by approaching it historically can one understand these preconditions of its intelligibility. To address a public or think of oneself as belonging to a public is to be a certain kind of person, to inhabit a certain kind of social world, to have at one’s disposal certain media and genres, to be motivated by a certain normative horizon, and to

¹⁷⁷ See Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975.

¹⁷⁸ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1854.

¹⁷⁹ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858, p 19.

¹⁸⁰ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848, p viii; King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853.

¹⁸¹ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858, p 19.

¹⁸² Warner, *Publics and Counter Publics*, 2002, p 8.

speak within a certain language ideology. No single history sufficiently explains all the different ways these preconditions come together in practice. Yet despite this complexity, the modern concept of public seems to have floated free from its original context. Like the market or the nation – two cultural forms with which it shares a great deal – it has entered the repertoire of almost every culture. It has gone traveling.”¹⁸³

Hence, Warner construes the public as paradoxical: on one level, the ‘public’ is historically contingent but on another it has become unmoored from its dock to float freely as a ‘universal’ and transferable concept which bears a “functional intelligibility across a wide range of contexts”.¹⁸⁴ This means that the mid 19th century reader can be understood as being part of a ‘public’ by and large in the same way as a 21st century cinema audiences can be recognized as a ‘public’. Warner cautions that if we develop too ‘cultural’ and too contextual an understanding of the public and we are too intent on determining historical contingency and ‘appropriation’, we can overlook how the notion of the ‘public’ can be translated into different cultural contexts. That is, in which ways one culture translates another culture.¹⁸⁵

Warner further suggests that,

“...the idea of the public has a metacultural dimension; it gives form to a tension between the general and particular that makes it difficult to analyze from either perspective alone. It might even be said to be a kind of engine of translatability, putting down new roots wherever it goes.”¹⁸⁶

According to Warner, we need to be cautious of presenting the public in ways that are too simplistic or in ways that are under-theorized; instead of revealing a partiality for either the general or the particular, we need to see the ‘public’ within the framework of this ‘tension’. This methodological perspective, taking into account the inevitable problems historians have with the sublime, can enhance an analysis of how the 19th century ‘public’ was imagined in military narratives because it provides opportunities to convey thoughts about a metacultural reading public as well as envisage the specifics of who was reading what and when. It would be possible to cut through this Gordian knot of complexity but I think this would diminish the subtlety of analysis that this tension requires. In that the 19th Century reading public read texts which have a form recognizable to us today but these texts were also obeisant to the expectations and delectations of the readership positioned in that time.

In summary, although the ‘public’ bears some consistency of form and carries a ‘meta-cultural dimension’, it also is a product of social specificity, is subject to historical contingency and is capable of transmutation when it turns up in another culture. Warner’s perspectives have implications for this study: warfare produces cultural translatability through its martial interconnections but also through verbal and written commentary about the ‘enemy’ by metropolitan authors. The military narratives and the ventriloquisms that find their way into the texts support the claim that commentary on different ‘cultures’ was pervasive and in a ‘material’ way we see the translation of certain Xhosa practices into the tactics of the regular army. Additionally, one cannot dismiss a possible, indirect integration of ‘western’

¹⁸³ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 2002, p 10.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 2002, p 9.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 2002, p 11.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 2002, p 11.

texts and mission-taught literacy into the fighting experiences of the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi: there is one such reference to Khoikhoi readers scanning the Graham's Town papers for troop movements.¹⁸⁷ There are also instances of letters written by 'rebels' addressed to army commanders in the 8th Frontier War. The following passage demonstrates the intersections found in warfare as well as the condescension and disdain shown by the British colonial authorities towards the enemy:

"We had not gone more than a quarter of a mile, when a bugle sounded the "halt" far up on the hills, and we perceived the white flag and two or three figures rapidly descending the mountain, bringing the promised letter. As two of our party went to receive it, the enemy's bugle above sounded the "right incline," and keeping away in that direction, they avoided thereby, as we afterwards learned, a deep sluit, of which they were politely made aware. No force was to be seen today. The purport of the letter, which was very well written in English, was to propose terms of peace without surrendering their leaders. His Excellency [Cathcart] took no notice whatsoever of the proposal, and not only expressed his displeasure at the conference having taken place at all, but offered a reward of five hundred pounds for Uithaolder, dead or alive."¹⁸⁸

The 'very well written letter' can be located within the educational milieu of the colony. Ross proposes that literacy statistics for mission educated people in the Eastern Cape in the late 1840s were high. He suggests that the missionaries' literacy drives were relatively successful in that region and cites the following figures for a number of mission stations:

"In the long established stations of the Eastern Cape, literacy rates among adults were considerable. The proportions who could read in Enon [Enon: men 40 literates out of 94 and women 67 out of 111], Bethelsdorp (men only) and Pacaltsdorp and Hankey were 52 per cent substantially more for women than for men), 49 per cent, 44 per cent and 40 per cent respectively."¹⁸⁹

In his brief discussion on the "Kat River Rebellion" of 1851, Ross quotes from London Mission Society records in which missionaries were called upon to explain the resistance to the colonial structure:

"Many of the Hottentots attend the public meetings of the English at which they hear enough to satisfy their minds about the real state of feeling towards the coloured races. Many of them also read the frontier papers which with scarcely an exception exhibit the very worst of feelings towards them...."¹⁹⁰

Citing a Memorandum to John Montagu, Ross also attributes "the desertion of large numbers of Khoi soldiers" after they had read an article in the *Zuid-Afrikaan* which called for the "ultimate extinction of the worthless creatures".¹⁹¹ There is a military slant to this: soldiers, and presumably Ross is referring to members of the Cape Mounted Riflemen who took up arms with the Xhosa, endured alarming levels of systemic violence in the 19th Century army. However, there were certain 'standards' that soldiers upheld

¹⁸⁷ Maxwell and McGeogh, *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, 1978, pp 173, 174, 278. Stubbs wrote: "Some Hottentots called to us from a hill to know why we did not come through Double Drift as they had been waiting for us. They had seen the Grahams Town papers two days before. This again shows the communication kept up between the Hottentots in town and the rebels." A footnote to this comment suggests that the plan was not published in the papers but the muster roll was.

¹⁸⁸ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 146.

¹⁸⁹ Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 2009, p 124. Figures were taken from the Mission Census of 1849.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 2009, p 156.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 2009, p 156.

and they detested verbal abuse: 'worthless creatures' would have riled them. Additionally, the usage of the word 'extermination' would not have gone down well with soldiers as their employment already placed them on the margins of life itself; as well as on the peripheries of social respectability.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of a number of publications covering the Frontier Wars and attempted to examine their publishing trajectories and their sphere of influence. Most revisionist histories assume that colonial publications were influential but how far did this influence extend and was there an obscured 'counter public' in their readership? It is also easy to claim that the publications contributed to the pot of colonial knowledge but this often has been too glibly determined in current historiography. The identification of the major themes prevalent in the books and journal articles was intended to provide some notion of their thematic complexity. In general, the Xhosa were represented ambivalently: they were 'admired' for their bravery and their looks, amongst other characteristics, but they were frequently represented unsympathetically to a western readership. There were points made in the texts concerning the Xhosa's ability to outwit and out-fight the 'flower' of the British troops but these observations incorporated attempts to elide over the often lamentable performance of the regular army in the Eastern Cape: a theme which will be extended in the next chapter. The authors of the texts also classified and described autochthonous peoples and frequently wrote about their campaigning experiences in a way they 'naturalized' the imperial project. Certain publications, as we shall see, also tended to provide oblique accounts of the persistent violence inflicted on the cultures of the colonized.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975; Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875.

Chapter 4

Godlonton's representations of the 'enemy' in the 6th Frontier War 1834 - 1835

Introduction

The following is an enquiry into the diverse factors which impelled Godlonton to place before his readership criteria by which they could distinguish between the Xhosa and the settler. Godlonton's was a civilian voice, even though he was in a commando during the 6th Frontier War, and he is the only settler who will be examined in a sustained manner in this thesis. In general, Godlonton's book has been considered to be a reflection of 'settler sentiment' towards events of the 6th Frontier War rather than an accurate 'history' of the war.¹ This chapter will provide a short discussion of the metropolitan context of the colony and settler habitation in the Eastern Cape in the 1830s before addressing how the Xhosa were represented in Godlonton's writings. Additionally, there will be an exploration of the set of attitudes and representational strategies adopted by Godlonton in his narrative of the frontier war.

The metropolitan context of the 1830s

Early 19th Century metropolitan Britain experienced an ebbing of preindustrial society in the face of encroachment from the industrial revolution. From the 1830s onwards, the population was to become more acutely conscious of substantial and permanent industrial and urban change as well as the increasing interpenetration of government into social life. Through these processes Britain was to experience considerable transformation in its social composition and its government in the 1830s. Concomitant to the social upheaval of the industrial revolution in the urban areas was the advent of more specialized, capitalist farming systems driven by a stream of enclosure acts initiated in the 18th Century. The increasing social pressure created by these transformations thrust "...a vast and growing body of the population into an economic battleground, this destruction of all the vestigial remains of traditional securities and protective devices and this deadly concentration of ill-fed and ill-housed people had great consequences in the history of the state."²

Social and economic changes created the conditions for a change in the role of government, its original *raison d'état* being to rule not to legislate.³ Changing circumstances required planning and new legislation to contend with unprecedented social problems. Legislature was required to be informed by 'exact knowledge' prior to its being passed by parliament.⁴ This resulted in the emergence of a plethora of experts, select committees and other investigating instruments used to probe and find solutions for the social predicaments of the day. Confronted by the appalling social conditions of the first decades of the 19th Century, a number of state interventions were made into the lives of the poor. The year 1834 saw the initiation of the Poor Law which has been selected for discussion because it is illustrative of the

¹ Lester, *'Reformulating Identities'*, 1998; Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*, 1996; Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1992.

² MacDonagh, *Early Victorian Government 1830-1870*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1977, p 97

³ *Ibid.*, 1977, p 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1977, p 6.

complexity of ideas that prefigured legislative change in the 1830s. It also provides an index of the conflicting philosophies that informed such legislature. The Poor Law was the product of a commission of enquiry appointed by Lord Grey in 1832 which was characterized by intense debate informed by questions around whether unemployment should be regarded as an offence or a misfortune.⁵ The existing, localized system of parish relief was unable to cope with the mass of misery and poverty confronting it. Opinion on the poor laws was divided into those who wished to retain the earlier parish based system and a second group who wished to modify them so as to extend the practice of making 'the pauper -labourer' self-sufficient. A third group persuaded by Malthusian notions and theories of political economy became the dominant force in the British legislature. The idea of a 'charitable' poor law was anathema to this group because it dammed up the supply of labour and caused potential workmen to languish on parish charity, hence reducing productivity and disrupting the 'free' contact between the employer and the employed. Malthusians furthermore argued that the Poor Law increased the 'improvidence' of the poor and created larger families than the economy was able to sustain. Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, which was expanded in 1803, argued that one of the intractable laws of human nature was that the population increased exponentially whereas the production of food increased arithmetically. Hence food scarcity was an unalterable part of the human condition. The didactic, improving component of this theory was that people should practise sexual restraint and control the population in order for food resources to remain commensurate with the population.⁶

Benthamite utilitarianism also proved to be influential in the formulation of the Poor Law. As Watson proposes,

"Jeremy Bentham's....idea of a 'felicific calculus', the overall aggregate of pleasure and pain, became identified with maximization of the production of goods, the most characteristic achievement of the new industrialism. The fundamental idea the greatest happiness for the number was soon amended to included the twist that, no matter how acute the hardship might be for the minority (in terms of unemployment, for example) it must be tolerated."⁷

The Poor Laws were intended to make labour and employment more attractive than state or charitable support. Poor relief was only to be made available in the workhouses: in these institutions the non-workers' rations were to be cut, discipline and regimentation was strict and compulsory and arduous labour was to be executed. It was hoped the able -bodied poor would reject these arduous terms and that poverty would become stigmatized. This system would also release the government from having to spend large amounts on funding a system of poor relief. Although the Poor Laws had no direct bearing on the Cape, they were a dark reminder of what some settlers had left behind in the metropole and their Benthamite underpinnings were an ever-present component of what Watson describes as the 'ideas in the air' at a historical juncture. Benthamite strains of thinking occur in the febrile attempts by ideologues such as Godlonton to promote the sanctity of labour and the benefits of productivity as opposed to the 'barbarism' and 'unproductiveness' of indigenous peoples. The idea that the basis of

⁵ MacDonagh, *Early Victorian Government 1830-1870*, 1977, p 97

⁶ Watson, *A History of Ideas*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 2005.

⁷ Ibid., 2005, p 563

economic success and wealth lay in work done and 'new' understandings of value of labour as morally uplifting, as well as providing material comfort, became prevalent at the Cape in the writings of ideologues such as Godlonton.

The Settlers

As De Kiewiet points out, "The 1820 settlers said good-bye to depression in England and found depression to greet them at the Cape."⁸ Indeed, many settlers at the Eastern Cape experienced a long road to economic stability. In addition the Cape was marginalized in the greater imperial project, De Kiewiet maintained that settlement in the Cape was sporadic and the Cape was always a less popular choice than other colonies. He writes

"The Cape Colony was too poor to finance immigration on a large scale, and after 1820 the Home Office was reluctant to undertake further expensive ventures of the same kind. The great stream of immigration, therefore, that went to Canada and Australia passed South Africa by."⁹

By the mid 1830s however, things were looking up for some Albany settlers who had reached a modicum of financial comfort. According to Godlonton they had,

".... attained a degree of opulence at which they never could have expected to arrive had they continued in Europe, where they must have shared in the privations of the middle classes of a redundant population. The settlement as a whole had never been so rich in corn, in flocks, in herds, and in substantial comforts since its first formation...an appearance of cheerful activity and contentment among those who had been struggling with years of difficulty."¹⁰

Godlonton's descriptions of 'opulence' might have been hyperbolic but the Cape was experiencing an improvement in its fortunes and the severe colonial deprivations of the 1820s seemed to have passed. But there were ominous undertones to increased prosperity; Keegan argues that the corollary of economic stability was an increase in expansionist aspirations:

"Once established by the 1830s, this emergent settler elite were to become more directly predatory, and put their full weight behind the process of dispossession and military expansionism whereby indigenous land and labour were shaken free for settler speculation and settler use....Speculation and investment in land, and from the 1830s on, in woolled sheep gradually gave rise to a fully fledged settler capitalism that was to spread well beyond the original nucleus of in the Albany district."¹¹

The wool industry, with Britain as the most significant trade partner, was to remain the backbone of trade in this period:

"The flocks established on settler farms in the 1820s and 1830s became the nucleus of the Cape's most valuable nineteenth century product and soon spilled over onto the land of the boers and the Africans. In the half century

⁸ De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa*, 1972, p 39.

⁹ Ibid., 1972, p 39.

¹⁰ Godlonton in Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1992, p 648.

¹¹ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*, 1996, pp 67, 68.

up to 1855, sheep numbers in the colony increased at least fourfold to 6.5 million, of these three-quarters were now woolled.”¹²

A rising interest in scientific agriculture and in particular, the breeding of sheep was to dominate South African colonial agriculture during the 19th Century, particularly prior to the mineral revolution when wool was the most profitable export from the Cape. Wool exports from South Africa increased from half a million pounds in 1838 to 12 million pounds in 1855. During this period, farm land was not only ‘expropriated’ during the frontier wars but large portions of land were bought from farmers who trekked north from the Eastern Cape in the 1830s. There was also a steady exchange of ownership of farms as more successful farmers bought up the land from those who had ‘failed’ as agriculturalists.¹³ Beinart has shown that the British enclosure system was not workable in the Eastern Cape, where vast sheep farms proved to be the most profitable means of farming, however, ideas of progress and scientific approaches which informed the enclosure system tended to be perpetuated by a number of farmers in the area. Enclosures were perceived in capitalist farming sectors to be representative of advancement whereas common land held by small communities was seen as backward. The argument was that agriculture could thrive and progress with better, more technologically advanced methods, crop rotation and other ‘scientific’ methods, whereas land held in common was considered unproductive and only suitable for immediate, localized requirements.¹⁴ This thinking had implications for settler attitudes towards the Xhosa whose ‘unscientific’ agricultural methods and common land usage led them to their being classified as ‘primitive’ and ‘unproductive’. Crais in his examination of the early 19th century proposes that conflict was based on cultural misunderstandings as well as material appropriation.

“The participants in this intersection of two different cultures...had great trouble in standing ‘outside’ their own culture. In a sense they comprehended a cross-cultural reality ‘ethnocentrically’. The British came from a capitalist and industrializing society centered on the individual and an economic system oriented around the production of commodities of exchange. In Xhosa society, by contrast, the overwhelming majority of goods remained within the community and circulated according to principles of reciprocity and redistribution. This intersection of cultures frequently produced a misreading of the ‘text’ of cross-cultural contact and the construction of ‘working misunderstandings’ which often collapsed into violent conflict.”¹⁵

The Xhosa and settler trade nexus went through a process of consolidation during the 19th Century but the ‘violent conflict’ of the frontier wars did much to undermine the availability of agricultural produce and livestock and deeply undermined relations of production because of the population depletion, through violent death, within the Xhosa polities.¹⁶

¹² Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa*, 2003, p 53.

¹³ Ibid., 2003, p 47.

¹⁴ Porter, *Enlightenment*, Penguin Books, London, 2000.

¹⁵ Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance*, 1993, p 100.

¹⁶ Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003, p 110.

Godlonton and the Graham's Town Journal

Robert Godlonton was born in London in 1794.¹⁷ In his youth he was apprenticed as a printer to the King's Printing Office at Shacklewell. In 1820, he left London and joined Lieutenant John Bailie's Joint Stock Party as part of the settlement scheme in the Eastern Cape. He was granted land around Cuylerville in the Eastern Cape but his first attempt at farming was unsuccessful and he drifted into Graham's Town where he worked as a clerk in the office of the landdrost in 1823. One of his duties was to collect taxes in the Albany and Somerset districts and from his travels in these areas, he amassed sufficient knowledge to write a number of 'travelling sketches' which were published in the *Graham's Town Journal* in 1832 and 1833. In 1834, he took over the post of editor of the *Graham's Town Journal* from L.H. Meurant; his editorship of the *Journal* was to last until 1866. Later, he became a partner in Meurant's printing, bookselling, binding and stationery business. During his lifetime Godlonton published two volumes on the 6th and the 8th Frontier Wars. The material for these volumes was mainly accrued from his *Graham's Town Journal* articles and from the letters and dispatches from those involved in the wars which were published in the *Graham's Town Journal* leaders. He also published a collection of settler memorials addressed to the British Government.¹⁸

Godlonton made the most of the opportunities offered by a fluctuating colonial society and established himself as a business man, acquired land and became a leading sheep farmer in the mid -1830s. In the 6th Frontier War, he held the position of captain in the Grahams Town Volunteer Corps and at the conclusion of the war he served on the Claims Board. As a Methodist, Godlonton was a pillar of the Wesleyan Church in Graham's Town. Ironically, Methodism had not been always considered respectable in sectors of metropolitan society. Holmes writes of soldiers being flogged for espousing Methodism and they were considered to be socially disruptive by certain conservative elements of Anglicanism.¹⁹ In fact, as James points out, Methodism was much more of an 'opiate' and acted more as a promoter of social compliancy and religious quietism. Additionally, Methodists were not necessarily representatives of the 'unruly poor' instead they often emerged from the more consciously 'respectable' working classes or the lower middle classes. A number of Methodist settlers in the Eastern Cape reflected these class origins but their position at the Cape provided them the opportunity to reinvent themselves as public-spirited citizens as well as to entrench themselves as a stabilizing and respectable force. McKenzie proposes that the importance of respectability was a central feature of the 19th Century colony:

"In communities on social flux, respectability was a weapon to be wielded in the context of rapid social mobility. For emigrants, whether voluntary or involuntary, Cape Town and Sydney offered the chance to cast off old

¹⁷ Le Cordeur, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol II, 1972, p 263. Godlonton died in Graham's Town in 1884.

¹⁸ Godlonton's publications included: *A Narrative of The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1835, 1965; Godlonton, and Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War 1850-1852*, Struik, Cape Town, 1962; Godlonton, *The Case of the Colonists of the Eastern Frontier*, Grahamstown, 1879.

¹⁹ See Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001; James writes, "In 1821, a Lincolnshire curate complained to his bishop of the tumults caused by "...organised banditti of strolling Methodists and impious Ranters who were spreading the born again gospel among local labourers"". James, *The Middle Class*, 2006, p 196.

associations and invent a new identity. In both cities emerging new elites in this period sought to establish an appropriate reputation in the eyes of both their own milieu and the imperial overload.”²⁰

Although McKenzie refers to Cape Town, a similar anxiety around social status and approval from the metropole can be seen in the ‘*Introductory*’ section of Godlonton’s narrative in which there we find vigorous attempts to gain recognition for settler propriety. However, these endeavours did not only reflect aspects of social mobility, they also had a political edge: the Eastern Cape settlers had come under fire from the metropole concerning their attitudes and practices towards indigenous people and Godlonton expended much energy on assuaging such criticism in his narratives.

The *Graham’s Town Journal* was to prove influential and became a small player in the contemporary global ‘print culture’. The metropolitan print culture, which had its origins in the 18th century, flourished throughout the 19th century.²¹ Reading habits also changed with increased access to newspapers and periodicals in the 18th century.²² Porter suggests that reading became ‘extensive’ rather than ‘intensive’ from the eighteenth century onwards. The ascent of the self-educated man took ‘culture’ and education out of the hands of the privileged elite and allowed the growing middleclass and a small percentage of the working class to become literate and educated.²³ It has been estimated that there were about 700 subscribers to the *Graham’s Town Journal* in the 1830s but newspapers were shared and the readership would have been greater than that which can be inferred from the subscription figures.²⁴ As McKenzie points out, “it was not only about reading, but about discussing what one had read” that made the print culture so central to the ascendancy of the middle classes who were confident that they could introduce social change through public forums such as the press.²⁵ According to Keegan, the *Graham’s Town Journal* represented “typical entrepreneurial interests vigorously and persistently over a number of decades.”²⁶ Keegan describes Godlonton as,

“....the chief propagandist of the settler bourgeoisie, a role he fulfilled in subsequent decades by issuing a number of books designed to serve the cause of the accumulating class which he represented.”²⁷

The newspaper also sort to promote the Eastern Cape as an immigration destination and to encourage capital investment:

“The *Journal* provided a public sphere for the common articulation of bourgeois values and aspirations in the context of a threatening physical and social landscape. It was the *Journal* more than anything which defined the settler elite as a historical reality, subjectively and collectively, and differentiated it from those who were excluded from membership by reason of social class, culture or racial characteristics.”²⁸

²⁰ McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, Melbourne University Publishing, Victoria, 2005, p 12.

²¹ Porter, *The Enlightenment*, 2000.

²² Ibid., 2000.

²³ Godlonton was educated at home by his sister. See *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol II, 1972, p 263.

²⁴ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 73.

²⁵ MacKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, 2005, p 11

²⁶ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 73.

²⁷ Ibid., 1996, p 73.

²⁸ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 73.

Indeed, in current historiography, Godlonton is considered to be a force in the development of colonial discourses around 'race' and 'racism'.²⁹ Godlonton certainly demonstrated little of the tentative, sympathetic nature espoused by a minority of Eastern Cape settlers towards indigenous peoples.³⁰ In the 1830s, humanitarian pressure emanated from both the British Government and from the metropolitan and colonial 'liberal' sector spearheaded by Godlonton's *bête noir*, the *Commercial Advertiser*. He sums up the latter's opposition as a kind of armchair intellectualism which demonstrated little comprehension of the 'true' conditions on the 'frontier'.

"It is deeply regretted, but it still is a fact which cannot be denied, that a spurious philanthropy has now-a-days become fashionable; and luckily for those who have adopted the mode they incur little *personal* risk in making a profession of it.... On the contrary they may sit down perfectly at ease, and by merely giving assent to, and maintaining one simple dogma – namely that every black man is oppressed, and every white man in his neighbourhood an oppressor, they may take rank amongst those who claim homage as benefactors to their kind..."

³¹

Godlonton's journalism, with justification, has been criticized for its belittling representations of the Xhosa and he has been described as a 'warmongering' and 'supremacist' ideologue.³² There is much to confirm these interpretations in his writing: many of his representations of the Xhosa are unfavorable and his assaults against their 'savagery' and 'barbarism' are repetitive and distasteful strands which weave their way through his texts. However, there are instances of inconsistency within his publication of the 6th Frontier War which can lead to the development of a more complex reading of his representations of autochthonous people. Significantly, his narrative of the war does not demonstrate strong examples of 'scientific' or 'biological' racism and in this regard he was a product of epistemic constraints. His attitudes to race largely were based on 'cultural' attributes and the 'advanced' characteristics of western culture were relentlessly juxtaposed to the 'primitive' and 'barbaric' practices of the Xhosa. In this regard, Godlonton was subscribing to a 19th Century modernist project: many of the opinions and maxims expressed in the narrative are recognizable as 'enlightenment' tropes which extended into the 19th Century. Consequently, certain ideas that run through his narrative of the 6th Frontier War have been overlaid by what would have been considered 'progressive' notions: settler energy, utilitarianism, free trade, 'advanced' agricultural practices and the taming of nature. These conditions Godlonton saw as running counter to the 'profligacy' of indigenous peoples and their evasion of missionary attempts to convert them.³³

Godlonton's narrative of the war is of further interest because his descriptions of skirmishes and attacks by the Xhosa provide a window on the Xhosa's adaptability in fighting both regular and commando forces and they demonstrate the ability of the Xhosa to combine traditional fighting techniques with the use of firearms and tactics such as night fighting. Furthermore, what emerges from the narrative is that

²⁹ Lester, 'The Margins of Order', Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 23, No 4, 1997.

³⁰ Le Cordeur, *The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch*, 1988; Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa*, Josiah Conder, London, 1835. See also the journal of the Aborigines' Protection Society: *The Colonial Intelligencer*.

³¹ Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Parts, II and III*, 1965, p 265.

³² Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996.

³³ Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965, pp 269, 270.

conventional, British military knowledge and Xhosa knowledge of war became imbricated in complex and not always asymmetrical ways in the field. What is disclosed in the texts is that the Xhosa were not the bearers of static cultural conditions, especially not in relation to warfare. Arguably, they adapted their fighting tactics perhaps more frequently and effectively than the British forces, who demonstrated shifts in their practices to adjust to 'bush' fighting but remained heavily reliant on the Khoikhoi forces and guides to negotiate their way around the unfamiliar, Cape 'bush'.

Godlonton was convinced that the conflict against the Xhosa was 'just war'. This assertion was predicated on arguments that the colony had to defend itself against the attacks of the Xhosa, but he also defended colonial aggression and incursions into 'Kaffraria' as justifiable on the grounds of pre-emptive action. These sentiments did not appear to conjure up moral dilemmas for Godlonton nor were there unsettling pricks on Godlonton's conscience as a practising Methodist: rather the dilemmas in his text seem to find resolution in his narrative through an implicit moral closure. The 'cultural mythoi' of the 19th century Western 'tradition' included the master narrative of Protestant Christianity which postulated that war was sinful, exploitation was wrong and compassion was the path of righteousness. However, there was a coexisting but equally dominant narrative, that of progress.³⁴ As Keegan points out, these are mutually incompatible, however, 19th century ideologues strove to reconcile their antimonies and historians such as Creasy advanced the idea that the principles and practices of liberty, in effect, Protestantism and democracy had to be "saved from extinction by some brilliant military exploit."³⁵ So war was a calamity if one subscribed to western Christian narratives, but permissible if it was construed as 'just'. Furthermore, war, or so the story went, was also the enemy of progress in that it was retrogressive, primitive, fatalistic and destructive of achievement. So how did progress, the great shibboleth of the 19th century, reconcile itself with war? This particular dilemma was resolved by attributing war with a 'purpose'. The latter theme transpires repeatedly in Godlonton's writing: war 'decided things' and it 'improved' conditions by doing away with atavistic practices and beliefs amongst the Xhosa such as 'despotism' and 'superstition'. Hence war's 'decisive role' was to protect the 'civilization' of the settlers but it also was seen as a means to enforce the Xhosa into western social systems.³⁶

According to Le Cordeur, Godlonton's narrative lacked insight into the 6th Frontier War, mainly because it relentlessly attributed the blame for the war on the Xhosa. In fact, Le Cordeur argues that Godlonton had a "more enduring impact upon frontier historiography than they had upon the policies of his day."³⁷ There is some truth in this statement, for British settlers in the Eastern Cape have come under increased scrutiny by a number of contemporary historians for their role in the formulation and establishment of racialized representations of the Xhosa and for their part in the entrenchment of repressive labour relations at the Cape.³⁸ For instance, Lester suggests that representations of the Xhosa after the 6th

³⁴ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 1999.

³⁵ Ibid., 1999, p 58.

³⁶ Ibid., 1999, p 62.

³⁷ Le Cordeur in *Dictionary of South African Biography* Vol II, 1972, p 266

³⁸ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996; Mostert, *Frontiers*, 1993.

Frontier War of 1834 became progressively more cynical.³⁹ He argues that the *Graham's Town Journal* and *The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes* were central to the "construction of a collective, legitimating past" for the settler community.⁴⁰ The settler point of view articulated to governmental authorities in London encapsulated the following points: their economic value as capitalists, their vulnerability in relation to Xhosa savagery and their differentiation from the Dutch settlers as consciously British subjects. In addition, as 'bearers of the enlightenment' they emphasized their obligation to 'uplift' the benighted Xhosa via educational and missionary activity.

Faithful to the print culture of the 19th century, Godlonton and settler contributors to the newspaper used the *Graham's Town Journal* as a way of contributing to public representation of the Xhosa.⁴¹ But how influential was Godlonton's *Graham's Town Journal*? One ought to be cautious of oversimplifying the influence of the newspaper and of Godlonton's books on the Frontier Wars. Other writers prior to and contemporaneous with Godlonton were also 'shaping' Cape society and were publishing their own renditions of the colony.⁴² Furthermore, to suggest that his was an era in which racism and its methods were integral and unquestioned is to minimize those who thought differently from Godlonton and to ignore the complexities and paradoxes of the first half of the 19th century in relation to race and colonization. Not all settler protagonists held unambiguously oppressive tendencies towards the Xhosa. Some colonial narratives displayed a consistent antipathy towards the colonized, whereas others were less coherent in their opprobrium or demonstrated sufficient self-reflection to contemplate the dilemmas that sprang from the colonial project.⁴³ These sentiments were evident in the writings of some colonial protagonists such as Stretch and Stockenström, who held more 'liberal' views of indigenous peoples.⁴⁴ Finally, perspectives that suggest that the "journal's imagery...became almost universally, the settlers' own" intimate an instrumentalist construction of settler identities. How exactly does one demonstrate the direct transference of the 'ideological' work of writers onto the practices and the administration of colonialism?⁴⁵ Much of this thesis is based on the proposition that 19th century narrative productions were influential and contributed to the literary shaping of the Xhosa but it would require considerable skill, in the face of the complexities of the colonial project, to demonstrate that contemporary narratives fed directly into settler identity.

Furthermore, although there are references to 'shifting identities' in recent accounts of the frontier and the wars, there is still a tendency to deploy the familiar binaries of frontier mythology, for example, the presence of black and white 'sides' and the frontier as an integrated or segregated zone. Legassick has demonstrated, convincingly, that the role of the frontier and its impact on the development of white

³⁹ Lester, *'Reformulating Identities'*, 1998; Bank, *'Of 'Native Skulls''*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 22, Number 3, 1997 also argues that there was a progressive hardening of settler attitudes towards the Xhosa over the period of the wars.

⁴⁰ Lester, *'Reformulating Identities'*, 1998.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1998, p 526.

⁴² See Barrow, *An account of travels into the interior of southern(sic) Africa*, Cadell and Davies, London, 1801; Burchell, *Travels in the Interior*, 1824; Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, Hamilton and Adams, London, 1844; Black, *The Fish River Bush*, *The Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*, Vol 55, 1853.

⁴³ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006.

⁴⁴ I shall discuss the antimonies of 'liberalism' in more detail in the chapter on the 7th Frontier War.

⁴⁵ Lester, *'Reformulating Identities'*, 1998, p 526.

attitudes requires complication.⁴⁶ The issue of settler defence of the colony also requires considerable revision. Historians such as Darwin suggest that the penurious state of the colony and the relatively small white population meant that there were never sufficient numbers of white colonials to fight on the frontier. Hence, metropolitan budgetary constraints led to hybrid and polyglot armies. As we have seen, there was a consistent use of Khoikhoi levies 'pressed' into service and the deployment of the Cape Mounted Riflemen, a locally raised, mainly Khoikhoi army regiment.⁴⁷

The Narrative of the 'Irruption'

Confusingly, *A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes into the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope 1834 – 1835* (Frontispiece) is divided into a number of parts. The first section of the book comprises *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Part I*, 1835. This part spans pages 1 – 128 and provides a history of the colony and its peoples. The second section of the book entitled *Introductory Remarks Parts II and III*, published in 1836, contains chapters on frontier trade and includes a chapter entitled '*Sketch of Kaffraria*' in which Godlonton presents his survey of the Xhosa, their genealogy and their association with missionaries in the area.⁴⁸ These two sections range from pages 129 – 270. The final portion of the book, published in 1836, focuses specifically on the 6th Frontier War: this is entitled *A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kafir (sic) Hordes into the Eastern Province* (pages 1 – 229). The latter review is compiled from a number of different sources which incorporate Godlonton's own articles and leaders in the *Graham's Town Journal*. Godlonton also includes an *Appendix* at the end of the book which contains, *inter alia*, military reports and correspondence from Sir Benjamin D'Urban and Lieutenant -Colonel Harry Smith.

Throughout his narrative and introductory remarks, Godlonton intentionally moderates his authorial role: the events and witnesses 'speak for themselves' and he writes that the 'hand of the narrative', which is used to connect the various incidents and diverse texts, is not 'of importance to the compiler' but is present to engender 'clarity' for the reader.⁴⁹ The literary conceit of Godlonton's 'self-effacement' is used to confirm the verisimilitude and objectivity of his narrative. However, it also demonstrates that the narrative was intended to be more representative of a history than a mere chronicle of events. The first section is similar in genre to the 'almanac compendium' in which geographical description, 'ethnographic' information and statistical tables are interspersed with historical narration.⁵⁰ The second section tells the story of the war and although it could be construed as a 'narrativized' history it does not contain the interpretative readings expected from current secondary histories. Nevertheless, Godlonton's work elicits a number of qualities which are 'historical' in the Whitean sense. White proposes that for historians to report "their truths about the real world" they require to tell a 'story', featuring a beginning, middle and an end, about the past.⁵¹ If one chooses a non-narrative form one

⁴⁶ See Chapter 1 for a discussion on Legassick.

⁴⁷ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013. Everson writes that the total strength of the CMR was 300 at the time of the 1834 war and only increased in 1835 at the close of the campaign.

⁴⁸ Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Part II and III*, 1835, p 201.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 1965, Advertisement. (no page number). See also pp 129- 133 for a discussion of settler trade with the Xhosa.

⁵⁰ White, '*The Value of Narrative*', in Mitchell (Ed), *On Narrative*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981.

⁵¹ White, *The Value of Narrative*, 1981, p 2.

can still narrate events but one would not be narrativizing a 'reality', that is, imbuing it with the form of a story. Thus one can,

"...distinguish between a historical discourse that narrates on the one side and, and a discourse that narrativizes, on the other; between a discourse that openly adopts a perspective that looks out on the world and reports it and a discourse that feigns to make the world speak for itself and speak itself *as a story*." ⁵²

Hence events 'appear on the horizon of the story' and 'tell themselves': this is crucial if the events are intended to be constructed as 'real' and as 'facts' rather than as fictive. As White has emphasized, narratives contain a 'moral' component which differentiates them from lists of sequential events found in chronicles. ⁵³ Godlonton's narrative is deeply informed by a particular western 'moral authority' and he provides a universe steeped in notions relating to the virtues of progress, work and a miscellany of Christian injunctions. His exposition of the 6th Frontier war becomes a kind of morality play in which 'righteous settlers', and their allies, defend themselves against the 'barbarian'. There is also a futurity in his work in that "events are thrown forward onto a future that is just beyond the present and this future is fraught with moral judgment on the transgressors." ⁵⁴ In this instance the transgressors are the 'humanitarians' and, pointedly, the Xhosa. Both parties, in Godlonton's mind, constitute portents of doom for the settler community and both subjects occupy significant components of Godlonton's narrative.

Representations of the Xhosa

The first portion of Godlonton's narrative is where the more overt 'ideological' work takes place. He feverishly defends the settlers from a multipronged attack: humanitarians, the missionary's willful misrepresentations and the British government's 'vacillating' policy. The section covering the 6th Frontier War is arguably more prone to slippage in that Godlonton has to concede to Xhosa tactical strengths and to the incapacity of the forces present on the 'frontier'. The 'early history' of the Xhosa, Godlonton claims, was "veiled in impenetrable obscurity" this obfuscation was due to their "not having any writings and their language being highly figurative, it is impossible to place any dependence on their wild traditional stories." ⁵⁵ However, 'considerable research' conducted by missionaries in the area resulted in Godlonton making available a comprehensive, although idiosyncratic, genealogical outline of the Xhosa, complete with an intricate "*Genealogical table of the Xhosa tribes*". The inference in the text is that the Xhosa were not competent to devise their own genealogy and for a 'rational' and 'sensible' account of their origins the reader was induced to rely on missionary and colonial 'experts'. Godlonton readily and intentionally used rhetoric of this nature to invoke incredulity in his readership towards Xhosa cultural practices.

By the early 19th century, certain Xhosa customs, such as circumcision, had become the subject of speculation of Xhosa origins and there were suggestions afloat that the Xhosa were a lost tribe of Israel. Godlonton writes, "Thus many persons suppose that they can discover in many of their ceremonies an

⁵² White, *The Value of Narrative* 1981, pp 2, 3.

⁵³ Ibid., 1981, pp 13, 14.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1981, p 21.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1981, p 208.

affinity to those established by the antient (sic) Jews.”⁵⁶ But he is quick to throw this conjecture into disrepute, he declares that,

“Whether there be any foundation for this hypothesis or not we leave to the unbiassed (sic) judgment of the reader. But at all events it appears to be very clear that these tribes, whatever their origin, have greatly degenerated from the manners and customs of their forefathers.”⁵⁷

Expressions of alterity concerning the ‘degenerate’ state of the Xhosa and their “barbarous state of nudity” lead the reader ineluctably to the conclusion that the Xhosa were the instigators of the war not only because they were ‘cruel and predatory’ but also because of the baseness of their morality and their ‘primitivism’.⁵⁸ According to Godlonton, it is the Xhosa who invite rebarbative commentary, who are guilty of pillaging and despite practising exogamous practices which prove that the Xhosa “have amongst them the relics of customs which clearly indicate a much higher state of morals, and far greater advancement in civilization than that which is now perceived or found amongst them”, he goes on to contend that,

“...these archaic virtues are so blended with disgusting and sensual vices, with appalling cruelties, and with the most barbarous rites and practices, that they merely serve, as it were, to render the moral darkness in which they are enshrouded distinct and palpable.”⁵⁹

However, despite these references to vice, the Xhosa’s ‘benighted’ condition is seen as being susceptible to the benefits of the civilizing effects of education because further on we read that,

“To affect any material amelioration in the condition of such people must be a work of time. ...The simple circumstance of their language having been arranged and reduced to a written standard is a wide step in improvement; whilst the dissemination of knowledge by means of schools, the introduction amongst them of a few of the most useful arts and of some approximation to an equitable trade, are all so many indications of an advancement in the scale of society..”⁶⁰

The *Narrative* is pervaded with contradictions: the quote above suggests that the ‘nature’ of the Xhosa could be changed and that education is advantageous, that is, for the development of trade skills and entrance into the colonial wage labour market. However, environmental influences are conjoined by innatist assertions of the profound fixity of the Xhosa ‘character’, as is outlined in this quote:

“Such being the case it need not occasion much surprise that the colonists should be kept in a continual state of excitement by the forays of these people on their flocks and herds. The Kaffir has no perception of moral rectitude

⁵⁶ Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Parts II and III*, 1965, p 212.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1965, p 212.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1965, p 212.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1965, pp 212, 215.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1965, p 215.

to deter him from the commission to plunder; he is an inveterate thief and bush ranger, and his disposition is in general bold and daring.”⁶¹

Godlonton invokes a range of epithets in the narrative to describe the enemy: marauding, duplicitous, wily, crafty, yelling and whistling. Yet, as mentioned above, distinctively racialized metaphors are few and Godlonton rarely uses the epithet ‘black’ in his narrative of the 6th Frontier War. Rattansi argues the notion of ‘race’ started to gain more systematic currency during the Enlightenment and it is against this backdrop that I shall examine Godlonton’s representations of the Xhosa. The Linnaean classificatory system which dominated the discipline of natural science was extended to the categorization of societies and to questions of ontology. Linnaeus produced his influential *systema natura* in 1755 and later extended his classification system to include humans. His four classifications of humans were: “*Americanus* (red, choleric and erect); *europaeus* (white and muscular); *asiaticus* (yellow, melancholic and inflexible) and *afri* (black, phlegmatic and indulgent)”. In the English edition of the system, *H. Afri* was described thus: “*Afri* : of black complexion, and relaxed fibre, ...of crafty, indolent and careless disposition, and are governed in their actions by caprice.”⁶² Even though these categorizations are patently negative there is no clear indication of race *per se* as holding any privileged status. According to Rattansi, “...ideas of race, variety and nation were often used interchangeably.” Nevertheless, strong associations developed between blackness and bestiality, primitivism and heightened sexuality in the 18th Century. Rattansi argues that conventional or ‘classical’ racism was generally defined in terms of bodily characteristics and developed into what was to become known as biological racism.⁶³ He suggests that,

“Strong racism can be defined as the belief that separate, distinct, biologically defined races exist; that they can be hierarchically ordered on the basis of innate, and thus unalterable superior and inferior characteristics and abilities; and that hostility is natural between these races.”⁶⁴

Cultural racism can be considered as being associated with ‘cultural’ or ‘religious’ traits and is putatively devoid of any reference to biological traits. In principle, Rattansi argues, a form of group identification that relies on criteria such as dress, customs and religion should be construed as ethnocentrism rather than bearing connotations of race. Discrimination on these grounds should be considered to be xenophobic rather than racist. However he suggests that,

“In practice though, cultural demarcations are often drawn and used in a form that naturalizes them by implying that they are more or less immutable. Thus the supposed avariciousness of Jews, the alleged aggressiveness of Africans.....become traits that are invariably attached to these groups over extremely long periods of time. The

⁶¹ Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Parts II and III*, 1965, p 224.

⁶² Rattansi, *Racism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p 95.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2007, p 105.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2007, p 105.

descriptions may be drawn upon as part of a commonsense vocabulary of stereotypes that blur any strict distinction between culture and biology.”⁶⁵

Thus chains of association are created: in the 19th Century if you were Xhosa, you were culturally ‘inferior’ and heathen. Thus the slippage into the idea of Xhosa as a ‘race’, or cultural group was made easily via the bridging concept of invariable traits such as cunning and treachery. Rattansi suggests,

“In this sense it is possible to talk of ‘cultural racism’ despite the fact that strictly speaking modern ideas of race have always had one or other biological foundation.”⁶⁶

Even if Godlonton’s writing can be construed as indicating ‘cultural’ bias rather than providing ‘racial’ representations of the Xhosa, there is no doubt that he considered white settlers to be superior to the Xhosa and even if logic demands that he was ‘culturally racist’ his marked intention was to associate Xhosa people with disorder and depravity. These categories appear to be a generalized form of racism certainly to 21st Century eyes. Further points made by Howe in his discussion of empire are useful in that they summarize a number of cultural themes running through Godlonton’s texts. Howe points out that it was generally believed that Europeans had made greater achievements in terms of inventions, control over nature and had more elaborate political and social structures than the colonized. Reasons for the less ‘developed’ condition of indigenous people in the colonies were varied. Environment and climate were used to explain difference. For example, tropical conditions induced idleness and lassitude and these led to low levels of achievement amongst the inhabitants. Or cultural inferiority was seen, generally by ‘liberal’ proponents, as a set of historical variables: the colonized could achieve as much as the colonizers if their circumstances had been different, therefore, they required the conditions of improvement such as education. Religious justifications of colonization were widespread and Howe writes,

“...the religious case for empire-building, however, could point in radically different directions in terms of colonial policy. On one side it implied that the main purpose of colonial rule was to convert the ‘natives’, which of course implied educating them in Christian doctrine and behaving decently towards them; even, after conversion, treating them as equals.”⁶⁷

Those ‘heathen’ who would not convert were considered to be irremediably ‘depraved’ and therefore could be subjugated with impunity. I shall be returning to themes of race throughout the thesis.

Godlonton’s Narrative of the War

This discussion will commence with a short summary of the 6th Frontier War. The war was initiated by the invasion of the Xhosa into the Albany area. The major Xhosa attack, which was instigated by maladroit and aggressive colonial policies such as the ‘commando system’, commenced on the 25th

⁶⁵ Rattansi, *Racism*, 2007, p 105.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 2007, p 105.

⁶⁷ Howe, *Empire, A Very Short Introduction*, 2002, p 84.

December 1834.⁶⁸ The first attacks took the colonists by surprise and the Xhosa advance was exceptionally effective against the confused and, at times, disorganized settler defence. The 'invasion' took on the form of a war with the subsequent involvement of the British regular forces. The operation was led by Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who as Cape Governor was also Commander in Chief of the armed forces. Colonel Harry Smith's dramatic ride from Cape Town to Graham's Town culminated in his taking command of the defence of Graham's Town and as acting as Chief of Staff for D'Urban. The Xhosa, especially in the early stages of the war had the advantages of territorial knowledge as well as the ability to perform swiftly in the field. The British regular forces in particular were lumbered with heavy artillery and the long trail of commissariat wagons that followed in their wake. The Xhosa used a variety of guerilla tactics: night fighting, sniping and initiating small skirmishes after which they evaded the military by retreating into the bush. Although the regular and colonial troops managed, in colonial parlance, to 'clear' the Albany area and its surrounds of Xhosa fighters, the British forces were unable to inflict a defeat on the Xhosa in the fastnesses of the Amatole Mountains. The regulars engaged in total war tactics which included the burning of homesteads, crops and gardens and the appropriation of herds of cattle in an attempt to starve out the Xhosa. Peires notes that the Xhosa, even though undefeated in the field, finally sued for peace largely because of their lack of a commissariat and the deprivations that their communities were experiencing.⁶⁹

Godlonton avoids discussion of aggressive colonial and regular army practices; instead his account is redolent with interjections of Xhosa 'perfidy'. His narrative from the start deflects culpability for the war onto the 'enemy', and on the more liberal press, as illustrated in the following passage:

"The Kaffirs have been declared, by those who are superlatively ignorant of the subject, to be an injured people; and every occurrence on this frontier for some years back has been made to bend to, or subserve in some way or other, this fanciful hypothesis....it may excite indignation, but not surprise, when we remark that at the very moment when the whole of the frontier is threatened with destruction - when the flourishing and beautiful settlement of Albany had been completely laid desolate - when the "lamentations of the widow and the fatherless" were piercing our ears - and when the streets were crowded with our ruined, destitute friends and neighbours - at this fearful moment, and amidst these harrowing scenes, the post from Cape Town brought the following false scenes and flippant comment on the state of the frontier, inserted in the "*Commercial Advertiser*"..."⁷⁰

The first chapter of the narrative describes the 'invasion' of Albany and other areas such as the Olifant's Hoek and the subsequent arrival of Colonel Harry Smith in Graham's Town. The ensuing chapters cover the course of the war, provide descriptions of skirmishes and provide a deeply disingenuous account of the death of Hintsa. Godlonton drew on a wide selection of texts which included officers' reports of patrols and skirmishes and 'eyewitness accounts'. He then gathered these 'traces', lined up his events in chronological order and wrote his sustained narrative of the war. His introduction includes a detailed account of the Eastern Cape which communicates an intimate knowledge of the topography to readers

⁶⁸ The commando system allowed settler commandoes to follow the spoor of stolen livestock and retrieve the animals from Xhosa kraals. It was clearly a system which was open to corruption and it frequently resulted in colonial violence; it was one of the major reasons for the beginning of the war.

⁶⁹ Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003.

⁷⁰ Godlonton, *A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kafir Hordes*, 1965, p 49.

who 'are at a distance'. An illustration of this geographical familiarity can be found in an early chapter on 'Kaffraria' in which Godlonton delineates the boundaries of the 'Amakosa':

"Behind them is a chain of mountains, stretching from the Amatoli due east, until they gradually die away towards the western bank of the Zimvooba River in the Amaondo country; on the west it is bounded by the Chumie, until its confluence with the Keiskamma, which stream it follows to the sea." ⁷¹

This account appears to demonstrate a magisterial sweep of knowledge of the colony but, of course, it is also deeply tendentious. Godlonton's rhetoric is consistently directed against the metropolitan public and the 'misguided', liberal settler. ⁷² His conveyance of a 'deep knowledge' of the topography, ethnography and history of the colony is intended to disabuse not only the ignorant but also to reprimand those metropolitan authorities who were prone to make 'ill-considered' decisions about the Cape. ⁷³ Contemplation of his narrative would have enabled readers to discard any illusions they might have harbored about the Xhosa. ⁷⁴ Godlonton writes,

"...we may confidently hope that in the world, as it grows older, will become wiser. The bubble may sparkle for a moment, but it must soon burst and betray its unsubstantial character. ...The inhabitants of this frontier ask for no favor, but they claim justice and they make no demand, nor bring forward any charge, which they are not prepared to defend and support by indubitable proof." ⁷⁵

The above passage exemplifies a metaphorical refrain in the narrative which suggests that the 'bubble' of sympathy that the Xhosa might invoke amongst Godlonton's imagined readership is fated to burst and by so doing it demonstrates the insubstantiality of the Xhosa cause. Contrary to this, the settler cause is based on hard, Gradgrindian 'fact'. It is in this vein that Godlonton berates Dr John Philip who, he argues, has "lost sight of the plainest maxims of common sense and of ordinary prudence." ⁷⁶ Godlonton's readers are left with a stark choice: they either opt for 'ephemeral' sentiment or for utilitarian 'good sense'. However, Godlonton's repertory of Xhosa culture is broad and he is induced to make certain concessions to the Xhosa in his narrative. In his discussions of the frontier war, he demonstrates that the Xhosa adopted a range of tactics and that the 'troops' in the colony frequently were hard-pressed to keep up with the enemy. He provides a description of a patrol:

"Our camp was formed on a height to the east of headquarters, exposed to the cold, and a very high wind coming from the N.W., - small comfort for the dispirited and starving troops, after a fortnight's fatigue and labour to punish the invaders of our country! We have certainly not been so successful as we anticipated, but that was not our faults (sic). We were constant in following the flying Kaffir enemy, - driving them from place to place, - and

⁷¹ Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks, Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Parts II and III*, 1965, p 201.

⁷² Ibid., 1965, p 64. Pringle comes in for criticism in Godlonton's *Irruption*, as in the following example: "These obnoxious passages are so much in the style of Mr T. Pringle....who it is well known has been consulted on almost every work of modern date that has been written on the subject of this abused colony." The passages referred to were written by the missionary, Kay.

⁷³ Godlonton's narrative is concertedly directed towards local 'liberal' mouthpieces such as Fairbairn's Commercial Advertiser and mounts critiques of the metropolitan, Exeter Hall 'philanthropic set'.

⁷⁴ We see an inversion of the notion of the 'noble savage'. The metropolitan readers are the 'innocents' who are compelled by the explication of certain 'truths' to become worldly.

⁷⁵ Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks, Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Parts II and III*, 1965, p 266.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1965, p 107.

their means of evading pursuit is well-known, whilst the quickness of their movements far exceed that of our troops, on whose actions they keep a constant watch, conveying intelligence of every movement with the greatest celerity along the whole line of country, while the kloofs and jungle become hiding places both for themselves and their flocks, of which no vestige is left to their pursuers.”⁷⁷

Renditions such as this appear in the narratives of the next two wars. This does not mean that Godlonton’s was a foundational text in the sphere of campaign narratives. However, Godlonton’s narrative is part of the accumulation of texts which ended up providing a ‘grand narrative’ of the wars and of the Xhosa. I shall return to this point later in the thesis.

The ‘flying’ enemy had certain advantages which were embedded within the social milieu of the Xhosa:

“...the military force of Kaffraria consists in every male who has undergone the right of circumcision. All are soldiers of the state without any exception; they are always armed, and are ready at a moment’s warning to take to the field to confront an enemy. The Kaffir requires no preparation: he seizes his long shield, cut from an ox hide – which is either at the back of his own hut, or deposited with the head man of the kraal – grasps his assegais, from which he is scarcely ever separated, and rushes off at the sound of the Klabu Umkosi! Or war-whoop directly to the point from whence the cry proceeds...”⁷⁸

In a typical passage, the Xhosa are construed as brave, but, in this polyphonic text this quality is swiftly dispelled and the Xhosa are made to appear almost insensate. He writes that the Xhosa warrior,

“... possesses in general great personal bravery, and he is withal active, enterprising, and endowed with great muscular power, which is brought to full maturity by his mode of living, his customary employment being the care of cattle, his amusements hunting and dancing....He has in general very little apprehension of death; hence he will run the greatest risk to accomplish any favourite object, and even when immediate death appears inevitable, he will rarely betray any visible agitation, or indicate the slightest relaxation of the nervous system.”⁷⁹

The subject of Xhosa ‘character’ in Godlonton’s text is saturated with implication. Godlonton attributed Xhosa stoicism to their “temperate habits”; he describes their diet as being principally made up of sour milk and their “freedom of care” and the “pure air of a mild and salubrious climate” all contribute to the ‘strength of their constitutions’.⁸⁰ Godlonton presents the 1834 ‘irruption’ into the colony as a consequence of the intrinsic war readiness of the Xhosa. The Xhosa are active and strong and intrepid: his text infers that settlers could not even begin to withstand these mythical beings without the assistance of the metropolitan government.

The convolutions of Godlonton’s narrative are bound to include contradictions and the narrative also presents any number of binaries and examples of Xhosa alterity. Furthermore, Godlonton’s aggrieved, at times apoplectic statements, about the conduct of Xhosa warfare can provide, if read against the grain, a rich seam of Xhosa strategies and tactics. But reading against the grain does not necessarily allow an alternative, dissonant, Xhosa voice to emerge. Is one really left with the ‘original language’ of the Xhosa?

⁷⁷ Godlonton, *A Narrative of the Irruption*, 1965, p 146.

⁷⁸ *Introductory Remarks, Parts II and III*, 1965, p 225, 226.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1965, p 226.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1965, p 227

Or does such a reading merely lead to a 'fixing' of the dissonant voice within the order of things? I have largely avoided these questions in this chapter; rather my concern has been with an analysis of the representations of the Xhosa in the narrative. These representations do not necessarily only provide instances of Saidian 'othering' in that they also display dimensions of ambivalence and slippage. Young in his exposition of Homi Bhaba suggests that,

"For Bhaba,....Orientalism may be a representation but it also takes part in an entirely discursive field, any consideration of which, he argues, must include the question of enunciation, that is of who is speaking to whom. It cannot be assumed that representations are static entities which may or may not correspond with the real – because they must always be part of an address, whether written or spoken, with a specific addresser and addressee. Bhaba analyses the conditions of this process of address in order to show the occurrence of slippage which problematizes both the claim for a single political-ideological intention of the colonizer, as well as the straightforward instrumentalist relation of power and knowledge which Said assumes." ⁸¹

Godlonton is a significant 'enunciator' when it comes to the Xhosa and it is no stranger to the facile stereotype but he also conveys detail about the Xhosa which complements his realist project of presenting the Xhosa 'comprehensively'. Bhaba suggests that the stereotyping of the colonized "is not a straightforward matter of the crudity of the stereotype as opposed to the complexity of the actual people being characterized." ⁸² Colonial discourse does not just represent the 'other' but also simultaneously projects and disallows its difference. Bhaba suggests that, "Its mastery is always asserted, but it is always slipping, ceaselessly displaced, never complete." ⁸³ This interpretation is valuable because it is a fairly uncomplicated task to identify a stereotype or a binary within a 19th century text; the more difficult work is to try to understand how and why 'difference' is both projected and disallowed in the text. I shall return to this question throughout the thesis.

Conclusion

Elderly settlers living in the 19th century Eastern Cape would have had prior exposure to a number of contradictory metropolitan images of Africans in the early 19th century. These images might have evoked the cruelties of slavery and promoted the humanitarian cause or they might have portrayed barbarism, cannibalism and licentiousness amongst the colonized. All of these would have constituted a populist and abiding component of the 'movable feast' of Georgian metaphors. Later in the 19th century, the British settlers' experiences of the 6th Frontier War frequently led to an impassioned obduracy against the Xhosa which was centered on images of the cunning, the barbaric and the shiftless. This set of images was to be extensively exploited by journalists such as Godlonton. Yet, representations of the Xhosa were not consistent. The hypostatization of the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi was not only of a pejorative nature, the ideal of the classical physique of antiquity was frequently assigned to the Xhosa and representations of their 'bravery' in war survived well into first half of the century. Colonial identities were not merely excrescences of domination and imperial will but were also deeply ambivalent.

⁸¹ Young, *White Mythologies*, 1990, p 142

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1965, p 143.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1965, 143.

I have also argued that Godlonton includes a number of Enlightenment strains in his narrative; however, his texts also make allusions to 19th century romanticism, vestiges of which manifest themselves in the folkloric aspects of his journalism and in his renditions of 'landscape'. Hindsight into the trajectory of 6th Frontier War, however, confirms a tragic vision of Xhosa destabilization and dispossession and the assignment of an uneasy victory to the settlers. But there is narrative life beyond Godlonton's *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*: as we shall see in the ensuing chapters, his ideological persuasions in particular were revisited by authors such as Ward and Napier.

Chapter 5

Landscape and the Frontier Wars

Introduction

This chapter is an enquiry into representations of the landscape which were prevalent in 19th century military narratives. Why was the landscape such a common motif in military narratives? One response would be to focus on the important pragmatic function of landscapes and their provision of vital topographical information for military expeditions. This information often was realized in the form of drawings or sketch maps of the terrain, but verbal and written descriptions were also common. Prior to photography, potentially hazardous areas were drawn, usually by a 'sketching' officer who delineated areas to demonstrate such features as high ground and undergrowth. Cosgrove suggests that the notion of landscape initially arose during the period of 'renaissance humanism' in Europe and from that time was associated with the "practical appropriation of space". Topographical themes were connected to the surveying and mapping of territory and with the fields of defensive fortification and artillery science which incorporated the calculation of cannon fire trajectories. However, engagement with the landscape was not only about charting its topography, in itself a value-laden activity, instead what emerges from the texts is that its narrative uses were multifarious. Memoirs of the Frontier Wars frequently included landscape images that assisted their reading audience with a comprehension of military tactics. They also interwove landscape motifs to provide aesthetic enhancement to their texts: so military texts provided both pragmatic observations and 'romantic' representations of the landscape which made concessions to the lyrical and the subjective. Responses to the landscape were variable and ranged from aesthetic renderings to uneasy accounts of 'gloomy and profound thickets' and, as we shall see, representations of the terrain also stood in for physical danger and acts of violence.¹

I wish to approach the topic in such a way which does not refute those orientations which have stressed links between landscape writing and the violent appropriation of the land. However, I intend to include a more flexible reading which suggests that representations of the colonial landscape had more diverse intentions. Importantly, military narratives used the 'landscape' in ways which did not always bear an instrumental relationship with capitalist accumulation and the nascent bourgeoisie, as proposed in a number of 'materialist' accounts of landscape. To this end, I shall provide a theoretical overview with particular reference to Pratt, Mitchell and Coetzee who have been influential in textual deconstructions of the landscape.² The chapter will then trace the integration of landscape imagery into representations of skirmishing and tactics; a further theme narrates the 'planned' landscape or what Mitchell calls 'practised places' with particular reference to fortification.

¹ The landscape, frequently troped as 'impenetrable bush', was used to explain a number of British regular army apprehensions and defeats. Importantly the 'bush' also was seen as synonymous with the Xhosa and with colonial warfare such as: the bush was 'cleared' of Xhosa. Godlonton, *A Narrative Of The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965.

² Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, Routledge, London 1992; Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002; Coetzee, *White Writing*, Pentz Publishers, Braamfontein, 2007.

Recently, studies have investigated the exchange of knowledge and the interaction of different knowledge systems within both the metropolitan and the colonial ambit.³ By the 1830s and 1840s, along with the growth of scientific institutions, “knowledge became more specialized and autochthonous knowledge systems became the object of observation and enquiry and became absorbed into metropolitan discourse.”⁴ Not only did the periphery become more vocal in its contributions to metropolitan thinking in relation to constructions of ‘race’ but knowledge of the colonial topography, geological and archaeological studies also filtered through to the metropole. It is not the intention to accrue detailed evidence of this interlocution but rather to demonstrate that an exchange of knowledge in the realm of subjects such as ‘ethnography’, topography and natural history was apparent in the texts. The question of 19th Century ‘ethnography’ will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

Beinart and McGregor argue that the study of landscape has had a relatively short tradition within African historiography and it is “only recently that this topic has been explicitly addressed in African social and environmental history.”⁵ They attribute this reluctance to the associations that landscape has held with European schemas: its alliance to property ownership and its affiliation to aesthetic considerations which are not considered relevant to African contexts. Yet they argue,

“...by defining ‘landscape’ broadly, as an imaginative construction of the environment, new areas were opened up for Africanists. The notion of landscape has provided a valuable means of bringing together discussion of material changes in the environment, with imaginative interpretations – a combination that should stand at the heart of environmental history.”⁶

They propose that imaginings about ‘landscape’ have contributed to notions of ‘nation and identity’; both with regard to how Africans categorized themselves, for instance as ‘river people’, and in relation to settler identity. However, colonial projects also implied a system of ‘divided realities’ in that some were excluded from the landscape and others included in ways which facilitated the domination of indigenous peoples. As Beinart and McGregor point out, prior environmental histories would have relied on archival research and oral history field studies but current interpretations demonstrate more interdisciplinary intentions and there is a growing engagement with ideas drawn from cultural studies and literary criticism. Postcolonial criticism combines various sources and methods with ‘explorations’ of texts such as literary narratives, myths and pictorial imagery such as photography. Yet, research into the landscape has been less developed in the African context, partly because it has been difficult “to historicize indigenous ideas on the basis of oral traditions and to find systematic evidence of concepts of landscape within African traditions of thought.”⁷

Working from this position, Beinart and McGregor consider it more appropriate to address issues of landscape historically within the white, colonial tradition:

³ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2007.

⁴ Ibid., 2007, p 82.

⁵ Beinart and McGregor, *Social History and African Environments*, 2003, p 4.

⁶ Ibid., 2003, p 4.

⁷ Ibid., 2003, p 15.

“An exploration of the range of natural metaphors and landscape imagery used in different times and places, and their relationships to intellectual and cultural traditions, brings a new richness to our understanding of white culture in southern Africa, and also its metropolitan connections.”⁸

Historiographically, there has been an increased interest in how the notion of ‘landscape’ was constituted in colonial representations. Dubow points out that the act of describing the landscape demonstrated a nascent nationalism and that the “manner in which the colonists made sense of the landscape the Cape had important bearings on their feelings of belonging and the manner of their insertion into the African continent.”⁹ In his discussion of the *Cape Monthly Magazine* he argues that a number of 19th Century writers demonstrated sufficient flexibility and reflexivity to perceive the landscape in complex and critical ways, sufficiently so ‘to make it their own’. This attention to the South African landscape has persisted in current historical and literary accounts and representations of the landscape are still “encrypted with the codes of identity extended and contested across it back then”.¹⁰

Yet, military representations of the landscape have not commanded attention despite the centrality of the military to the colonization process. Jeremy Black argues that cartography was not only central to the operations of an army but also that military structures contributed considerably to its development. Maps assisted in ‘strategic, operational and tactical’ planning and were an adjunct to the planning and execution of force by providing a detailed mapping of the ground in an area, or potential zone, of conflict.¹¹ The contribution of mapping was especially apparent in the ordnance maps developed during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century when the British Ordnance Department mapped the British Isles as part of the protection plans in the event of a Napoleonic invasion. In the early 1830s, Eastern Cape cartography was still rudimentary but a number of sources indicated that maps were becoming more common.¹² Stubbs, writing about the 8th Frontier War in 1851, provides an indication of the combination of maps and local knowledge that was commonly used on campaign:

“Colonel Eyre of the 73rd was ordered to Albany and encamped at Driver’s Hill. He sent for me to point out the best places to place his men. He was quite ignorant of that part. I pointed out the principal footpaths and recommended a camp to be formed on each. He, like most military men was too conceited to listen to a civilian but soon found out his mistake, for the Caffers and Rebels passed him within a very short distance....[He] then took my advice and moved his camps to the places I had pointed out....After he had been in camp some time, he sent for me to point out the footpaths mostly used by the enemy. The one his camp as on, was the principal one – passed the Spitz Kop. He certainly did take a great deal of trouble to learn the country.” For every time I was at his camp we had a map on his table for hours.”¹³

Sketching officers had been attached formally to the British army since the 18th Century and this practice persisted into the 19th century.¹⁴ Their major task was to accompany the cavalry while on campaign and sketch the terrain: their sketches were an adjunct to extant maps and at times were the sole delineation

⁸ Beinart, *Social History and African Environments*, 2003, p 23

⁹ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2007, p 82.

¹⁰ Anderson, *The Fish River Bush*, 2005, p 23.

¹¹ Black, *The Tools of War*, 2007.

¹² See Godlonton, *A Narrative Of The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965.

¹³ Maxwell and McGeogh, *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, 1977, p 155.

¹⁴ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001.

of a territory. The mapping and depiction of areas was of considerable importance to the imperial forces which depended on them to negotiate unfamiliar areas. Sketching officers, or surveyors as they were sometimes termed, faced considerable risk during the frontier wars as they frequently separated themselves from their battalions to survey and to draw. Thomas Holden Bowker records that, "Mr White was killed the day after Hintza's death as he was surveying at a distance from the camp and had only a few attendants as usual." He was killed in a swift attack by the Xhosa who took advantage of his isolated position.¹⁵

Major T.C. White was a major in the Graham's Town Volunteers and his obituary in the Graham's Town Journal provided some idea of his role in the army and how he was ambushed:

"It was here [Bashhee River]....that the lamented and gallant Mr T.C. White....met his death by the hand of the barbarians. This public spirited officer had been actively employed during the whole period of the campaign in making an accurate topographical survey of the Kafir territory, and in prosecution of his favourite subject he had ascended an eminence near the encampment of for the purpose of sketching the surrounding country. Four men of the Cape Corps [Cape Mounted Riflemen] had been ordered to accompany him, and these were posted at different points of the hill to guard against surprise. In spite, however, of this precaution, the wily Kafirs crouching stealthily in the long grass, succeeded in approaching the spot unobserved, and suddenly springing upon the major and the corporal, dispatched them with their assegais, before the other men could afford them the slightest assistance, or even apprise them of their danger."¹⁶

There were evident dangers attached to being too artistically involved in representations of the landscape during the frontier wars because Bowker also records the narrow escape of Guybon Atherstone: "G.A. [Atherstone] was sketching a view of the Kye River" when the Xhosa attempted to shoot him "but missed their aim upon which he took himself off."¹⁷ Peires points out that the ambush was a common tactic used by the Xhosa, "instead of facing the enemy army....they shadowed it until a small party became detached from the main body. Then deploying their forces with amazing speed, they encircled and cut it off."¹⁸

Military texts documenting the landscape ranged from those written by peripatetic regular army members, who saw the landscape through 'new eyes', to acclimatized settlers such as Charles Lennox Stretch and Holden Bowker.¹⁹ As Mitchell has pointed out, 'landscape' lends itself to notions of colonialism and imperialism and it was used regularly by interested settler parties to designate particularity and an intimate knowledge of 'place' thus vindicating settlement and ownership.²⁰ However, in the narratives of the peripatetic regular officers who wrote reports or diaries of their

¹⁵ Mitford-Barberton, *Cmdt Thomas Holden Bowker*, Human and Rousseau, Cape Town, 1970, p 136.

¹⁶ White was described somewhat fulsomely as "...an officer. of considerable merit in the army, having received his education at the military college at Marlo, and having at a very early period distinguished himself as a mathematician, an acute reasoner, and an able draftsman." Godlonton, *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965, pp 171, 172.

¹⁷ Mitford-Barberton, *Cmdt Thomas Holden Bowker*, 1970, p 133.

¹⁸ Peires, *House of Phalo*, 2003, p 165.

¹⁹ See Le Cordeur, *The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch*, 1988; Mitford-Barberton, *Cmdt Thomas Holden Bowker*, 1970.

²⁰ Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2002.

experiences, land appropriation was not an immediate concern: rather their function was the putative defence of the colony. Proprietary desire was more evident in the narratives of the colonial forces and was a persistent theme in Godlonton's *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes* in which topographical descriptions alluded to an intimate knowledge and to a familiarity of the landscape which transcended that of his metropolitan audience. His minutely detailed account was intended to bring home to metropolitan and Cape humanitarian lobbies the 'facts' of the conflict and to inform a sector which Godlonton considered to be ignorant of the 'reality' of the frontier.

Theories of landscape

In order to discuss motifs of 'landscape' in the frontier war narratives it is useful to consider the contribution of a number of theories of landscape which have provided a broad purview of the major themes and which include more localized investigations of language and landscape. Various interpretive strategies have attempted to decode the landscape as a 'textual system'. Mitchell's 'dialectical triad' of place, space and landscape provides an entry for a discussion of representations of 'landscape' found in military writings ranging from topographical description and mapmaking to aesthetic and metaphorical renderings of landscape. Mitchell's notion of 'practised places', which include built places such as forts and memorials, suggests that they are mutable, contingent and dependent on the definitional capabilities of the narrator and upon the constraints of the discursive endeavour.²¹ Mitchell suggests that a triangulation of space, place and landscape offers an interpretation of landscape which avoids the more common binaries of space and place. Hence the topic of 'place' dictates "a process of thinking space/place/landscape as a unified problem and dialectical process."²² According to Mitchell clusters of 'mediations', such as "writing, memory, imagination" contribute to the formulation of a human space which leads us to conceptualizing landscape as an imaginary space as much as a 'location'. Furthermore, it will be proposed that within the 19th century production of 'landscape' imagery there are attempts by colonial diarists to define and justify colonial penetration of the Xhosa land but even within these texts, there are intersections with indigenous knowledge which demonstrate an affiliation to what Dubow refers to as an 'acquired indigeneity'.²³

A predominant theme in Pratt's interpretation of the genres of travel writing, *Imperial Eyes*, is concerned with how travel books written by 'Europeans' about 'non - European' parts of the world created the imperial order for Europeans 'back home' and gave indigenous peoples a particular place within the metropolitan sphere.²⁴ According to Pratt, travel books gave the European reading public a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity in relation to distant parts of the world that were being both explored and invested in by 'Europeans'. Travel books also excited the metropolitan popular imagination: they prompted curiosity, excitement and invested a sense of adventure and moral fervor in expansionist projects. She considers depictions of landscape as important ideological components in 18th and 19th century travel writing and makes influential links between Linnaean classification, enlightenment science and contemporary descriptions of the landscape.

²¹ Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2002, p 1.

²² Ibid., 2002, p xi.

²³ Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006,, p 14.

²⁴ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 1992.

One of Pratt's primary methodological directions addresses 'shifts in discourse' which occurred over time; she suggests that these "important historical transitions alter the way people write because they alter peoples' experiences and the way people imagine, feel and think about the world they live in." These 'transitions' impacted on contemporary narratives and Pratt is interested in "...how shifts that took place in travel writing intersected with other forms of knowledge and expression."²⁵ A primary consideration is how European travel writing 'intersected' with enlightenment natural history classificatory schemes and how western discussions of natural history saw themselves in relation to autochthonous, vernacular knowledge. Pratt also raises a number of points around the occlusion of indigenous people in the landscape. She argues that most travellers represented indigenous people either as 'shadowy presences' or ignored them in their writings. A similar distancing can be found in some military texts but, by and large, narratives are strikingly inclusive of indigenous people. Firstly, because the British regular troops and colonial levies fought on the same 'side' it was difficult not to include descriptions of the allied Khoikhoi and the Mfengu: although these inclusions varied in length and quality in the texts. Secondly, campaign descriptions contained consistent references to the Xhosa as the 'enemy': wars throw up deeply complicit relationships between the two 'sides' and there was a significant 'contact zone' between the British forces and the Xhosa particularly in the area of military tactics.

Most significant for this study are the intersections that emerge between travel writing and military memoirs. Consequently, a number of her methodological concerns resonate with some of the military narratives of the frontier wars both in content and narrative structure. However, some of her postulations require careful consideration. For instance in her discussion of discursive shifts, she suggests that pre-Linnaean narratives contained very different sentiments and categorizations of nature from post-Linnaean texts which imposed a scientific classificatory system on the natural world. There indeed do appear to be differences in emphasis in certain accounts, some 19th Century accounts for example include scientific names for plants and invoke scientific nomenclature. But a number of early 19th century narratives did not demonstrate Linnaean influences and in fact bear a number of discursive similarities to their pre-Linnaean predecessors. Pratt's approach could be construed as methodologically confining and overly linear in its analysis, in relation to episteme and conceptually, especially as a number of divergent narratives appear to coexist within a period. The post-Linnaean 'episteme' does not seem to have been as hermetic as presented by Pratt and residual discourses of nature appear to persist in tandem with those influenced by Linnaean classificatory systems.

Pratt makes the observation that indigenous knowledge was silenced in travel books of the Cape (her primary sources are the works of Sparrman and Barrow) and that depictions of the landscape often took precedence over the insights of its autochthonous inhabitants. These propositions have been questioned by Beinart who concedes that during the 19th Century, western, scientific knowledge became more influential and indigenous knowledge retreated in importance but as he points out it is "important not to date this silencing too early".²⁶ Beinart suggests that analyses such as Pratt's have significance "at a general level over a long period of time" but do not always provide a "fluid approach to masculinity

²⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 1992, p 4.

²⁶ Beinart, 'Men, Science, Travel and Nature', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 24, No 4, 1998, p 784.

and science” which encourages the exploration of the development of “alternative visions of social interaction and the natural world”.²⁷ Beinart includes certain caveats in relation to Pratt’s thesis, one of which is that her insights do not reflect the complex particularities of Cape colonial encounters nor do they entail a close enough reading of the texts with regard to travellers’ conceptions of autochthonous peoples.²⁸

There was a well-established scientific interest in and classification of the flora and fauna of the Eastern Cape by the 1830s. Members of the regular army were also in Pratt’s terms also contributed to the ‘passive’, though androcentric, collection and naming of botanical and zoological specimens. In his two volume travel narrative James Alexander makes regular inclusions of sightings of flora and fauna and also records the naming of species. Alexander, as an army officer, was not exceptional in his interest and a number of regular and colonial officers also collected natural specimens and archaeological artifacts. In their more lyrical passages, officers in particular had a tendency to take symbolic possession of the landscape by describing it aesthetically and by using the familiar Burkean elements of the sublime and the picturesque. British scenery was used as a reference point, but not exclusively, for in some of the diaries there were comparisons made between South Africa and India and, at times, with Spain where a number of soldiers had campaigned during the Napoleonic Wars.²⁹ At times, officers’ narratives attempted to make sense of the wars by comparing them to mythical experiences: descriptions of titanic struggles to overcome hostile terrain were not uncommon. According to Torgovnik, there is a tendency in colonial and imperial texts to perceive autochthonous people through the lens of western myths.³⁰ Torgovnick’s analysis of western notions of ‘primitivism’ suggests that a number of dichotomies emerge in colonial texts concerning Africa. On the one hand the continent is dark and dangerous, on the other it is the testing ground for men and a place of adventure. This provides an appropriate reference point for some of the narratives: hunting or ‘sport’ was a familiar motif in the narratives about the frontier wars. Bisset’s published memoir was entitled *Sport and War* and a number of accounts blurred the distinction between fighting and hunting.

In his preface to *Landscape and Power*, Mitchell suggests that vernacular understandings of landscape tend to emphasize its ‘indeterminacy’. Landscape exerts a ‘subtle power’ which elicits uncertain feelings in the viewer: the abiding quality of landscape is that it is a ‘gestalt’ and as such, it largely remains unspecified. Thus landscape emerges as a far less tangible entity than ‘place’ or space, not only in commonsense understandings, but also within both phenomenological and historical materialist positions which designate ‘place’ and space’ as being primary analytical constructs. The primacy of space and place remains undisputed in these positions. Mitchell writes that,

²⁷ Beinart, *Men, Science, Travel and Nature*, 1998, p 775.

²⁸ Ibid., 1998, p 776.

²⁹ McKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1870.

³⁰ Torgovnik, *Gone Primitive*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1990.

“My aim....is not primarily to add to the stock of hard facts about landscape but to take a harder look at the framework in which facts about landscape are constituted – the way in particular, that the nature, history, and semiotic or aesthetic character of landscape is constructed in both its idealist and skeptical interpretations.”³¹

For Mitchell, landscape is a category has long been ‘under-analyzed’ and puts forward the proposition that space, place and landscape should be thought of as a ‘conceptual unity’ rather than as separate binaries of disparate value. Drawing on De Certeau, Mitchell intimates that ‘place’ is associated with stability, the specific and with the law and prohibition whereas ‘space’ is the ‘practised place’: a street is a (planned) place in a city but it is “transformed into a space by walkers”.³² However, Mitchell argues that De Certeau’s analysis perpetuates a constraining binarism of place and space and he turns to Levebre for a more nuanced and triangulated understanding of the two concepts. Levebre uses the terms ‘perceived, conceived and lived space’.³³ ‘Perceived’ space is similar to De Certeau’s notion of ‘spatial practices’ in that ‘conceived’ space is planned, administrated and ‘lived’ space is ‘representational space’ which has been conceptualized symbolically. Mitchell suggests that the above three concepts correspond roughly to his own notions of ‘place’, ‘space’ and ‘landscape’. None of these three concepts can be considered as taking priority over the others, nor are they in any way derivative of each other. Rather they are expressions of interconnectedness. The ‘place’ is where an event happened, it becomes a ‘space’ through the practice of tourism, pilgrimages. A ‘space’ also alludes to the imaginary and representational through the media of postcards, souvenirs, memories and narratives. This imaginary landscape becomes woven into the ‘fabric of real places’ and Mitchell proposes that,

“If a place is a specific location, a space is a ‘practised place’ a site activated by movements, actions, narratives and signs, and a landscape is that site encountered as image or “sight””.³⁴

The above categories are permeated by expressions of power. These appear in the symbolic regulation of a place as excrescences which are manifested through the prohibitions and delimitations in systems of control, such as a ‘frontier policy’. It is the premise of this study that frontier locations were represented both as ‘places’, often untamed, and as ‘spaces’ in which there were attempts to establish approximations of military order through improvisatory resourcefulness. The ‘landscape’ provided a more generalized image for the violence and ordeals of warfare.

Within the South African context, Bunn addresses a number of questions pertaining to the landscape. He focuses on two travellers to the Cape: Le Vaillant in the late 18th century and Thomas Pringle in the early 1820s. The Le Vaillant section of the article examines aspects of the depicted landscape and investigates how the ‘non-indigenous’, self-dramatizing figure of the author Le Vaillant becomes ‘naturalized’ into an exotic, African landscape. Colonial illustration frequently used a form of ‘staging’ and a common trope found in this depiction was the positioning of the ‘civilized’ figure confronting or confronted by images of exotic ‘savagery’. But there is more to this balancing act, the subject was also

³¹ Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2002, p 7.

³² Ibid., 2002, p viii.

³³ Ibid., 2002, p ix.

³⁴ Ibid., 2002, p xi.

part of the tableau and the landscape became the locus of an enactment which staged the subject as the purveyor and surveyor of a 'new' and exotic knowledge which was intended to intrigue the reader. Bunn argues that the Le Vaillant landscape is 'colonial' because it contains examples of indigenous flora and fauna, but, it does not look 'African' because it is ordered by European artistic conventions. The trope of mobility is also present in the narrative: Le Vaillant has an 'unobstructed passage' through the colonial environment and this invokes liberal notions of freedom which can also be interpreted as supporting calls for the establishment of free trade.³⁵

Shum in his discussion of Pringle's *'Evening Rambles'* suggests that the colonial landscape is "a site that both invites and resists the imposition of European schemas".³⁶ He argues that,

"Far from accomplishing a seamless or untroubled annexure of the African landscape into the generic boundaries or metropolitan representation, the poem, in my reading, problematises this process to the point where such boundaries lose their bearing and, and enacts something like the collapse of its informing conventions rather than their imposition."³⁷

This 'collapse' of 'informing conventions' appears from time to time in military texts; particularly when the landscape is associated with skirmishing. Shum argues that Pringle explicitly acknowledges that the frontier landscape could not have been a replication of the metropolitan model and that the landscape is pervaded by a number of incommensurable 'antitheses'. He proposes that the tropes developed in Pringle's poem are,

"...something very like dialectical movement within the poem between landscapes which invite or prefigure human occupation and landscapes which refuse it. That the poem is unable to resolve these tensions or antitheses indicates, I think, an unspoken recognition that colonial experience requires another set of representations altogether."³⁸

Rather than being a colonial expression of unmodified power, the poem speaks to a "sense of uncertainty, of a spatial bewilderment in which memories of home and the landscape of the colony blur into an indeterminate place: the settler experience is laid open to the dangers of its own futurity while at the same time losing its grip on the certainties of inherited convention. The preceding debates around the colonial landscape pertain to 'settler' interpretations and not to military renditions of the landscape. It will be suggested that some of the literary insights discussed are applicable to military narratives; and bring into sharper focus how 'cultural' images and rhetorical purposes pervaded the texts concerning the Cape Colony.

³⁵ Pringle's representation of his local environment, the Baviaans River area, is ordered by two 'cognitive maps': the first is 'memory' and the second is 'a negotiated compromise' which produces the transitional context of the poem. This context enables the poet to wander around his environment with a confidence born of familiarity and independence of movement. According to Bunn, this 'rambling' is a 'massive presumption' for it suggests an 'aristocratic control' of 'leisure time' which is inconsistent with the intensive labour practices of the frontier. Bunn, *Our Wattled Cot*, In Mitchell, W.T., *Landscape and Power*, 2002.

³⁶ Shum, *Unsettling Settler Identity*, *English in Africa*, 33, No 2, 2006, p 22.

³⁷ Ibid., 2006, p 22.

³⁸ Ibid., 2006, p 42

Coetzee's *White Writing* situates the colonist in a seemingly incommensurable predicament. He or she is beset with concerns which are "no longer European, not yet African." This duality is attended by a deep sense of anxiety because the colonist forges a life which is inundated by fears of the environment and by an existential trepidation inspired by the latent power of indigenous confrontation. Of course, the colonist is seen as a threat by indigenous people, but paradoxically, it is the 'indigenes' who are particularly menacing to the colonist precisely because it is they who are experiencing the travails of suppression and it is they who, like the proverbial bent twig, could spring back on their 'oppressors'. The colonist survives the 'abyss' through a process of domestication which enables him/her to manage and understand his environment and Coetzee suggests that,

"In an attempt to transform an alien location into a semblance of domestic security, an artistic colonial can portray his/her situation through a linguistic or visual medium, but this requires a process of transference from the familiar to the strange, the deployment of historically developed and culturally specific schemas, which are of course imported with the colonists themselves, but whose congruity with the new environment may seem distressingly deficient.'³⁹

Coetzee suggests that the prelapsarian, 'Garden of Eden' myth never really took hold in South Africa; likewise, the myth of the South Seas which celebrated sexuality and ease never became one of the defining mythologies of the area. Coetzee argues that the Edenic myth could not establish itself because South Africa was not the 'new world', in fact it is the "Lapland of the south"⁴⁰ and as such came to be represented as prehistoric, a dystopian 'anti-garden' inhabited by Calibanesque beings. The Khoi could never be represented as romantic or noble, because Coetzee argues from the inception of Dutch colonization they were associated with brutishness and idleness.⁴¹ Coetzee argues that while the Edenic myth failed, the georgic held some sway. Indeed, the 19th Century landscape more often than not was prosaically described by British settlers at the Eastern Cape and emphasis was laid upon commercial and farming possibilities with the 'topos' of the garden interwoven with the georgic strains of the idealized landscape. Thus the idealized land in Albany at least was characterized as domestic, neatened into 'parklands' and gentrified country seats as Coetzee suggests this was a nostalgic practice:

"To pastoral art the west has assigned the task of asserting the virtues of the garden – simplicity, peace, immemorial usage- against the vices of the city: luxury, competitiveness, novelty. In the variety known as georgic, the pastoral also holds up the garden in bloom against the garden of decay, the garden degenerating into wilderness. It is essentially conservative... it looks back to the calm and stability of the farm."⁴²

Yet, as Coetzee asks: who labours on the land? The answer is the person who is most invisible: the black male and female worker. Virgil's Georgics stress that virtuous labour and frugality are at the heart of pastoral life, so pastoralism in South Africa should 'portray labour' as in "he is a hardworking farmer" and a benign patriarch. That is but one 'dream topography' according to Coetzee, the other is that the

³⁹ Coetzee, *White Writing*, 2007, p xiii.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 2007, p 2.

⁴¹ Penn, 'Written Culture and the Cape Khoikhoi', in Delmas and Penn, *Written Culture in a Colonial Context*, UCT Press, Cape Town, 2011. Penn's discussion of the writings of Kolbe questions some of the assumptions that the Khoikhoi were subject to pervasively negative stereotyping.

⁴² Ibid., 2011, p 5.

trope of the landscape as arid, vast, prehistoric and more palaeontological than anthropological in nature. The logic of this argument is that part of the land is so ancient that no one is able to claim it, yet it will always have a claim on those who live in it. This 'dream' sidesteps the political nature of landscape and the social context of those who inhabit or inhabited an 'ancient' landscape.

In his discussion of the Burkean exposition of the picturesque and the sublime, Coetzee suggests that neither of these explanatory categories are suitable interpreters of the South African environment. In his travel narrative written on the early 19th century, Burchell argued that two things were required for an aesthetic appreciation of the South African landscape. Firstly, there had to be the realization that the European aesthetic of foreground, middle ground and horizon was only one form of an aesthetic. The second was that the 'European eye' would be dismayed if it sought for European tones and shades in the African landscape; in fact should seek for something different. Burke's inquiry into the *'Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful'* published in 1757, associated the sublime with the external forces of nature; an interpretation that was to be dislodged, or at times cohabited with, the notion of the sublime as an internal, subjective and imaginative power. Burkean notions of the sublime and the picturesque were to remain influential in the realm of landscape painting and loco-descriptive writing during the 19th Century and we find references to these concepts in Barrow's 1804 travel book and later in Alexander's and Baines's journals.⁴³ Burke suggested that the occurrence of the sublime in nature evoked the 'passions' of astonishment and horror but also the more palliative and salutary feelings of admiration and reverence.

Coetzee argues that the South African landscape is too flat for an evocation of the 'sublime' which emphasizes the vertical and valorizes the ensuing awe, exhilaration and imaginative expression it was supposed to inspire. Coetzee suggests that the 'organizing categories' of the sublime, and to a lesser extent the picturesque, never took hold in South Africa literature.⁴⁴ Even though the picturesque as a category might have held more meaning in relation to the African landscape; it too was undermined by the relentlessness of African light which bore down on the landscape and which was far too harsh to be consonant with the European picturesque which tended to invoke the soft light, twilights and dawns.

Coetzee's thesis has been influential, however, narratives about the colonies demonstrate that representations of the landscape were much more multifarious and questions that Coetzee raises were in fact being debated with some perspicuity back in the 19th century. Indisputably, the 'vertical' was a constant presence on military writings especially in relation to the campaign in the Amatholes. Aesthetic responses to the literary behemoth of 19th Century South African landscape were varied and, as we shall see, meanings assigned to this setting were both complex and capacious. In addition, conventional formulations about the 'freakish' colonial landscape which was too 'wild' be expropriated have been undermined by historians who propose that people came to terms with the landscape remarkably quickly, economically through trade and animal husbandry and through investigations into natural science.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Frontier Wars were fought in a number of different theatres and landscape

⁴³ Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation*, Henry Colburn, London, 1835.

⁴⁴ Coetzee, *White Writing*, 2007, p 57.

⁴⁵ Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, 2003.

imagery tended to be concentrated on the Waterkloof, the Fish River Bush and the Amathole mountain range, for aesthetic reasons and for reasons of tactical exposition. Yet the regular army and the Xhosa also contended with more prosaic grassland and scrub.

There have been recent forays into the contested terrain of the 'frontier'. Current versions have focused on the language and representation of the frontier and its metaphorical constitution. In his article, the *Fish River Bush and the Place of History*, Anderson discusses representations of the Frontier Bush and argues that landscape should be understood ideologically and should be recognized as an 'idea' that has become embedded in the historiography of the frontier.⁴⁶ The "historiographical adoption of the colonial landscape must compromise accounts of the frontier" because the frontier was not only a colonial construction but also deeply implicated the colonized. Anderson argues that the 'Fish River Bush' and the 'Frontier' have been represented as static, timeless, natural and absolute in a range of historical texts. Black, an Assistant Surgeon in the 7th and 8th Frontier Wars, whose book on the Fish River territory provides an evocation of the 'eternal bush', writes,

"In every respect there seems the character of eternity implanted on it. No one knows how, or where, or when, it began to grow; no one has witnessed its increase in any way, no one its decay....Inconsumable by fire, waveless by the wind, unharmed by torrents, unchangeable in every vicissitude of season, having neither youth nor age imprinted on it, it partakes more of the character of a stratum on the surface of the earth than anything proper to organic life."⁴⁷

So ancient and imperturbable is the bush that is more geological than botanical. Yet, in military narratives, swathes of land such as the Fish River Bush were not empty of people. However, the Xhosa 'enemy' was sometimes represented as incompletely human. Black, for example, represents the Xhosa enemy as synonymous with the bush and presents them as conveying a sinister unity with its gloom:

"...yet the Caffres, and numerous too, may still be concealed in the same kloof, secure from observation, while they are aided by the black colour of their skins affording no contrast to the gloom of the recesses they have taken refuge in."⁴⁸

The 'Fish River Bush' and the 'Frontier' have been represented as static, timeless, natural and absolute in a range of historical texts: both in 19th Century and in contemporary accounts. Anderson proposes that the idea of the 'eternal landscape' actually obscures the 'reality' which lies beneath such imperturbability: the 'reality' being the contestation and violence inherent in frontier regions. Anderson attributes the idea of the 'eternal bush' to implicit, imperial authority, and representations of the landscape provide an apologist idiom entrenching and sanctioning "the presence of empire". Anderson's approach to language alerts us to the ideological intentions of texts such as Black's, but do descriptions of the bush only sanction the presence of empire? There is little reference made in the article to how the Xhosa might have described the Bush. Neither does the notion of the 'eternal Bush' take into

⁴⁶ Anderson, *The Fish River Bush*, 2005.

⁴⁷ Black, *Account of the Fish River Bush*, 1858, p 83. Black's campaign status was Staff Assistant Surgeon, and he served in the 7th and 8th Frontier Wars.

⁴⁸ Anderson, *The Fish River Bush*, 2005, p 80

cognizance the Saidian concept of adjacency.⁴⁹ The Bush might have been eternal and untamed but if one considers that adjacent to the primal bush was another manifestation of the British colonial power, the erection of a panopticon provost in Graham's Town, a more complex picture of the 'empire' can be developed and one that complicates the 'natural' connotations of the bush by demonstrating that the colony also bore the marks of Benthamite reason as well as the tropes of natural 'chaos' which so frequently emblemized the vicissitudes and fluctuations of warfare. I shall discuss this 'taming' of the landscape and the reciprocal relationships with nature that manifested themselves in the narratives below.

"Natural fortresses": Skirmishes, death and the landscape

The following section explores a selection of the military representations of the landscape. The idea of the landscape was often used to provide understanding of the exigencies of the campaign; it denoted inaccessibility and difficulty for the troops and from a military perspective, the landscape was suggestive of why the regulars and locals failed at times to be decisive in their attacks. It also stood in metaphorically for the type of guerilla warfare conducted in the frontier wars and frequent allusions were made to the obstruction and wildness of the 'bush'. The landscape was not considered by certain officers to be conducive to 'honourable' warfare whose traditional 'place' of conflict would have been the battlefield where soldiers fought in serried ranks or in squares. In part, this was predicated on the assumption that guerilla warfare was not considered 'real' warfare; although a soldier's hardiness and ability to traverse the bush were considered essential masculine traits. Passages in the narrative demonstrate, unwittingly, how precarious the hold of the regular army was in the forested Amatholes. John Bisset's account of a skirmish in the 6th Frontier war provides some indication of this in the following depiction of the landscape represented as obstruction for the imperial troops and as a conduit for the Xhosa:

"Daylight broke as we reached the edge of the rocky glen, and troops were at once sent into the attack. It was a most difficult position to approach. Before reaching the solid cliff itself the troops had to pass between high masses of perpendicular rocks towering more than 100 feet above their heads on either side, and a passage not ten feet between them; this narrow passage serpentineing around boulders and zig-zagging round corners in the most extraordinary manner....The Kafirs were quite prepared for us, for they commenced at once to throw down great rocks and spears etc from the precipices above, which had evidently been collected there for the purpose. We, however, forced our way on until we came to the bluff or acute angle of the cliff itself; here only one man could pass at a time, and as that man came to the corner he was either shot or assegaied (sic)." ⁵⁰

Even though the British forces were often "admittedly useless in the bush": some troops adapted to skirmishing and to guerilla tactics, such as the feint. ⁵¹ Representations of the landscape could be considered as metaphorical codes for defeat and frustration and a number of memoirs offered candid accounts of the lack of success of some of the patrols on campaign. Alexander provides an indication of this in his account of the 6th Frontier War:

⁴⁹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage, London, 1993.

⁵⁰ Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875, pp 14, 15.

⁵¹ Peires, *House of Phalo*, 2003, p 168.

“The excellent manner in which the plans of the Kaffirs were laid, and the system of warfare which they organized on this occasion, surprised and confounded everyone. By showing themselves at so many different points at once, and making demonstrations of attack without much exposing themselves, they caused the abandonment of property of every kind, which they easily secured...”⁵²

King who fought in the 8th Frontier War, makes more specific linkages with the landscape and guerilla warfare,

“...the Kaffirs were the most formidable foe even to the flower of the British troops, who had to encounter and storm them in their own natural fortresses, rendered almost inaccessible by the dense bush of impenetrable thorn, &c; too succulent to be burnt, yet affording to the crawling native, the opportunity of lurking in unexpected ambuscade at every point.”⁵³

Topographical representations were not always concise and the vagueness of the descriptions lent themselves easily to divergent interpretations. The wildness of the bush, the unassailable mountain, the precipitous gorge contained a moral requirement in military writing which was intended to demonstrate a particular ethic in relation to work and the tenacity of the British soldier. These requirements were imbricated in justifications for invasion into a ‘wild’ country which through the endeavours of the imperial troops could become appropriable. In part, the sentiments of soldierly endurance resemble the familiar trope of Christian perseverance which leads to the ‘reward’ of victory. There are illustrations in the texts of stoicism in the face of adversity as seen in this report of operations in the Buffalo range of mountains:

“Operations of this extended nature, in a most difficult and mountainous country, cannot be carried on without great exertion and fatigue; and the troops, both officers and men, endured them as heretofore with the cheerfulness and perseverance which characterizes good soldiers.”⁵⁴

Imperial military narratives contained plenty of ‘hard-luck stories’ and accounts of fatal skirmishes with the Xhosa but they also were redolent with bravura tales of their own skill and fortitude. The following extract written by a ‘writer’ published in the *Graham’s Town Journal* records how regular soldiers and dismounted troops appeared to acclimatize themselves readily and learnt how to manipulate the landscape to their own advantage:

“When the day dawned on the 12th, the enemy were perceived in numerous small parties, with great numbers of cattle, which they immediately drove out of their kraals, evidently ignorant of the position of the infantry upon that side; a fire was then opened upon them with a six pounder and a howitzer. The troops under Lieut.-Col England, Major McLean, and Capt Halifax having the guns in the rear of the enemy pushed forward up the steep, rugged and bushy hills, with the wonted vigor and determination of British soldiers; the Hottentot Sharpshooters, both foot and mounted, boldly aided their advance, and skillfully scoured the thicket upon their flanks. As the troops ascended the cattle poured forth from the ravine and passes, the Kafirs bravely using their utmost

⁵² Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 1837, p 421.

⁵³ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 172. King’s account reflects Assistant Surgeon Black’s account of the ‘eternal bush’; these convergences of description were not unusual and as will be demonstrated in the chapter on ethnography, there were extensive ‘borrowings’ across military narratives.

⁵⁴ Godlonton, *A Narrative Of Irruption of the Kafir (sic) Hordes*, p 260.

endeavours to prevent their being driven into the open country above, but being fired upon both front and rear, they soon retreated into their holds and fastnesses.”⁵⁵

There were also occurrences of what Shum refers to as the ‘collapse’ of ‘informing conventions’ in the face of colonial intent.⁵⁶ In military narratives, the landscape constitutes a phantasm and a theatrical backdrop to calamity whereby the landscape is represented as a mortal threat. In a reference to the 6th Frontier War, Godlonton describes the death of four men of the 72nd Regiment who were killed by friendly fire. A detachment of the regiment had been positioned in the expectation of a Xhosa night-attack. One of the men awoke from having heard a sound or from the “the working of imagination whilst half asleep”, called out in alarm and in the following consternation “muskets were discharged” and four men of the regiment were killed. Godlonton invokes the youth of the soldier who caused the commotion but the principal reason was attributed to the doom-laden landscape:

“This fine body of men had just arrived on the frontier and the scene in which they found themselves so suddenly placed was calculated to have a powerful effect on the imagination. None can form any conception of a night bivouac in the kloofs of the Fish River, but those who have actually been in such a situation. The gloomy and profound thickets – the rugged and frowning precipices – and the lofty heights which bound the view on every hand, - the natural gloom, heightened by the shadows of night, and the restless watchfulness which must necessarily be induced from a knowledge that a treacherous and cruel enemy were lurking around, watching for an opportunity to spring upon his victim...”⁵⁷

Acts of imagination could lead to panic and to fatal consequences. Darkness also unnerved and bewildered the senses and the landscape became associated with trauma. Generally, the imaginative repossession of the landscape required representations of the landscape that strove either to contain or to domesticate it or if it were too ‘wild’ to trope it into ideal hunting territory. But on the frontier, particularly at times of war, these constraints on representation became compromised. Shum suggests in relation to the colony at the Cape that “... how landscape is read, interpreted or acted upon, in both literal and figurative senses is the first and indispensable step into the future: it is freighted with a significance that it would not necessarily have in its metropolitan context.”⁵⁸ This is true for soldiers on campaign whose passage through the landscape and whose survival rested on ‘reading’ its future significance.

How did ‘ordinary’ soldiers in the field come to terms with the Eastern Cape landscape? Most frequently they saw it in terms of travail. Military reports and orders credit soldiers with their tenacity and their ability to fight their way through the bush and in the mountainous conditions of the Amatoles but, as we shall see, soldiers in the rank and file tended to combine their perceptions of the Eastern Cape landscape with the folkloric. An instance of the uncertainty induced by an alien environment is reflected in a letter written by Private Witcherley in 1828. It demonstrates the chasm between texts of the officer class and the regular soldier and it was evidently inspired by popular and stereotypical representations of ‘savage’, cannibalistic Africans. Writing about a decade before the 6th Frontier War, Private George

⁵⁵ Godlonton, *A Narrative Of The Irruption of the Kafir Hordes*, 1965, p 103.

⁵⁶ Shum, *Unsettling Settler Identity*, 2006, p 22.

⁵⁷ Godlonton, *A Narrative Of The Irruption of the Kafir Hordes*, 1965, p 106.

⁵⁸ Shum, *Unsettling Settler Identity*, 2006, p 30.

Witcherley was based in Graham's Town in 1828 with the 55th Regiment of Foot and he provides this soldier's eye-view in a letter to his parents:

"...this is Caled the front tiere of Africa....and it is the worst part of the world it is where the English settlers are sent too but then an afrisaen tribe Came Down upon tham and the Governor Had to Send the 55th Regiment to their assistance and wee was 2 months before we Got sattled, and I Found this Part of the Cuntrey Wild Barran and Diserted No Agrecultier No fir No nothing but Wild Beast of Everey Kind and the Peipal that Inhabuit this part are uncivilised and savage and Gow Naked and subsist on raw flash as they Kill in the wild foriest of this inncultavated Cuntrey they are as the tribes of India was they have Cheffs and fight a Gainst one a Nather...." ⁵⁹

Witcherley was referring to the so-called Fetcani campaign of 1828. The tradition of reporting marvels and tall stories in travel writing had infiltrated Private Witcherley's writing style and in contrast to the above letter, Godlonton's account of the peoples of Kaffraria for all its prejudices bears the marks of an 'educated', dispassionate account. Not surprisingly, most of the letters written from the army in South Africa in the first half of the 19th century were from the officer class who were more educated and had more leisure time than the rank and file. However, access to education by members of the rank and file was to increase during the course of the 19th century and by 1856 there were regimental schools in the majority of the detachments. Each recruit was required by law to have a minimum of four hours per week of schooling. ⁶⁰ James McKay a non-commissioned officer in the 74th Highlanders wrote that in the 1850s that,

"The rank and file of the British army of the present day differs in mental ability very much from what it was twenty or thirty years ago. I can say, and say it safely, without fear of contradiction, there is not a troop of any regiment or battalion in the army, but you will find men in it who are well-versed in reading, writing, grammar, geography, history, and the higher branches of arithmetic, with parts of algebra and Euclid also; besides many regiments have good libraries and excellent reading rooms wherein the men have late hours of indulgence, that they might sit and improve their minds." ⁶¹

I do not wish to set up Witcherley as a candidate for cultural deprivation, but his letter helps to demonstrate why educated officers and ideologues such as Godlonton had the ability and the power to pronounce on the Xhosa in ways which were configured as 'knowledge' within the colonial and metropolitan discursive realm of the first half of the 19th Century.

Romantic landscapes

The lyrical also crept into "eyewitness" accounts from the regular army forces :

"This height is a remarkable feature in the lowest ridge of the mountainous tract which extends from the Debie to the elevated range in the Gaika's Berg and the Amatoli mountain are prominent objects. The bush in this tract is not extensive, compared with the celebrated jungle of the Fish River, but the precipitous character of the country affords the savage great facilities for relief....Everywhere the mimosa embellishes the scene, but is seldom sufficiently thick to afford a hiding place to the enemy....The mountains, which were kept close upon the left hand during the whole of this day's march, are thickly clothed with large trees, and rise to a considerable elevation. The

⁵⁹ In Boyden, *'ashes and blood'*, 1999, p 132.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1999, p 132.

⁶¹ McKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970, pp 10, 11.

country immediately at the foot of the mountain is perfectly open and at that time clothed with the most luxuriant vegetation....The streamlets from the mountain are numerous, perfectly sweet, clear as chrystal; and the principal bank of the Buffalo, on which the troops encamped, presented a scene which we all agreed was particularly beautiful.”⁶²

As discussed above, most narratives of the Frontier Wars made associations between topography and warfare but not many of them incorporated aesthetic, lyrical allusions. These aesthetic insertions alluded to ideas which referenced the picturesque or conveyed a dilution of some of the romantic ideas which prevailed in early part of the 19th Century. They have an intriguing presence in the texts because of their juxtaposition with accounts of skirmish and violence. Working within the realm of a history of ideas, Watson proposes that romanticism presented “a massive revolution in ideas” partly inspired by reactions against the industrial revolution. Enthusiasm for nature was offset by the depression and despair surrounding the bleakness of industrialization.⁶³ How did these ideas translate into the writings of 19th century soldiers? Not that extensively, but we do see the more conservative, less political, safer side of romanticism, that is, in lyrical descriptions of nature; although these depictions nearly always incorporated a ‘lurking’ presence of the enemy or a hint of his existence. King provides a typical example of this:

“We saw the smoke of the enemy’s fires curling slowly up from the dark bush, on a steppe or lower ridge of the elevated range in front, and on the opposite side of a lovely valley which lay at our very feet, carpeted with the smoothest and greenest grass, and dotted with mimosa, protea and clumps of tangled bush. On our left towered the lofty peak of the Hogsback, the highest point of the whole chain; and below it lay a finely wooded ravine, down the centre of which foamed a milk-white cataract, the dark forest stretching way on either side, and filling the kloof.”⁶⁴

Burkean readings of the picturesque and the sublime also found their way into 19th century military narratives and Amathole Mountains in particular became the repository of the sublime:

“Separated from the other parts of the colony by the loftiest and most inaccessible mountains in this part of Southern Africa, it can only be approached at certain points over their summits, or by a road following the sinuosities of a narrow opening between them, where a succession of views present themselves, which have all the charms usually attending mountain scenery....Stupendous mountains on either hand in many parts crowned with overhanging precipices of naked rock, - beneath deep chasms or ravines, clothed with forest timber....while in several places water-falls of great beauty give variety, and an appearance of animation to the surrounding objects.”⁶⁵

Alexander provides a classic version of the picturesque: in the foreground: fine plain on which the regiment camped, the middle ground constitutes the hills covered in bush accompanied by the picturesque and ‘tragic’ ruin of the burnt out mission station, in the distance is the mountain range and the imagined source of the river. Alexander tropes the colonial landscape into recognizable, formulaic representational procedures; the viewing of a landscape was “a socially and culturally distinctive

⁶² Godlonton, *A Narrative Of The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965, p 132.

⁶³ Watson, *A History of Ideas*, 2005, p 607.

⁶⁴ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 47.

⁶⁵ Godlonton, *A Narrative Of The Irruption of the Kafir Hordes*, 1965, p 13.

practice” and most leisured people in Europe were able to converse using knowledgeable, Burkean expressions.⁶⁶

“Next day, after a short march, we reached the Buffalo River, and encamped on a fine plain on its banks. Hills of two to three thousand feet elevation were round us, lightly covered with bush; and looking up the stream beyond the walls and garden of the burnt out mission station, we saw, at the distance of nine or ten miles, the very picturesque mountain ranges at and beyond the sources of the river.”⁶⁷

In a number of texts there are descriptions of mountain ranges used by the Xhosa as vantage points and their importance as strategic positions during the frontier wars. Consequently, renditions of the ‘sublime’ are found in the texts but these representations do not focus singly on the aesthetic: mountain ranges are also considered as an integral part of what was termed the ‘peculiar’, that is guerilla, warfare implemented by the Xhosa.

Space as a ‘practised place’.

Landscape and the historical narratives of landscape are suited to producing discourses of imperialism and their inevitable inclusions of expansion of ‘civilization’ and progress which coexist with dispossession and expropriation. In his discussion of the colonial landscape with reference to New Zealand landscape painting, Mitchell raises a paradox pertinent to the 19th century Cape context:

“How would New Zealand present itself as a unique place with its own national identity while at the same time representing itself with conventions borrowed from European landscape representations? How could it reconcile its desire for difference with its equally powerful desire to be the same?”⁶⁸

A further question would ask whether depictions of landscape are merely familiar tropes into which ‘exotica’ drawn from natural history or from autochthonous inhabitants of New Zealand are inserted. On the one hand one can argue that all colonial landscape conventions are imported and have merely absorbed the alien New Zealand, or South African, landscape into them. Representations of landscape would then simply entail the placement of ‘others’ into a familiar landscape. The problem with this argument according to Mitchell is that does not take into account that the landscape played a role in the formation of colonial identity and that indigenous people were not simply ‘absorbed’, they had their own ‘sense of place in the landscape’.⁶⁹

In his introduction Mitchell argues that imperialism is not a “one-way phenomenon but a complicated process of exchange, mutual transformation and ambivalence”. In the light of this, landscape, as a representation, does not necessarily “declare its relation to imperialism in any direct way”⁷⁰ and it is not necessarily nefariously linked to the imperial project of domination which can lead to a reductive model of the relationship between imperialism and landscape. He suggests that,

⁶⁶ Shum, *Unsettling Settler Identity*, 2006, p 32

⁶⁷ Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 1837, p 191

⁶⁸ Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2002, p 21.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 2002, p 27.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 2002, p 9.

"Landscape might be seen more profitably as something like the 'dreamwork' of imperialism, unfolding its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin and folding back on itself to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance." ⁷¹

On the other hand, despite the ambiguities suggested above, the 'semiotic features' of landscapes and the narratives that developed from them are eminently suitable for an 'imperial' generation: they assume appropriation of and expansion into the landscape as inevitable and the progressive expansion of 'civilization' into natural and uncharted spaces as equally ineluctable.

The following section will address the 'unfolding' of a fort in the Eastern Cape whose construction and social composition as a 'space', if not exactly a dystopia, amounted to more hybridized, and imperfect 'imperial prospect' than is first apparent. Its 'place' or location might have remained but as a space or 'practised site' which was "activated by movements, actions, narratives and signs" it demonstrated a transitory and fragile structure.

Conquest and warfare are with good reason often associated with the degradation of the environment and sustainable interactions between humans and 'nature' are considered untenable in this context. Descriptions of military architecture and landscaping in the Eastern Cape appear to diverge from colonial domestic arrangements yet there are a number of references to the practices of domestic colonial settlement in contemporary narratives. Military structures in the Eastern Cape either comprised fairly substantial fortification or they were temporary encampments which left only a trail of broken branches to indicate their presence. The following account examines the establishment of a military post, Fort Wellington, the shaping and incarnation of which infers a hybridized and integrative place which bore some but by no means all of the marks of an uncompromising colonial power.

Before forts were built their position, and composition, was decided through a combination of nous and standard military practice. Pollock and Agnew outline the factors which influenced the placing of forts: some were placed near the then seat of a tribal chief, for example, Fort Cox near Ngqika's residence, and "others guarded strategic forts or roads down the sides of the entrenched valleys". ⁷² The majority of the sites chosen were on 'alluvial terraces' near to rivers so that a continued water supply could be available. "The final choice of site was made with an eye to defence. Frequently a full meander curve was favoured as a natural kind of moat, when the rock-cut terraces across the meander spurs would serve as a leveled site for the cavalry barracks and gun emplacements." ⁷³

Fort Wellington was established near the banks of the Gonube River during an operation under Harry Smith when a number of local and regular troops invaded 'Kaffraria' in the 6th Frontier War. The naming of the fort is redolent with the opportunism and inconsistencies of colonialism. On the one hand, there was an imposition of imperial nomenclature upon Xhosa territory around the Gonube River which ran

⁷¹ Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2002, p 10.

⁷² Pollock and Agnew, *A Historical Geography of South Africa*, Longmans, London, 1963, p 84

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1963, p 84.

between the Buffalo and the Kei rivers: an adjacent mountain known as the Gonube Hill was renamed 'Wellington Heights'.⁷⁴

Wellington was an obvious, perhaps even a clichéd choice.⁷⁵ On the other hand, a closer reading of the fort, in effect it was a 'post', reveals that it was more than a mere expression of military force and bore complex social arrangements. Some of the more extractive, colonial aspects of the construction and habitation of the fort are undermined by Bowker's description which demonstrates the fort to be an amalgam of the vernacular and the military. The reconstituted landscape of British power which Crais argues "centred on the opposition of colonial (rationally organized) space and African (sensual and inferior) space"⁷⁶ does not appear to be an entirely apt a dichotomy in the context of the fort.

One of the officers engaged in the construction of the fort was James Alexander who had been posted to South Africa in January 1835 just after the 6th Frontier War broke out. He was to act as Sir Benjamin D'Urban's aide-de-camp throughout the duration of the war.⁷⁷ Alexander provides an idea of the rapidity of the construction of the fort:

"We reached the Gonubee (sic) Hill, now distinguished by the name of the "Heights of Wellington", after seventeen miles march; and immediately after a hasty repast, his excellency directed a post of communication to be traced out and constructed the same day, below the principal summit. Here we were again hard at work, and busy as bees. As we stand on no ceremony about dirtying our fingers, and delight in the labours of our crest – the beaver, we were soon covered up to our knees and elbows with sand and dust. Nor is this mentioned boastfully, but only as a hint to younger officers, who may depend on always getting their men to work vigorously if they set them an example, *and are sparing of abuse* [his italics]. A circular work of an hundred feet in diameter, with a parapet of sods, six feet high, having six feet of base and three of crest, with a good ditch around it, was commenced in the morning and completed in the evening."⁷⁸

Another inhabitant of the post was Thomas Holden Bowker, a Lieutenant with the First Battalion of the Provisional Colonial Infantry which was composed of Khoikhoi levies. The troops assigned to the fort were from the 75th Regiment and the First Provisional Colonial Infantry, Cape Mounted Riflemen, and Mfengu levies. The fort and its grounds also contained a number of different groups, a large number of whom were civilians. This was common in 19th Century campaigns, as there was usually a baggage train attached to regiments, but this particular fort accommodated Mfengu levies, refugees and the wives of

⁷⁴ Godlonton, *A Narrative Of The Irruption of the Kafir (sic) Hordes*, 1965, p 254. In the General Orders of the 21st May, 1835 from Harry Smith, Chief of Staff, specified that: "The lofty and commanding hill, eastward of the river Gonube, left of, and close to the high-road leading from that river to the Kye, called by the natives, "Gonube" is henceforth named "Wellington" the range of heights of which it is the summit are named "The Heights of Wellington" and the work constructing here for a post of occupation, is named "Fort Wellington".

⁷⁵ The colonial project often resulted in pre- existing names being ignored and subverted. See Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2002.

⁷⁶ Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance*, 1992, p 133.

⁷⁷ *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol III, 1977, p 15.

⁷⁸ Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation*, 1837, p 189. An aide-de-camp (ADC) played a similar role to a private secretary to a commander and he was often selected on individual grounds, for instance his affability or his congeniality with the commander.

some the Khoi troops. Bowker recorded their presence in his diary: "15 August, Building thatching, trenching. Building huts for the married Hottentots". In relation to the Mfengu he writes, "There are nearly a hundred of them. 20 men, 40 women & 50 children".⁷⁹

Bowker was to spend about five months at Fort Wellington and he left a fairly detailed record of the fort in his diary in which he describes not only its architecture but also its social composition. Overall, Bowker's diary bears more similarity in form to a chronicle than a narrative with its vertical list of events and its failure to provide much commentary on events. In fact, events in military diaries often are far more concerned with the diurnal and the domestic than with the more theatrical elements of colonialism. For instance, in one of the more interesting segments of Bowker's diary, a Xhosa attack on the fort, there is an elision of many of the details.⁸⁰ The first part of Bowker's account of the fort focused on its construction:

21 May: Marched for the Gonube. Pass the deep valley camp near Wellington hill. Commence building the fort. Lieutenants Leslie and Bowker (T.H.), P C I [Provisional Corps of Infantry] left in charge of Fort Wellington. Commence making kraals, stone house etc. This fort is constructed of the same materials as the other but smaller and circular. Sixty foot in diameter, containing four tents, a lookout in the centre made of four trees set in a square. On the top the sentinel looks out. The sides are to be plastered up. This is to be the magazine and store room.

23 May Very little work done today. The water and wood is so far from our fort it takes most of our time to bring in supplies. Kaffir corn brought in. The Fingoes building their huts in a circle around the kraal. They have erected temporary places all in a heap. These are to be removed. Our cattle to be kept in the Fingo kraal with a guard of six men till we make our own under the walls of the fort. This is to be made with sods and protected by thorns.

25 May Monday. The Fingoes put up the frame of one of our huts in the fort. Col. Thompson has marked out six places for huts within the walls. Wattling the store. Fatigue party brings corn and pumpkins, mealies etc. The Fingoes shuffle each other in dealing their rations meat.

12 Sept. Saturday. "The Kaffirs have an idea and they are not mistaken, that we are desirous of peace. As for ourselves at this place, though not afraid of the kaffirs yet, we are not their equals in the field. If this was to continue our small force would be meeting with a disaster some time or other."⁸¹

Bowker's account narrates the lives of most 19th Century soldiers who spent much of their time drilling or engaged in domestic duties and recreational activities.⁸² It would be mistaken to assume that 'forts' on the eastern frontier were merely derivative of European models and that they were primarily constructed for the protection of soldiers. They were also public spaces that included women and children and they were meeting places for discussion with the 'enemy' once the war had ended.⁸³ How they were constructed reflected the vernacular in ways that exceeded Pringle's 'wattled cot' only in

⁷⁹ In Mitford-Barberton, *Cmdt Holden Bowker*, 1970, p 137.

⁸⁰ See also Kingsley, 8th *Frontier War Diary, 1850 – 1853*.

⁸¹ Mitford-Barberton, *Cmdt Holden Bowker*, 1970, p 157. Bowker along with other regulars and levies spent five months from 21 May to 29 September 1835 at the fort. They finally marched to King William's Town on the 4 October.

⁸² Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 2001, p 161.

number and variety. Early British settler habitations were in the *hartebeeshuise* style of the trekboers. These were structures made from a framework of poles and covered in sticks and reeds which were then plastered over with clay and cow dung. Griquas and the Khoikhoi also built *hartebeeshuise* and from Bowker's account we know that the levies were familiar with this method of building.

Fort Wellington's 'vernacular' structure was were not atypical, even British settlers who advocated 'progressive, scientific farming' and were influenced by notions of British property ownership, were not immune to local methods of building which suited the constraints of environmental resources. As Beinart points out that "a number of early British settlers first built 'thatched shelters more or less after the native fashion', or 'hartebees' huts in the manner of trekboers" so that "the buildings and settlements that resulted from British occupation were not simply an imposition of new styles and new conceptions of space."⁸⁴ Fort Wellington bore these marks of hybridization but within these compounds, hierarchical relations in the army remained intact and the subservience of the men to the officers was assumed. Different regiments also bivouacked separately even though they were sent on joint patrols and foraging parties. This separation was enforced for a number of reasons which included factors such as regimental *corps d' esprit* and commissariat arrangements. On the frontier, this arrangement was overlaid by colonial social patterns of culture and race. Nevertheless, what is evident is that the various regiments lived cheek by jowl in an intimacy which did not seem overly to disturb hardened colonialists such as Bowker.

Coetzee describes typical colonial representations as resulting in the "occlusion of black labour" and that "the black man becomes a shadowy presence flitting across the stage now and then to hold a horse or serve a meal". In contradistinction to this, Bowker's diary concerning Fort Wellington, although paternalistic, is inclusive of the levies. In the end, military structures on the frontier had to come to terms with the complexities of established, indigenous societies both as their allies and as the enemy.

Conclusion: war and sylvan settings

In broad terms, colonial space was socially and 'culturally grounded.'⁸⁵ It can be argued that the semiotic features of the landscape generated historical narratives which assisted in the creation and the naturalization of colonial social formations. A place became a 'space' because of complex power relations and as a result of "symbolic and imaginative" investments. So there are multiple meanings attached to 'land' and this chapter has attempted to demonstrate some of the complexities of the militarized landscape.

A word on the emplotment of the narratives discussed in this chapter: Cosgrove suggests that genres of painting replicate those of poetry from "the storia (epic or historic events) to portraiture and domestic scenes and finally to the least serious, landscapes and rural scenes". The city is the setting for 'great men' and 'epic deeds' while the countryside is the provenance of the peasantry and where the propertied and wealthy indulge in pursuits such as hunting or in the appreciation of 'nature'. Cosgrove writes,

⁸⁴ Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, 2003, pp 49, 50.

⁸⁵ Darian-Smith, *Text, Theory, Space*, Routledge, London, 1996.

"In the theatre, whose auditorium design, spatial arrangements and stage sets were exercises in applied geometry and perspective construction ...this hierarchy was carefully articulated for the three forms of drama. Tragedy was played against settings of the ideal city and its monumental architecture, romance in the palace interior or closed garden, and comedy and farce in the sylvan setting of a rural landscape." ⁸⁶

The ideal structure of wars fought in Europe in the 18th and 19th was one of ordered, serried ranks and the density of numbers of men involved was more reminiscent of the cityscape than a rural environment and hence could be staged with more plausibility as heroic. This urban, heroic symbolism was deemed to be inapposite to frontier landscape, which was subject to interpretations incorporating both the nostalgic and images of 'irredeemable wilderness'. The South African theatre of war was primarily in the countryside, that is, the 'bush', and erroneously, appears to invite the comedic plot. The frontier wars were often portrayed as being the antithesis of 'real wars' as their 'guerilla' or 'irregular' nature precluded the invocation of heroism. Landscapes reflected the ambivalence that soldiers felt towards frontier warfare and were attributed with being the cause of soldierly misfortune. The uncertainty around the landscape underwent some adjustment in the 8th Frontier War as the regular forces familiarized themselves with the terrain and became more proficient in terms of guerilla tactics. For the colonized, the countryside became the scene of deep tragedy. Large portions of the Eastern Cape landscape were devastated by the slash and burn tactics of the regular army were reduced to a wasteland.

⁸⁶ Cosgrove, 'Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea', in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, Vol 10, 1, 1985, p 52

Chapter 6

The Seventh Frontier War: The Narratives of Harriet Ward and Edward Napier.

Introduction

This chapter diverges from the representations of masculinity which invest a major part of this thesis as it focuses on the only sustained narrative of the frontier wars by a woman: Harriet Ward. Gender-sensitive historiography requires a rethinking of the category of 'women' and a chapter such as this would be justly criticized for its detached status. There is a cogent argument that gender should infiltrate colonial analysis rather than be considered as a separate concern.¹ The chapter is further sullied by the inclusion of Edward Elers Napier's narrative of the 7th Frontier War. There are a number of reasons for this alliance. Through an examination of Ward's and Napier's narratives, the intention in this chapter is to demonstrate an increasing metropolitan interest in the Xhosa in the 1840s. This interest, in part, was generated by the proliferation of knowledge and communications systems directed towards a growing middle class readership.² Hence the focus in this chapter is on metropolitan texts, as opposed to their colonial counterparts, and the discussion will attempt to map the diffusion of ideas espoused in the works of Ward and Napier through commentary which appeared in a number of popular publications. I wish to demonstrate that the representations of the Xhosa and the iterations found in these heteroglossic texts formed a pattern which revealed western notions of Xhosa 'difference' and which also presented a challenge to contemporary 'humanitarian' accounts of the Xhosa. There was noticeable contestation over representations of the Xhosa in the 1840s and Ward's and Napier's literary contributions played a part in this contest which was made more acute by the onset of the 7th Frontier War. It will be proposed that by correlating representations of the Xhosa alongside their historical context a sense can be gained of how the Xhosa became the focus of intensifying metropolitan interest and how they were subjected to new levels of textual alterity.

The narratives demonstrated some of the tensions of colonization in the 1830s and 1840s: Ward's narrative in particular presents an appeal to the British reading public to provide support for the sustained involvement of the British government and for the continued emigration of settlers to the Cape.³ However, what Ward and Napier espoused was not immediately congruent with British policy in the colony which tended to vacillate around the annexation of territory in the interior regions of South Africa.⁴

In their opening statement of *The War of the Axe*, Le Cordeur and Saunders propose that,

¹ Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, 2005.

² Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2009. Most of the journals selected for discussion, such as the *New Monthly Magazine* and *Blackwood's*, were specifically targeted towards the middle class.

³ There was popular support for emigration from Britain in the 1840s: a decade which saw the advent of the Irish Famine.

⁴ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013; Crais, *Poverty, War and Violence in South Africa*, 2011.

“The War of the Axe has suffered more neglect by military and other historians than has any of the other major conflicts on the eastern (sic) Cape frontier.”⁵ Furthermore, they suggest that events were not recorded in as much “detail or vividness as the previous 6th Frontier War and the longer one of 1850-53” and that there were “few dramatic moments to capture the imagination” as the campaign was primarily concerned with the seizing of Xhosa cattle and the destruction of their crops.⁶ Yet despite this literary neglect, the authors assert that the war presented a significant impediment to Xhosa independence and contributed to the entrenchment of colonial control. Furthermore, it involved “much suffering, particularly on the side of the Xhosa.....it contributed to making the history of relations so tragic between white and black on the frontier.”⁷ The quote demonstrates an obeisance to the historiographical tradition that considers the ‘frontier’ during the first half of the 19th Century as being instrumental in the formulation of future race relations in South Africa.⁸ The Frontier Wars have been tragically troped by a number of historians, and with good reason, however it was not only the overtly violent events of the war, the despoilment and skirmishes that led to the relegation of the Xhosa to colonized subjects. It will be argued in this chapter that during the 1840s, the Xhosa increasingly ‘went-metropolitan’: we find the inclusion of the Xhosa in a wider range of publications, including monthly magazine articles, which were to become the pedesis for the diffusion of popular ideas about the Cape and its inhabitants.

It will be proposed in this chapter that despite the ‘smallness’ of the 7th Frontier War, it elicited at least two narratives that amplified the ‘information’ base about the Xhosa and which contributed to the production and reproduction of Xhosa representation to a metropolitan audience. These narratives appeared at a juncture in which the sentiments of liberal humanitarianism were increasingly being confronted by renditions of the ‘real’ conditions at the Cape.⁹ In line with this new ‘realism’, these representations constituted unsympathetic renderings of the Xhosa and Harriet Ward’s *Five Years in Kaffirland* (1848) and Edward Napier’s *Excursions in Southern Africa* (1849, 1850) both written, in part, during the 7th Frontier War are exemplars of this trend. The latter works were published in London and include Ward’s condensed version of *Five years in Kaffirland*, entitled *The Cape and the Kaffirs: A diary of five years residence in Kaffirland*.¹⁰

The combined texts revealed an attempt to provide an ‘immediate’ and ‘faithful’ picture of the Eastern Cape ‘frontier’, they also strove to delineate Xhosa ‘perfidy’ and they were critical of the seemingly

⁵ Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The War of the Axe*, 1847, Brenthurst Press, Johannesburg, 1981, p 15.

⁶ Ibid., 1981, p 15.

⁷ Ibid., 1981, p 15.

⁸ See liberal renditions of the ‘frontier’: De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa*, 1972. Also Legassick’s critique of liberalism in *The Frontier Tradition*, 1980.

⁹ I have used liberal humanitarianism as short hand for proliferation of ideas which informed the more sympathetic, ‘philanthropic’, accounts of the Xhosa. ‘Political economy’ is a term used in the 1840s which condensed the multiplicities of free trade policies.

¹⁰ *The Cape and the Kaffirs* was published four times, the fourth edition was published by Henry Bohn in 1860. Ward suggests that it was the high price tag of *Five years in Kaffirland* that led to the publication of *The Cape and the Kaffirs*. She writes: “It’s price...having necessarily limited its circulation...” Advertisement in *The Cape and the Kaffirs*, Henry Bohn, London, 1851.

unremitting Xhosa defiance of the colonial project.¹¹ These pessimistic and often vituperative views were compounded by the assertion in the texts that the Xhosa had been misrepresented by idealized renderings of the 1830s and 1840s. Texts concerning the colonies frequently were construed as responses to perceived misrepresentations by previous authors' narratives and Ward and Napier both endeavored to counteract, indeed vilify, what they considered to be the 'mawkish', 'pro-Xhosa' tendencies which they argued prevailed in these texts.¹² In this regard, their authorial intentions were twofold: they wished to provide a countervailing voice to contemporary 'philanthropic' narratives of the Xhosa and by so doing revise the recent 'history' of the Cape; and secondly they endeavored to disabuse a 'credulous' metropolitan reading public and to shape public opinion. In this way, they deliberately exerted their metropolitan status by chastising an imagined readership for their cultivation of an undiscerning mix of ignorance and sentimentality in relation to the Xhosa.

Furthermore, the practice of textual interconnectedness between the colony and the metropole was to coalesce in the 1840s.¹³ The existence of this interface distances the notion of an unmediated and dominant metropolitan discourse and suggests that there was a significant association between the metropole and the colonies in that the periphery played a crucial role in the construction of ideas beyond its parochial confines.¹⁴ However, this convoluted circulation of information complicates current notions that colonial knowledge influenced metropolitan ideas, especially in the realm of race. For instance, we find representatives of the metropole, incarnated by Ward and Napier, reporting from the colony and sending back reports to the metropole. Hence the authors reported from the colony and used extracts of colonial reportage but maintained their stamp on the metropole through the London-based publishing houses.¹⁵ Furthermore, the appeals by Ward for metropolitan sympathy for the settler cause found a response in Godlonton's colonial journalism and he made use of extracts from the work of Harriet Ward in a later book on the 8th Frontier war to substantiate his claims of settler mistreatment at the hands of the metropolitan Government and public.¹⁶ The colonial press and the metropolitan press intersected in a number of ways to form a mesh of 'minor literature' and as we shall

¹¹ See Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol II, II, 1848, 1849, Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol I and II, 1849, 1850, *The Monthly Magazine*, Blackwood's, *The United Services Magazine*.

¹² Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol II, 1850. 'Mawkish' is Napier's epithet, The 'sentimental' texts referred to possibly included Justus's *The Wrongs of the Caffer Nation*, (1837), Pringle's *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa*, (1835) and Philip's *Researches in South Africa*, (1828). Few direct references are provided by Ward; Napier is the more assiduous reference-provider. Napier, for example, refers disparagingly to Pringle's *African Sketches*, Edward Moxon, London, 1834 in his narrative in *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol II, 1850, p 163.

¹³ This web evidently existed in the 1830s: for instance, Godlonton's *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes* was directed towards the 'north'. However, in the 1840s the reach of the narratives seems to have increased and the proliferation of metropolitan, 'family' orientated journals meant that the Xhosa were becoming visible, textually and through pictorial representation, in a number of middle class homes.

¹⁴ See Dubow's *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 2006.

¹⁵ Ward published articles in the 'colonial' press but her books and most of her articles were published in London. See Letcher, *Trespassing Beyond the Borders*, PhD Thesis, Rhodes University, eprints.ru.ac.za, 1999.

¹⁶ Godlonton, *Narrative of the 8th Frontier War 1850 – 1852*, 1962, pp 162 – 166. Perhaps the reach of colonial influence should not be overestimated. Britain, or rather more specifically the London remained central to print culture where we find a much more extensive and reflexive paying readership. Unlike the colonial press which was small-scale, the 'City' had sway. Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013.

see Ward's and Napier's texts appeared in a number of textual domains.¹⁷ Britain's cultural resources such as publication houses, societies and missionary bodies meant that the diffusion of knowledge reached a wider base: although Ward's and Napier's colonially inspired books generally were directed towards the influential, British middle classes, as were the journals in which they were reviewed.¹⁸

The concept of liberalism has been considered in earlier chapters but requires some preliminary definition as I wish to introduce what was understood by British and 'Cape' liberalism in the 1840s. This was a decade during which the violence of modernity seems to have become more acute in Britain. The 1830s and the 1840s in Britain saw a growth of industrialization and the establishment of ideas pertaining to 'political economy'. However, the 1840s was also a decade which came to be known as the 'Hungry Forties' and a number of political and social crises emerged which were associated with economic depression, unemployment and the cataclysmic Irish Famine. In addition there were appeals, generally from the middle classes, for the abolishment of the Corn Laws which had protected British trade from foreign trade incursion but which were seen to be obstructive of *laissez faire* policies.¹⁹ In the 1840s, 'liberalism' was largely consonant with free trade but as a notion it also transcended the abolishment of protective tariffs, as Harvey and Matthew point out,

"'Free trade' or *laissez-faire* were shorthand terms exemplifying a whole philosophy of political, social, and economic organization. John Stuart Mill's 1848 *Principles of Political Economy*, the handbook of mid-Victorian liberalism, put the point in a nutshell: "Laissez faire, in short, should be the general practice; every departure from it, unless required by some great good, is a certain evil.""²⁰

Deliberations around the notions of liberty and access to knowledge were central features of mid-Victorian society. The 1840s predated untaxed access to knowledge through newspapers and journals as the 'Knowledge Taxes' were only abolished in 1855 and 1861; this resulted in stamp duties on newspapers and customs and excise duties on paper being rescinded.²¹ However, the notion of 'knowledge' was to become increasingly imbricated in concepts relating to both social 'freedom' and 'productivity' and by the mid 19th Century:

"If individuals were to make their way productively, they must be prepared and equipped with knowledge and the freedom to comment on it was thus central to liberal society."²²

Ward and Napier were supporters of 'progress' and the spread of 'knowledge' and through their publications they upheld the prevailing ideas of 'political economy' and modernization.²³ However, their work also conveyed a belittlement of the rights and position of autochthonous people at the Cape

¹⁷ *New Monthly Magazine, Blackwood's Magazine.*

¹⁸ A journal such as *The New Monthly Magazine* was touted as a publication suitable for the middle class family.

¹⁹ Boyce, 'The Politics of the "Hungry Forties"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol 40, 2012, p 445. The term 'The Hungry Forties' was not in use during these destitute times.

²⁰ Harvey and Matthew, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p 68.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2000.

²² Harvey and Matthew, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, 2000, p 69.

²³ *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol 1, 1848, p 28. Ward was also critical of political economists: "And ye political economists, who rail at the expenses which fall on the nation by the maintenance of a large army (grumbling at the effect, yet wilfully blind to the cause)..."

and portrayed very little narrative dissonance in relation to conservative settler views. At the Cape in the 1840s, humanitarian liberalism was associated with those missionaries, 'philanthropists' and settlers who were critical of the parlous social conditions of the colonial Khoi and the Xhosa. By the 1840s, adherents of Stokenstrom's Treaty system which regulated the dealings between settler and Xhosa around issues such as cattle theft were also seen to be adversarial towards settler interests. However, we can no longer view these Cape liberals with innocent eyes: the frailties of early 19th Century liberalism have been exposed by revisionist historians, including Timothy Keegan who argues that:

"Early nineteenth century liberalism was profoundly ambiguous. Its rhetorical commitment to the legal formalities of equality and freedom was in sharp contrast to its fundamental compatibility with cultural imperialism, class domination and, ultimately, racial subjugation."²⁴

Liberal renditions of the colonized have been criticized for their envelopment of the colonized into 'western' constructions in their narratives. In their eyes, the 'ideal native' was quietist and one who conformed to the demands of evangelism and modernization in the first part of the 19th Century. These affiliations persevered and military narratives written in the early 1850s continued to engage with 'liberal' texts in intricate ways; most frequently in the form of ripostes to 'philanthropy'.

Initially, at the Cape, mercantilism and humanitarianism displayed a measure of convergence in the calls for the abolition of slavery and for a revision of laws pertaining to indentured labourers: these institutions were to be transformed in late 1820s (Ordinance 50 was passed in 1828) and in the 1830s (with the abolition of slavery at the Cape in 1834).²⁵ Concomitantly, texts such as Justus's *The Wrong's of the Caffre Nation* attempted to inform readers of injustices perpetrated against autochthonous peoples at the Cape but they also pursued the path of cultural imperialism especially in the realm of religious conversion. The 19th Century saw the increased success of settler capitalism and notions of humanitarianism receded and became increasingly replaced by notions of 'progress' and previous forms of forced labour transmogrified into systems of wage labour.²⁶ Even though, British settlers in the Eastern Cape were still not entirely 'settled' in the 1830s, by the time we reach the 7th Frontier War their 'front', although still fissiparous, had become more united and their opposition to humanitarianism more cohesive.²⁷

Background to the 7th Frontier war

The historiography of the 7th Frontier War (1846 – 1847) has thrown up a number of conflicting interpretations about the 'causes' of the war. Harriet Ward posed that,

"The colonists have lived in alarm and uncertainty for ten years.... No other nation other than England would have permitted her settlers to bear the insults and depredations suffered by the British emigrants at the hands of the

²⁴ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 13.

²⁵ Ibid., 1996.

²⁶ Ibid., 1996.

²⁷ See Bank, "Of 'Native Skulls'", 1996.

heathen robbers, who have been permitted to arm themselves and to make every preparation for war during a period of three years.”²⁸

In fact, as Le Cordeur points out, the war was an episode in the prolonged history of struggle between white settlers and autochthonous peoples on the Frontier. In the 1840s, settler grievances were focused on the abrogation of the Province of Queen Adelaide which as ‘ceded land’ had been assigned to a number of settlers.²⁹ The establishment of this territory eventuated after the 6th Frontier War when a number of territorial adjustments had been made to the frontier zone. A ‘new’ province, the Province of Queen Adelaide, was carved out of the area between the Fish and the Keiskamma rivers and recognized by the Cape Governor Benjamin D’Urban. The retrocession of the Province of Queen Adelaide followed Lord Glenelg’s insistence on a change of policy in the Eastern Cape which included *inter alia* that the Province of Queen Adelaide should be abandoned, part of the land allocated to settlers should be returned to the Xhosa and the Fish River reinstated as the boundary between the Xhosa and the colony.³⁰ The administration of the area also concerned itself with the position of the former allies of the British forces, the Mfengu and the Gqunukhwebe, as it was feared by the British that there would be Xhosa reprisals against these groups. The Mfengu were located in the ceded territory and were regarded as under the protection of the British Government. The Xhosa were induced by a succession of treaties not to assail the Mfengu polities.³¹

In the first few years of the 1840s a marked settler antipathy towards Stockenström’s ‘Treaty System’ prevailed. The extent of the ill-feeling induced the governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, to do away with the system and institute, in 1844, a partial return to previous ‘commando’ system. This allowed settlers to track stolen cattle and seek recompense for their theft; a move which did little to increase Xhosa support for British rule. Keegan has argued that the state of affairs in the Eastern Cape became overheated with the increased bellicosity of Eastern Cape settlers.³²

The cognomen for the Seventh Frontier War, the War of the Axe, was derived from an event which occurred in the ‘powder keg’ of the Eastern Cape: the Fort Beaufort area. The colonial rendition of the story goes that in March 1846 a Xhosa man, who had been convicted of theft for reputedly stealing an axe, and a Khoi convict were handcuffed together and placed under an escort of police constables who were to convey them from Fort Beaufort to Grahamstown. On the road just outside Fort Beaufort, the escort was ambushed and attacked by a number of the prisoner’s compatriots who drove off the escort and killed the Khoi fellow-prisoner to whom the Xhosa man had been handcuffed. The party then escaped with the rescued man. The Cape Government demanded the surrender of those who had killed the Khoi prisoner but Sandile refused to give them up. This impasse led Maitland and Colonel Hare to launch an offensive against the Xhosa which eventuated in British troops “taking to the field” on the 11

²⁸ Ward, *The Cape and the Kaffirs*, 1851, p 154.

²⁹ See Le Cordeur, *The War of the Axe*, 1981. Lord Glenelg was Secretary for State of War and the Colonies, 1835 – 1839.

³¹ See Le Cordeur, *The War of the Axe*, 1981; Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003; Milton, *The Edges of War*, 1983.

³² Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996.

April 1846.³³ Thus the British forces initiated the war; unlike the wars of 1836 and 1850 which were sparked off by Xhosa attacks.

At the outset of the war, Maitland and Hare hoped that an incursion into Sandile's territory would lead to his capitulation but the British regiments had to advance into the Amatole Mountains and their commissariat wagons were ambushed at Burns Hill and large amounts of equipment taken by the Xhosa. Subsequent to this Xhosa success, Phato an ally of the British in the 1836 war, joined the Ngqika under Sandile largely because of the Mfengu encroachment on his land.³⁴ The Xhosa employed similar guerilla tactics to those of the 6th Frontier War and inexorably the war was drawn into the Amatoles and the Zuurberg mountain ranges where the Xhosa could pursue the war with greater tactical skill. Stockenstrom describes the intricacies of the 7th Frontier War:

"Such was our grand combined movement on the Amatola, which has been, not inappropriately, called a grand quadrille, performed by the Kaffirs and ourselves on this vast theatre, in which all parties complaisantly twist and turn through the figures so as to avoid jostling and upsetting each other. Had I called it so from the first, I might, with justice, been called contentious and acrimonious, but it would nevertheless have been the truth."³⁵

However, the Xhosa deployed strategies which also diverted from their usual guerilla tactic of the ambush when they attacked a fixed target, Fort Peddie.³⁶ The attack on Peddie in May was the largest Xhosa assault since the Battle of Graham's Town in 1819 and it comprised 8000 Xhosa warriors under the chief, Phato.³⁷ The Xhosa eventually retreated from Fort Peddie after being repulsed by gunfire and by the Mfengu levies situated outside of the fort's walls. The war also saw the Battle of 'Gwangwa' (Gwangqa); the only engagement in the three wars which was 'dignified' by the appellation of 'Battle' by the British. The Gwangqa proved to be disastrous for the Xhosa, but even after the battle, which left hundreds of Xhosa dead, the British forces remained on the back foot because of commissariat difficulties and bungling leadership.³⁸ Stockenstrom's autobiography conveys how often the British were out-witted and out-fought by the Xhosa. In his comments on the ineptitude of the British army he wrote that:

"When the bravest and noblest troops in the world were, through their mismanagement, to use the softest term, driven before naked savages, like rats before a pack of terriers from Burns Hill to Block Drift leaving their

³³ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, p 194.

³⁴ Le Cordeur, *The War of the Axe*, 1981.

³⁵ Stockenstrom, *Autobiography of Sir Andries Stockenstrom, Vol II*, Juta, Cape Town, 1887, p 226.

³⁶ Milton, *The Edges of War*, 1983. Fort Peddie was constructed in 1835 and named after Lt Col Peddie the commander of the Seaforth Highlanders. Its precinct comprised commissariat stores, barracks and stables which were surrounded by loop-holed walls. A separate watch tower made of stone with a shooting radius of 360 degrees was mounted on the upper storey of the fort. During the 7th Frontier War Congreve rockets were fired against the Xhosa from the fort.

³⁷ Le Cordeur, *The War of the Axe*, 1981.

³⁸ Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875, pp 97, 98. Numbers of the Xhosa dead vary: Bisset states that 270 Xhosa died on the battlefield. According to Bisset, "This was the only time the British troops ever caught the [Xhosa] really in the open."

ammunition wagons in the hands of the enemy to be recovered by a few poor Hottentots under Andries Botha, whom we afterwards rewarded by trying to hang him as a rebel....”³⁹

A distinguishing feature of the 1846 war was that the Xhosa embraced a modernization of their tactics in that they were much better armed and a number of warriors were mounted.⁴⁰ Prior to the war, there had been a brisk firearm and ammunition trade between the Xhosa, colonial traders and reputedly some international arms dealers in the years preceding the war.

Meanwhile, Maitland’s force rose to 3 200 regulars, 5 500 burghers and 800 Hottentot levies. In addition there was a labour corps of 4000.⁴¹ However, he experienced logistical problems due to drought and the Xhosa tactic of attacking wagon trains meant that the army commissariat supply chain was compromised. Maitland was unable to attain the expected decisive victory over the Xhosa in the field and was recalled by the British Government and replaced by Sir Henry Pottinger. Pottinger arrived at the Cape in January 1847 and almost immediately left for the Eastern Cape where he was to remain for the entire period of his brief governorship. He busied himself with the administrative aspects of the war leaving the military command to his Commander in Chief, Sir George Berkeley.

The war was to continue for another ten months until the Xhosa finally capitulated. British and colonial forces had deliberately destroyed Xhosa corn supplies and driven away their cattle which left the Xhosa to face starvation. Peires’s assessment of British conquest is phlegmatic: “It is clear that the victory in the War of the Axe turned almost exclusively on the question of provisions and supplies.”⁴² However, the war left other legacies not least of all a series of injunctions which were to encourage an increased militarization of the Eastern Cape and a further diminishment of Xhosa independence. Lord Grey, the Whig Secretary for War and the Colonies between 1846 and 1852, sent a brief to Governor Pottinger which espoused that,

“[The Xhosa] were to be ruled not so much as part of the colony itself but by means inter alia of a military presence in their territory, and the enrolment of British troops under British officers was to be encouraged.”⁴³

Furthermore, he proposed that: “sound policy and enlightened regard for the welfare of the colonists require that the Kaffir tribes no longer be left in possession of their independence.”⁴⁴ It was not only in the realm of parliamentary policy that the Xhosa experienced destabilization but as we shall see there was a revision in their narrative representations in the 1840s.

³⁹ Stockenstrom, *Autobiography of Sir Andries Stockenstrom, Vol II*, 1887, p 216. Stockenstrom was often critical of British military leadership and was antagonistic towards Colonel Somerset.

⁴⁰ Numerous colonial and British texts attest to this. See Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850; Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875 and John Bowker who wrote: “It is something new to me to be running on foot before Kaffirs mounted on horseback and the bolts whistling like hail about me,” Quoted in Milton, *The Edges of War*, 1983, p 161.

⁴¹ Milton, *The Edges of War*, 1983.

⁴² Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003, p 172.

⁴³ Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The War of the Axe*, 1983, p 21. Quote from British Parliamentary Papers, 1847 – 48.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 1983, p 21.

Narratives of the 7th Frontier War: Harriet Ward

As proposed earlier, Ward's and Napier's texts adopted a political position which was explicitly 'anti-humanitarian' and often expressive of an unequivocal contempt for the Xhosa. The following sections will attempt to outline why this position was adopted with such vehemence during the 1840s. A number of studies of the 19th Century Cape have provided economic reasons for the shift in emphasis away from 'humanitarianism'. Shum, who also addresses textual influences, suggests that, "As the settler economy grew stronger and more organized, so the voice of the humanitarians faded."⁴⁵ Other scholars have observed that the frontier wars contributed to a solidification of settler antipathy towards the Xhosa and the construction of a distinctly obdurate settler identity.⁴⁶ My intention in this chapter is to discuss why Ward's and Napier's textual representations of the Xhosa were so tendentious and how and why they became significant in sectors of the metropolitan publishing matrix.

I shall now turn to an examination of two of the narratives which emerged from the 7th Frontier War. I shall provide a lengthier discussion of Ward's narrative and, in general, Napier will be utilized as the secondary character (if not the straight man) in this double act. Harriet Ward, the wife of an officer in the 91st Regiment, was a published author before her stay at the Cape. She accompanied her husband, Captain John Ward and their young daughter, Isabel, from St Helena to the Cape in 1842: roughly four years before the war. Hence, the first volume of her book *Five Years in Kaffirland* is primarily concerned with her impressions of the Eastern Cape: its topography and its inhabitants, particularly the Xhosa. In general, her experiences of the Eastern Cape followed the progress of her husband's regiment through the region. The regiment was stationed at Fort Peddie between 1843 and 1845 and subsequently moved to Graham's Town. During her time at the Cape, Ward went on excursions to the 'frontier' region. The observations which emerged from these peregrinations and from the military posts she resided in formed the basis of her "on the spot" reportage of the Cape.⁴⁷ These reports were published initially in the *United Services Magazine* and then later collected and published in two volumes.⁴⁸ The second volume of *Five Years in Kaffirland* concentrated on events of the 7th Frontier War (1846 – 1847) and further excursions provided her with the opportunity to comment on the devastation wreaked by the war; an account which was generally saturated in sympathy for the settler population.

There are a number of references to Ward in contemporary letters and Assistant Surgeon W.N. Irwin, an army surgeon, who was at the Cape between 1843 and 1846, describes his association with Harriet Ward at Fort Peddie:

"We have at this post a good many people, four officers, with myself. The Commanding Officers is Our Major, a good man, nearly an "exquisite", but at the bottom a brick. We live in the same house and pull well together. There are two or three ladies as well, one a Mrs Wark, (sic) lady to Captain Wark, (sic) 91st Regiment, an authoress of some note in the annuals and a mild blue.⁴⁹ I am her cavalier, servant, and accompany her in riding, walking, and

⁴⁵ Shum, *Thomas Pringle and the Xhosa*, 2000, p 1.

⁴⁶ See Bank, *Of 'Native Skulls'*, 1996.

⁴⁷ "On the spot" is included as an inscription on the title page of *Five Years in Kaffirland*. It is a suggestive tagline as it alludes to Ward as an eyewitness and as a writer who could contradict armchair philanthropists.

⁴⁸ She also published articles in *The People's Magazine*, see Van Wyk Smith, *'Romancing the East Cape Frontier', English in Africa*, Vol 24, 2, 1997, p 5.

⁴⁹ 'Wark' is obviously an error in the transliteration of the original letter.

we generally have a song every night. She sings, plays the guitar, dances with castanets, and gives imitations of everybody, and I may say knows every one of title or literary eminence in England, so we manage to make time pass. She has lived as a child with the Calverts, as her father was Colonel in Sir Harry's old Regiment, the 14th of Buckingham Regiment. There is a great dearth of young ladies. Of this, however, I care little, indeed I believe it is thus better.”⁵⁰

Irwin's reference to Harriet Ward's political affiliations as a 'mild blue' is notable: 19th Century 'blues', sometimes referred to as the 'buff and the blue', were Whigs. The appellation of 'mild' is possibly a reference to the complications permeating Ward's political ideas: she could not be construed as a 'true blue' as she opposed significant Whig politicians, such as Lord Glenelg, and displayed a marked antipathy towards 'humanitarian' ideas concerning the Xhosa. One of her contemporary reviewers took the opportunity to criticize Whig policy in his article for *Blackwood's Magazine* and clearly deduced a political complicity between their texts:

“...[we] concur at attributing to Whig mal-administration and to the unwise treaties of Sir Andries Stockenstrom, the numerous disasters that of late years have afflicted the Cape, and the bloody and inglorious struggle that has cost this country upwards of three millions sterling.”⁵¹

To our eyes, Harriet Ward's politics take on a conservative, deeply blue hue and scholars have referred to her writing as 'bigoted' and 'racist'. Bunn describes Ward as,

“...one of the most racist settler commentators during the War of the Axe, [she] was particularly intrigued by the evidence of spilt blood. In one episode her outrage at supposed Xhosa atrocities is surpassed only by her anger at enemy warriors achieving command of the tactical heights above, “brandishing [a captured] sword on the top of the hill [1848:213].”⁵²

Letcher, in her thesis on Harriet Ward, in general, provides a meliorative examination of Ward's work and she suggests,

“What close examination of her texts reveals is that beneath the carefully cultivated persona is concealed a profoundly subversive sensibility, conscious of racial and gender-based injustices, and antagonistic to many aspects of patriarchal society and the colonial presence in South Africa.”⁵³

Letcher bases the above assessment predominantly on the two novels Ward wrote: *Helen Charteris* and *Jasper Lyle*. Ward wrote the latter novel in response to metropolitan interest in the Xhosa which had been kindled by the 8th Frontier War.⁵⁴ Letcher argues that the novels provide “an exploration of these

⁵⁰ Irwin wrote a number of letters to a Dr John Cowley who had a practice at Winslow in England. The letter is headed “Fort Peddie, Caffraria, March 16th 1844”. In *Africana Notes and News*, Vol 22, 4, December, 1976, p 136. An officer at the Cape, Sir John Hall, wrote in a letter to his fiancé: “Met Captain and Mrs Ward of the [91st] at Colonel Lindsay's, she is the authoress of some twelve papers on the Kaffir War, which have appeared in the Frontier Times. She is a chatty, pleasant woman, but rather romantic in her ideas.” In Mitra, *Life and Letters of Sir John Hall*. 1911, Longmans, London, pp 177, 178.

⁵¹ *Blackwood's Magazine*, Vol LXIV, 1848, p 163.

⁵² Bunn, ‘*Morbid Curiosities*’, *Transforming Anthropology*, Vol 8, Issue 1–2, 2008, p 42.

⁵³ Letcher, ‘*Harriet Ward: Trespassing Beyond the Borders*’, 1999, p 5.

⁵⁴ Van Wyk Smith, ‘*Romancing the Eastern Cape Frontier*’, 1997.

works leads to the discovery of Ward's unexpectedly subversive stance with regard to gender, the military, and imperialist politics."⁵⁵ Furthermore she states that, "Ward was troubled by the "imperialist project""and that "a careful reading of her writing will reveal this."⁵⁶ Letcher correctly identifies that texts subjected to post-colonial review often are undifferentiated and perhaps it is not politic to dismiss the entirety of Ward's work as an exemplar of bigotry. However, in this examination of Ward's 'non-fiction' writings: *Five years in Kaffirland* and *The Cape and the Kaffirs*, I have found that Ward provides very slight opposition to the colonial enterprise.⁵⁷ There are contradictions and inconsistencies in her work which are apparent in most of the campaign narratives of the Frontier Wars; however, with perhaps the notable exception of the convert to Christianity, Chief Kama, Ward demonstrates very little sympathetic imagination towards the Xhosa.⁵⁸ There is a thread of bitterness running through Ward's books which was particularly evident in her account of the 7th Frontier War. However, her criticism of the Xhosa was pervasive in both her volumes as evidenced in the following polemic about cattle theft:

"With regards to cattle stealing, there is much said about the innocent Kaffirs suffering for the guilty. Who thinks about the innocent settlers suffering, when their whole life is spent in industry, and when one neighbor assists another, alike in labour and misfortune? I would punish the Chief of any kraal in which is found cattle of which he can give no satisfactory account. The first offence should be visited with three months at the tread -mill, and the second at least with transportation for a certain period, or for life. In my opinion, no punishment could be too severe for such a crime as cattle stealing. "Oh my! how shocking!" cries the cambric-handkerchief philanthropist. I should like to put our philanthropists on what we call a "commando" here....Hang one Chief publically (shooting him in a kloof, like Hintza, would not go half as far...)"⁵⁹

The discussion concerning the 'cambric handkerchief philanthropists' will be expanded later in this chapter; but the quote suffices to demonstrate Ward's allegiances to a colonial project which supported the violent containment of the Xhosa. Ward's parenthesis concerning Hintza is particularly notable: the death of Hintza was controversial in the 1830s and Ward's opinion would have been considered intemperate by a number of her contemporaries. However, Ward's opinions also demonstrate the political license to espouse such a position against the Xhosa, made all the more permissible because of

⁵⁵ Letcher, *Harriet Ward: Trespassing Beyond the Borders*, 1999, p 5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1999, p 3.

⁵⁷ Van Wyk Smith suggests that, "Letcher claims that Ward's reportage on the war shows signs that she did not share the adversarial racism of the colonial military establishment on behalf of whom she was writing, but I must agree with Jenny de Reuck (1995) that it is hard to rescue Harriet Ward of *Five years in Kaffirland* from full complicity in the prejudices of the frontier. Indeed it is this virtually unqualified complicity that makes her subsequent productions so much more remarkable." Van Wyk Smith, *Romancing the Frontier*, 1997, p 5. In the latter quote, Van Wyk Smith emphasizes the contradictions within Ward's *oeuvre* in that subsequent works concerning the Cape, for instance, her novel, *Jasper Lyle*, Routledge, London, 1851 were far more sympathetic towards autochthonous peoples than *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol I and II*, 1848, 1849. My own sense is that she was sometimes more vituperative than soldiers on the 'frontline' in her non-fiction works.

⁵⁸ See Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol I*, 1848, pp 160, 167 for comments on the convert, 'Chief Kama'. She demonstrates some sympathy towards the 'Bushmen' and other allies of the British. However, frequently her detailed and subjective observations are disparaging, even of British 'allies'. For example, she refers to the Khoisan simultaneously as "the hideous aborigines of South Africa" and as "these unfortunate little beings". *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, pp 304, 305.

⁵⁹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol I*, 1848, pp 134, 135.

her 'eye witness' status which allowed her to invoke the 'truth' rather than 'distant imaginings'. Her statement also arraigns Lord Glenelg, the Whig Secretary of State of War and the Colonies in 1835, who wrote that the death of Hintza, described as the 'murder' of Hintza in Justus's narrative, was a deplorable offence against his person and the Xhosa people. In an extract from a dispatch Glenelg indicted Colonel Smith and Sir Benjamin D'Urban for their prevarications over the reasons concerning the death of Hintza. He wrote,

"After anxiously examining every word which has been written on the subject by Colonel Smith and yourself, I must avow that I am not satisfied either that this chieftain was the legitimate object of your military operations, or that his death admits of any satisfactory justification." ⁶⁰

Ward's attitude emerges as antithetical to Glenelg's 'anxious' position: she argues that Hintza's death was 'inappropriate' because it did not take the form of minatory public display. Hintza was thus responsible for the scandal that ensued and the Governor and Smith were presented as victims of misguided and sentimental persuasions emanating from the metropole and from the representatives of a small, 'liberal' colonial sector. Throughout their texts, Ward's and Napier's political colours were nailed to the mast: they both make frequent reference to the 'vigour' of Sir Harry Smith and Colonel Henry Somerset. Sir Benjamin D'Urban both received commendations in their volumes, primarily for their confrontational attitudes towards the Xhosa. ⁶¹ Both books display robust criticism of the 'Glenelg' approach to the Cape and, at times, fervent approbation of the expansionist ambitions of Sir Benjamin D'Urban and Sir Harry Smith. ⁶²

Edward Elers Napier

There were significant congruencies between the two authors under review: the most evident being the coincidence of time and place. Ward's and Napier's paths crossed socially at the Cape and Napier makes reference to the Wards in a letter written to his family during his stay at the Cape which was subsequently published in his *Excursions in Southern Africa*. He wrote,

"I have become acquainted here with Captain Ward, of the 91st Regiment, the husband of the lady who has written 'The Scenes in Kaffirland' in the United Service Magazine..." ⁶³

Lieutenant –Colonel Edward Elers Napier was on 'particular service' in the regular army during the 7th Frontier War. ⁶⁴ Napier was assigned with the specific task of commanding "bodies of irregular troops"

⁶⁰ Justus, *The Wrongs of the Caffre Nation*, James Duncan, London, 1837, p 226. The above quote is taken from an extract of a dispatch from Glenelg to D'Urban written on 26 December 1835.

⁶¹ Ward's *The Cape and the Kaffirs*, 1851, is dedicated to "My dear Colonel Somerset". Napier's *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, has an engraving of Sir Harry Smith preceding the title page.

⁶² Napier in *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, p 146, wrote that "...the Kaffirs will now, under the vigorous administration of Sir Harry Smith, be dealt with according to their deserts; and, should they give any further trouble.....they will as a just punishment for past, and a security against future offences – be driven, *en masse*, beyond the Kye."

⁶³ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, p 374.

⁶⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Edward Elers Napier adopted the name of Napier after his mother (the widow of Lieutenant Elers who died when Napier was seven years old) married Admiral Sir Charles Napier. Sir Charles Napier adopted her four children. Biographical information from: *Colburn's Monthly Magazine* Vol 40, 1894, Obituary of Napier.

comprising Khoikhoi, 'friendly Xhosa' and Mfengu levies.⁶⁵ Special Service or what was known as 'particular service' in the Victorian army denoted those officers or men who had been assigned by the army command to perform various duties such as the organization of transport and reconnaissance. In addition, these men were detached from their original regiments.⁶⁶ Like Harriet Ward, Napier was an established author before he arrived at the Cape and subsequently wrote two books based on his experiences in the Eastern Cape. The first, *Past and Future Emigration to the Cape* (1849) provided a historical and economic outline of the Cape and included a treatise on British emigration to the region. The latter publication was edited by Ward, who offered to shape it into a narrative more conducive to prospective British emigrants.⁶⁷ According to Napier, Ward offered "to modify, alter, and add to my production" to make the book more palatable to the general public and to include the topic of emigration to the Cape "...to increase in all probability, its interest with the public."⁶⁸ Napier was a prickly commentator and his remarks in the final chapter of *Excursions in Southern Africa* provide a sense of his attitude towards emigration to the Cape.⁶⁹ Ward, a far more enthusiastic proponent of Cape settlement, was eminently suited to her editorial role. Books on emigration were a lucrative publishing line and were prominent in the 1840s; a decade which was characterized by high unemployment in the metropole and which was infused with the Malthusian notions of the perils of over- population in industrialized countries such as England.⁷⁰

Napier evidently had a brush with his editors about his impulsiveness which he describes in the introduction to *Excursions in Southern Africa*; the account offers a rare insight into the predicaments of the 19th Century writer subjected to the vagaries of the metropolitan publishing machine. Napier provides a trace of how implicated a narrative is in its commercial potentialities, in the law and in the 'hoarse murmurings' of his publishers. He writes that he had "compiled a mass of evidence" about the Cape and that this accrual had "suffered numerous wrongs" at the hands of "unprincipled authors", that is, his publishers.⁷¹ In an effort "to prove the accuracy" of his 'evidence' he argues that he was:

"....most particular in referring to those authorities whence I derived my information; thus giving, in every instance, "chapter and verse" for what I advance....but the "truth" – naked and undisguised – was not – in these days of refinement and morality – deemed by the publishers a befitting exhibition for the public eye; the ominous words of "libel" (meaning unconcealed facts) of "extreme opinions," "unfitting exposures," &c., were hoarsely murmured in my ears; in short all such of the profession to whom I applied on the subject, declined to bring out

⁶⁵ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I and II*, 1849, 1850.

⁶⁶ See Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I*, 1849.

⁶⁷ Published by T C Newby, London, 1849.

⁶⁸ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I*, 1849, p vii.

⁶⁹ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, P 425. Napier writes in his final chapter: "...unless some very effectual means of protection be afforded to the Eastern Frontier, it will most certainly be entirely deserted by the British Settlers...and become a dead weight on our Government."

⁷⁰ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013, pp 41, 42. In the decade spanning the 1840s over 1.6 million people emigrated from Britain to colonial destinations and the United States. Darwin suggests that "...migration was also a business, and perhaps even a 'craze'. The 'idea' of migration as a road to self-betterment became increasingly popular." South Africa remained unpopular for most of the 19th Century. Even in the 1880s immigration figures to the Cape and Natal were small compared to those for the United States: about 89,000 people emigrated to the Cape and Natal and nearly 2.5 million opted for the United States.

⁷¹ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I*, 1849, p v.

my “Book of the Cape,” unless it were completely altered, softened down, and remodelled, so as to suit the “prevailing taste and sentiments of the day.”⁷²

Napier’s objections demonstrate how texts could be manipulated to conform to the requirements of an imagined public. The decisions could have been made in obeisance to prevailing liberal or humanitarian sentiments amongst the metropolitan reading public but an examination of the texts and the commentary generated about the two books does not reveal this as a primary motive. It would seem that the protection of contemporaneous ‘sentiments’ was more about shielding the sensitivities of certain colonial and metropolitan protagonists. There is little in either of the narratives to suggest that their readership would be disturbed by the febrile, negative representations of the Xhosa inserted in the texts. Instead, Napier’s editors might have considered him incautious in relation to politicians such as Glenelg and to certain authors who had written about the Cape and the Xhosa. Napier had harsh words to say about Dr John Philip and Thomas Pringle: Pringle had died in 1838 but Philip and his son-in-law John Fairbairn might have considered statements in Napier’s narrative as “unfitting disclosures”.

Ward was more cautious about naming authors and politicians in her volumes; a practice which was detected by one of her reviewers in *Blackwood’s Magazine* who wrote that,

“Mrs. Ward, too lady-like and well-bred to descend to personalities – save in the case of the Kaffirs, whom at times she does most lustily vituperate – contents herself with blaming acts without attacking individuals.”⁷³

Ward might have been more discreet in relation to ‘personalities’ but as a generally sympathetic reviewer points out her approach towards the Xhosa was often vituperative. Both their texts were constative: they spoke for the Xhosa in a manner that assumed familiarity and authority and their representations of the Xhosa conveyed a sense of “what could be said and what was recognized as the truth”.⁷⁴ As Young proposes, one of the major effects of colonialism was that the colonized had little recourse to protecting themselves in colonial texts: they were compelled to have people to speak for them whether from a Pringle-like perspective or from Ward’s position of disapprobation.⁷⁵ Certainly in the 1830s and 1840s, as has been discussed in former chapters, the Xhosa struggle against colonialism was not agonistic in the literary, Foucauldian sense: by and large it comprised physical displays of resistance which they combined with oral engagement and repartee.⁷⁶

Napier subsequently published a second book on the Cape, composed of two volumes, entitled *Excursions in Southern Africa* (1849 and 1850) and it is this book which will be the focus of discussion in

⁷² Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I*, 1849, pp v, vi. In his narrative, Napier singles out Thomas Pringle as: “in the class of writers before alluded to – as having by false statements respecting this part of the world so long misled the public...”

⁷³ *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1848. The reviewer was anonymous.

⁷⁴ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 1995, p 159.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1995.

⁷⁶ Foucault’s term ‘agonism’ (textual contestation) is relational: “...a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle, less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyses both sides than a permanent provocation.” From Foucault, *The Subject and Power*, 1982, p 790. Quoted in De Kock, *Metonymies of Lead*, in Van der Vlies, *Print, Text and Book Cultures in South Africa*, Wits University Press, 2012, p 57.

this chapter.⁷⁷ Although both Ward's and Napier's books had a 'military' context, they were also troped as travel narratives and included a number of features typical to the genre. For instance, we find tales of hunting (in Napier) and extensive observations by both authors concerning the inhabitants of the Eastern Cape. But they also diverged in certain key ways from more 'classical' military accounts. While both authors were part of the broader military establishment they presented perspectives on the enemy which differed in certain ways from campaign narratives. Ward, for obvious reasons, relied on her husband and other officers stationed at the Eastern Cape for information about the skirmishes that took place during the war. Napier was involved in minor campaigning during the war, along with the levies under his command, but he had not taken part in the major military events of the 7th Frontier War such as the Burns Hill attack and the battle of the Gwangqa. Napier arrived at the Cape 'frontier' subsequent to these events and his special service status meant that he was expected to concentrate on the training of levies and not take part in the general combat on the 'frontier'. Hence, ironically, much of Ward's and Napier's commentary on the war was not of the 'on the spot' variety and their discussions of the 7th Frontier War campaign were generally taken from fighting officers' reports and hearsay.

"The 'truth' – naked and undisguised" ⁷⁸

In this section I wish to discuss representations of the Xhosa which provided the metropolitan public with an image that was both 'convincing' and capable of disrupting 'preconceived' ideas of Xhosa and their maltreatment by the colonial government and the Cape settlers. Ward and Napier proposed to demonstrate that their reading public's notions of the Xhosa were antiquated and they used a number of strategies to 'shift' the position of their readers. In the main, their texts aspired to 'realism' and 'truth-telling' and this section will address how these tropes came to be used as literary tools to destabilize the Xhosa 'character' and to undermine their rights to habitation in the Eastern Cape. A number of texts predating Ward's and Napier's had devoted chapters, or in the case of Godlonton lengthy discourses, to the Xhosa.⁷⁹ Ward's narrative attempted to present a synchronous overview of the Xhosa. In her earlier chapters, Ward provides a history of the colonization of the Cape; however, most of the narrative pins down events to a specific time, as in *'Five Years'*, and ties them to a concrete location: *'Kaffirland'*. Ward's use of *'Kaffirland'* in her title is ironic in that the Xhosa are not presented in the narrative as autochthonous to the area, rather their access to land was construed as opportunistic and as decidedly harmful to their 'neighbours'. In her discussion of the reasons for 'Dutch' settlers' disaffection with the colonial government in the 1830s she proposed that,

⁷⁷ Ward seems to have been too assiduous in her editing role of *Past and Future Emigration*. Napier's post-South African publications were numerous and comprise *Past and Future Emigration, or the Book of the Cape*, 1849; *Excursions in Southern Africa, including a History of the Cape Colony, Vol I and II*, 1849, 1850. His additional publications include: *Scenes and Sports in Foreign Lands*, 1840; *Excursions Along the Shores of the Mediterranean*, 1842; *Wild Sports in Europe, Asia and Africa*, 1844; *Reminiscences of Syria, and the Holy Land*, 1847; *The Linesman* (a novel), 1856; *Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier*, 1862.

⁷⁸ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, p v.

⁷⁹ See Chapter on Godlonton. 'Liberal' accounts of the Xhosa can be found in Phillip's *Researches in South Africa*, 1828; Pringle's *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa*, Josiah Conder, London, 1835; Justus's *The Wrongs of the Caffre Nation*, 1837.

"The Hottentot, The Kaffir, or the Fingo, established himself where he pleased. He could not be ejected from the position he had taken up in the immediate neighbourhood of the settler, whose property he had injured or destroyed with impunity, since the state of such laws as existed was, to say the least, loose and inefficient." ⁸⁰

Ward also invoked the *terra nullius* doctrine in the frontier region in relation to the Xhosa: she acknowledged the Khoisan as 'indigenous' to the area but the implication was that the Xhosa had a slender claim to the territory. Later in her narrative she positioned the 'rightful' place of the Xhosa beyond the Keiskamma River:

"As long as we permit the Kaffir tribes to live and have their possessions on *this side of the Keiskamma*, [Ward's italics] we must look upon them as a people whom it is impossible to lead, or convince, at least in their present savage state. They must be *made* [her italics] to abide by the laws which policy has induced us to form, - laws which are now unavailing, not from malformation, but from the vacillation in the execution of them." ⁸¹

This passage raises issues around the 'frontier' and its elasticity as a concept. By the 1840s the Fish River was deemed to be far too close settler interests and, according to Ward, only a 'firm hand' could ensure that the Xhosa remained behind the more easterly boundary of the Keiskamma. Ward proposed, in this instance, the laws governing the movement of the Xhosa were not as 'loose' as they were in the 1830s; all they required was strict implementation. John Darwin in his authoritative survey of the British Empire attributes British 'vacillation' in the execution of policy to the reluctance of successive Governments to use "military power to advance the colonial frontier" in South Africa. ⁸² Darwin's thesis presents a broad sweep of the British 'empire project' and he argues that Britain in the 1830s and 1840s remained primarily concerned with European threats to its imperial aspirations. The Cape remained significant as an enclave on the trade route to India and as a means of containing other European hegemonic interests in Asia. Britain thus, at this stage, had minimal interest in extending its power into the South African northern interior and was ambivalent about extending their reach into the more easterly regions of the Cape. Darwin refers to the Cape Colony as the "weakest link" in the imperial chain; and it was construed as an Achilles' heel largely because of consistent and concerted resistance from autochthonous peoples. ⁸³ In addition, the British imperial reach depended on settler bridgeheads comprising 'colonial elites' who could induce settler control of the local economy to create viable territories and who could engage in expansionist practices. ⁸⁴ South Africa in the 1840s "as a (British) settler bridgehead was feeble" and the British emigrant population remained small until 1870s and 1880s. ⁸⁵ For most of the 19th Century, South Africa was viewed by successive British governments as a "hybrid region" composed of a resilient black communities and a divided Dutch and British settler population. ⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Volume I*, 1848, p 195.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1848, p 132.

⁸² Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013, p 35.

⁸³ Ibid., 2013, p 271

⁸⁴ Ibid., 2013, p 49. Ward was a proponent of a united 'white' settler population and frequently bemoaned British Governmental policy because it alienated the 'Dutch'.

⁸⁵ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013, p 51.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 2013, p 217.

Darwin's survey deflates the detailed, localized narratives that appeared in the 1830s and 1840s and offers a more realistic appraisal in that the Cape appears minor in the context of the global colossus of British interests. However, his thesis does raise the question why Ward, in particular, wrote about the colony with such intensity of detail and so obsessively about the Xhosa and their 'incursions' on the settler population, especially as the latter comprised such a 'feeble' bridgehead. Darwin's analysis explains, in part, why military writers often were disparaging about the Cape and why they considered it as unworthy of the conflict that ensued there.⁸⁷ Yet Ward insisted on the Cape settlers, both British and Dutch, as being worthy of protection and in fact it could have been the very tenuousness of the hold over the frontier region that instilled such vehemence.

Ward comes across as impassioned crusader for British presence in the territory and she, and her interlocutors, attempted to defend a settler cause which was vulnerable to the vagaries of British policy. The greater Eastern Cape's fragile position in the British 'world-system' provides insight into Ward's anxiety around the Xhosa, who were the 'enemy' not only of their military opponents but were deemed inimical to the fabric of settler existence. Successive frontier wars also were capable of undermining future schemes of British emigration and Ward's close reading of the colony attempts to convince the British reading public that the Cape was not a remote and inconsequential colonial wasteland but a place which could become 'productive': if only the Xhosa could be 'controlled' by a strong hand. Ward was consistent in this aspect: that forms of civil punishment needed to be augmented as the army alone was an insufficient force to discipline the Xhosa. Ward recognized the importance of civil as much as military violence to control, regulate and police the Xhosa. In so doing she directly opposed concurrent 'liberal' policies which concentrated more on persuasion rather than obvious coercion.

Furthermore, the Xhosa were required to be textually delineated in ways which presented them almost uniformly as subjects who should be viewed unsympathetic ally. Ward introduced a chapter entitled the "*Political history of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope*" with an apostrophe which encapsulated this view:

"From the far plains of Southern Africa – from the shady valleys – from the wooded banks of gliding streams and noisy torrents – from the dark recesses of the deep ravines – from the cultivated lands of the industrious settler – from the well-filled cattle fold of the idle and ferocious savage- from the smoky hut of the indolent Hottentot and from the tent and bivouac of the soldier - let the voice of truth be heard! Ye philanthropists – fallacious reasoners on subjects of which ye know nothing certain, who romanticize about savages and slavery till ye get entangled in a web of metaphysics of your own weaving, from which you have neither the power nor the courage to extricate yourselves – who would leave the savage in undisturbed possession of a vast tract of country as much in need of population as England is of the reverse."⁸⁸

I wish to dispel the impression that the British were 'reluctant' colonizers: they might have balked at expanding their Cape possessions in northerly and easterly directions but they were intent on maintaining the Cape as part of their domain and colonization forged ahead in the face of dissent. Indeed, Ward's narrative supports Cape gubernatorial opinion which was predicated on the assertion

⁸⁷ Napier was ambivalent in his narrative about the Cape as an emigration destination.

⁸⁸ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol I*, 1848, pp 27, 28.

that without “an inland paramountcy to impose order on all its warring communities” there could be no economic growth at the Cape and the ports along the coast would be perpetually under threat.⁸⁹ However, the British Government had neither the economic nor the political will to support a full scale invasion into the interior and even though various Governors attempted to ‘annex’ areas in the Eastern Cape, such as D’Urban’s Province of Adelaide in the 1830s, their attempts were frustrated by a metropolitan reluctance to extend their influence into these territories. So, in a De Certeauian sense the Cape ‘frontier’ emerged, for its reading public, as a ‘space’ and as an identifiable locality.⁹⁰

The declaration of ‘my long residence’ and her invocation of local knowledge formed major tropes in Ward’s journalistic project. While readers interested in colonial campaigns kept up with the war they also were becoming more familiar with a ‘private’ realm: the putative ‘culture’, character and diurnal patterns of the Xhosa, often referred to as ‘customs and habits’ in early Victorian texts. Ward’s ‘five years’ at the Cape meant that she could pose as an authority on both these domains. In both her volumes her narrative weight was placed upon the Xhosa.⁹¹ A glance at the chapter headings in the contents pages demonstrates that three chapters were dedicated specifically to the Xhosa in Volume I and the remaining chapters referred to various characteristics such as Xhosa ‘warfare’ and ‘cruelty’. In Volume II she commenced with a chapter on Xhosa ‘morality’ and she followed this with chapters containing information about the 7th Frontier War campaign. Ward’s narrative is one of the most sustained accounts of the Xhosa in the first half of the 19th Century and it is concomitantly one of the most consciously pro- settler accounts of the genre.⁹² In this regard she was perpetuating Godlonton’s ‘colonial’ insider knowledge but from the ‘outsider’ perspective of a metropolitan ‘lady’.

Why was Ward so intent on providing negative configurations of the Xhosa? The texts reveal the incorrigibility of the colonized ‘savage’; the inadequacies of contemporary ‘humanitarian’ narrative and the necessity for hard headed ‘realism’ to supersede humanitarianism. Part of her intention is not only to ‘expose’ the Xhosa as treacherous but also to berate the ‘friends’ of the Xhosa. In her narrative, the Xhosa were subject to a changing set of subject positions: they were no longer seen as victims of settler aggression, they were now the aggressors. She writes that:

“The result has been what everyone experienced in the Kaffir character ought to have anticipated. We have dealt too mercifully with the treacherous and cruel foe; cruel he is by nature; witness his brutality even among those of his own colour, nay his own blood. Some say he is not cowardly; it is certain he meets death at the last moment calmly, and he has a particular pride in bearing pain and annoyance at all times with apparent indifference. A Kaffir will not raise his hand to remove a fly from his face...”⁹³

Ward then proceeds to provide a particularly distasteful account of the thickness of the skin of Xhosa men. This passage is steeped in alterity and displays Ward’s racialization of the Xhosa in its worst form.

⁸⁹ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013.

⁹⁰ See chapter on landscape: Chapter 4; De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1988, p 117.

⁹¹ The narrative includes sub-categories such as: “Martial Law- Opening of the Second Campaign- Cattle Stealing- Snuff Swallowing- The Fashions of Kaffraria...” In *Five Years in Kaffirland, Volume II*, Chapter VII, 1849, p 183.

⁹² Napier’s *Excursions in Southern Africa*, 1849, 1850 was categorically unsympathetic towards the Xhosa but he also did not take to the settlers at the Cape.

⁹³ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol I*, 1848, p 127.

Even though Ward's publication predates Knox's *The Races of Man* which was published in 1850, as Young points out, "From the 1840s, the new racial theories based in comparative anatomy and craniometry in the United States, Britain and France endorsed the polygenetic alternative..."⁹⁴ Ward did not articulate this alternative explicitly in her text but she did veer uncomfortably towards a racialization of autochthonous people at the Cape. In addition, the Xhosa were made to appear atavistic and resistant to modernization in Ward's text. In spite of her espoused criticisms of political economy, Ward's narrative contains vestiges of this school of thought and she made attempts to shape the Xhosa into its prevailing ideas. In the 18th Century political economy was considered to be a philosophical construct and focused on the study of 'polities' or social matrices. By the early 19th Century the notion of the 'economy' was to become more privileged and political economy came to be associated much more broadly with the study of production, capital accumulation, buying and selling and the relationship of the economy to systems of government.⁹⁵ Issues around 'free trade' and state interventions such as taxation also became more central to its literature.⁹⁶ In her narrative, Ward made some grand claims about the influences of education and trade on the Xhosa even though she remained skeptical about the effects of evangelical influence on the Xhosa. She wrote:

"If, however, the missionaries fail generally in the one grand object of converting the Kaffirs and Fingoes to Christianity, many among them may be brought to some degree of civilization. Already those who have been prevailed upon to read (the difficulty lies in getting them to learn at all,) – are diligent, and thirst for knowledge; as they progress in this, their communion with Europeans becomes more intimate, gradually they may wish to be clothed, and this may be of consequence to our manufactories. Already the English blanket, greased till it becomes the colour of ochre, begins to supersede the skin kaross; and the common brown coverlid is another favourite drapery of the Kaffir."⁹⁷

Further into this chapter the Xhosa are set to work in an imagined capitalist economy:

"I have imagined that if some profitable employment were set on foot among them, it would have a beneficial effect; but I understand that wool-combing was tried, which would have added to their cattle flocks of sheep, besides promoting habits of industry; but this failed, – their idleness is incorrigible. What valuable exportation from this Colony would the article of wool have been, in exchange for commodities of British manufacture! As it is the principal articles of our manufacture coveted by them are fire-arms."⁹⁸

In the above passage, Cape missionaries were derided for their misguided and unsuccessful attempts at conversion but Ward conceded some stadial effects in that she suggested that social conditions, such as education, could lead to the 'progress' of the Xhosa. Her reasoning went that if certain conditions were met and if the Xhosa could be prevailed upon to be industrious, then free market principles and practices could reign in the Eastern Cape. However, Ward remained pessimistic: schemes introduced amongst the Xhosa such as the 'profitable employment' of wool-combing would inevitably 'fail' because of Xhosa 'idleness' and their 'irrational' attachment to cattle. Here she provides the amalgam of

⁹⁴ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 1995, p 11.

⁹⁵ Harvie and Matthew, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, 2000.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 2000.

⁹⁷ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848, p 123.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1848, p 124.

environmental variables and innate characteristics, common to the military cum travel narrative: societies are capable of progression but there are aspects, such as idleness, which are incontrovertible in this social cosmology and which will constitute inevitable stumbling blocks in attempts to 'civilize' the colonized. In this instance, she elides over the 'modernization' of the tactics and weaponry the Xhosa used in the 7th Frontier War: 'civilization' is only congruent with the demands of the commodity market and with an engagement in 'profitable employment'.⁹⁹ Ward introduces further considerations such as the ineffectuality of 'charity' and the folly of lenience: a feature common to *laissez faire* thinking. For too long she argues, the Xhosa have been 'petted' and this was a major reason for their unruliness: "We pet a Kaffir chief for doing his duty..."¹⁰⁰ In her view, compassion and charity were well-intentioned but at the end of the day they were futile as they vitiated productivity. This coincided with Ward's attitude towards Stockenström's 'treaty system' which she considered to be far too lenient towards the Xhosa:

"Now, it is well known, that by the Stockenström treaties the Colony has been ruined and the present war gradually brought on. The Stockenström treaties were a means of clogging the wheels of Government, and giving the Kaffirs every chance of escape from justice."¹⁰¹

There is no direct evidence that Ward had read the work of Harriet Martineau. However, there are confluences of opinion that lead to the speculation that Ward might have read Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832 – 1833).¹⁰² In the 1830s, Harriet Martineau wrote a series of allegories to convey the laws of 'classical political economy' which then underpinned *laissez faire* economics and industrial capitalism. *The Illustrations of Political Economy* aimed to appease the "growing unease of members of the middle and upper classes and the growing unrest of the laboring classes as they experienced the increasingly de-regulated and industrialized market economy."¹⁰³

In her parables, Martineau outlined the 'harm' that charity and compassion could induce amongst the impoverished. During this period, the only type of poor relief Martineau supported was a general education which she argued would lead to working class self-sufficiency. In a classic espousal of *laissez faire* principles, she argued that any other form of state support for the poor would result in making the working class indolent and over-reliant on handouts. She also supported the notion that charity would sink capital and that capital should be invested into schemes which would lead to the creation of employment. However, the 1840s characterized by the pauperization of the working classes and by

⁹⁹ Ward, however, does write later in her narrative about the extensive use of firearms by the Xhosa. Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol II, 1849, p 311.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1849, p 132.

¹⁰¹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848, pp 291, 292.

¹⁰² Freedgood, 'Banishing Panic, Harriet Martineau and the Popularization of Political Economy', *Victorian Studies*, Autumn, 1995, p 36. The monthly sale of Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* series was 10000 copies in 1834. The popularity of Martineau's series declined in the 1840s. There is another clue to Ward's knowledge of Martineau's work and that is to be found in her description of the Khoisan. Martineau's first narrative in the *Illustrations of Political Economy* is entitled "Life in the Wilds" an allegory set in South Africa which concerns a group of the Khoisan and an adversarial group of settlers. Martineau proposed that the 'Bushmen' were the original possessors of the country about the Cape and that their land had been expropriated by the Dutch and the British.

¹⁰³ Freedgood, 'Banishing Panic: Harriet Martineau and the Popularization of Political Economy', 1995, p 33.

social turbulence, saw an increasing acceptance of government intervention. Popular accounts of political economy such as Martineau's were superseded by a 'literature of reform' in the 1840s.¹⁰⁴

Ward had observed what she considered to be a wanton dismissal of the advantages of 'progress' and a rejection of unrestrained consumerism by the Xhosa. To some extent the failure of her pet theories led to the heightened anxiety and disillusionment evident in her texts. Ward entered the considerable risks of war and found little consolation in the Eastern Cape which proved to be a stygian and unpredictable place for a colonist and for the member of the regular army. For Napier, Ward's ally, the Cape was a place which evoked satire rather than optimism and the promise of a fresh start. However, even in the face of consternation, Ward remained consistent in her support for the Cape colony as an emigrant destination. One of her reviewers noted that, "...whilst blaming the administration of the country she finds the country itself fair and excellent and of great resource."¹⁰⁵ In her view, only a hegemonic British authority could provide the necessary security to the emigrant settler: this was to prove elusive to successive governors in relation to the Eastern Cape for at least thirty years.¹⁰⁶

Ward's narrative demonstrated a number of contradictions: she supported emigration to the Cape but she also included passages which would have deterred the most intrepid British immigrant to the Eastern Cape. In one instance, she provides a transcription of a conversation with a settler woman whose homestead outside Graham's Town had been attacked:

"We did not like to stay after that, Ma'am." Said she, "and we have been many months on Graham's Town. I am sure I don't think we are safe now...but we are ruined, and things can't get much worse, so we may as well take our chance."¹⁰⁷

The above vignette does little to promote emigration and, as a reinforcement of the passivity and pessimism redolent in this exchange, Ward writes: "...here was a picture of emigration, and within five miles of a garrison town!" The following extract from the 'Editor's Preface' to *Five Years in Kaffirland* suggests that,

"Of the great extent and importance of the British Possessions in Southern Africa, it would be superfluous to speak; and the resources and capabilities of the country offer great temptations to the emigrant. But, let us stop to inquire, what has been the condition of the Settler there for some years past? ...By day he has been robbed with impunity..."¹⁰⁸

This passage sums up some of the complications of Ward's narrative: because of British governmental mismanagement, philanthropic 'delusion' and 'soft' policy implementation it was possible for her to proclaim that the Cape was not always a safe destination for emigrants from Britain. However, it 'promised' to be a secure destination and it was on this assertion that much of Ward's writing rests. A reading of Ward's narrative demonstrates that Ward offered no coherent policy on the Xhosa: she

¹⁰⁴ Freedgood, *Banishing Panic: Harriet Martineau and the Popularization of Political Economy*, 1995, p 34. Martineau also changed her position on the 1840s and became more supportive of the "Poor Laws".

¹⁰⁵ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol LXIV, 1848, p 159.

¹⁰⁶ The 9th Frontier War started in 1879, about 32 years after the 7th Frontier War.

¹⁰⁷ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol II, 1849, p 145.

¹⁰⁸ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, Editor's Preface, 1848.

fluctuated between a policy of 'modernization' and a degree of assimilation and invocations of segregationist policy in which she insisted on the eviction of the Xhosa beyond the Keiskamma River; and at times even beyond the "Kye" River.¹⁰⁹

The reign of "humbug"

Swathes of Napier's narrative turn on his criticism of 'philanthropists' and in *Excursions in Southern Africa* he expostulated that,

"It is, however, to be hoped that the reign of "humbug" in this quarter at last comes to a close; that a deaf ear will henceforth be turned to the ravings of deluded or deluding philanthropists, and of interested intriguers."¹¹⁰

Ward augmented Napier's portrayal by suggesting that the 'pseudo- philanthropists' not only generated textual opacity of the 'real conditions' at the Cape, they also played a part in the incendiary tactics of the Xhosa:

"Then it was that the pseudo-philanthropists (to raise themselves in the estimation of their employers at home, and add to the incomes they received from the Missionary Societies,) fanned from its embers the flame which had been smothered, and sent forth the savage (so to speak,) armed with brand and assegai, upon their own countrymen, the colonists."¹¹¹

A marked feature of the 'realism', evinced by the form of empiricism espoused by Ward and Napier, was based on the contrast of their appraisals with what they perceived to be the vagaries, delusions and wishful thinking of the 'philanthropic' set at the Cape and beyond.¹¹² The fact that Ward and Napier both felt compelled to distance themselves from this shadowy convocation signifies that both authors recognized the presence of a category of 'humanitarianism' which continued into the 1840s. There could be no 'reign' of humbug unless there was at the very least a perceived hegemony of the 'pseudo-philanthropists'; hence the textual anxiety that escalated around attempts to dislodge them. Ward's and Napier's texts incorporated the idea that the British government and parts of the metropolitan audience still held lingering sympathies with the Xhosa and were ignorant of the 'true' position at the Cape.¹¹³ Ward writes that,

¹⁰⁹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, p 39. Stockenstrom's 'Treaty System' which was a perpetual thorn in settler flesh in the 1840s, was another *bête noir*. Ward writes: "His [Stockenstrom's] policy always has been and is still destructive to the interests of the colony, and until totally opposite measures shall be adopted, there will be no peace for the settlers, nor wholesome discipline for their savage neighbours."

¹¹⁰ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, p 144.

¹¹¹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol 1*, p 193.

¹¹² Despite editorial jitters, both Ward's and Napier's narratives did not always focus on individual characters. Instead their approach was polemical: so they textually grouped the 'philanthropists' to present a unified assemblage; an economy of structure which made it easier for them to assail their opponents.

¹¹³ British Governments came and went and formed coalitions with alarming rapidity in the 1840s. See Harvie and Matthew, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, 2000. However, the presence of both the pragmatist and the 'humanitarian' wings provided a block on the self-vaunting ambitions of some of the colonial players at the Cape such as Sir Harry Smith and pursued their associations with 'liberals' such as Sir Andries Stockenstrom until after the 8th Frontier War.

“Much mischief has ensued from the misrepresentations of affairs here [in the metropole] by interested persons, at such a distance it may be said, how are people to distinguish truth from fiction?” ¹¹⁴

Distance was indeed a factor and the narratives of Ward and Napier intended to narrow the expanse between the colony and the metropole. The supposition was that their readership was being deceived by the insinuations of the ‘deluding philanthropists’ and Ward’s sentiments found an echo in Napier’s criticism of British policy at the Cape in which he provides reasons why the enemy was not ‘crippled’ by the British in the 6th Frontier War of 1834:

“...from a shrinking dread of responsibility – from the fear of opposing the falsely-founded opinions of the “religious” British public – from the same mistaken deference to that morbid spirit of would-be philanthropy, emanating from Exeter Hall – which has so long pervaded the public feeling in England...and caused us to set at naught the lives of our fellow countrymen: soldiers, sailors and settlers, as compared with those of a set of, generally speaking, treacherous, blood thirsty, and ungrateful savages.” ¹¹⁵

So, Ward’s and Napier’s appraisals attempted to controvert ‘Exeter Hall’ opinions and the influence of evangelism and early 19th century philanthropy articulations about the Xhosa. ¹¹⁶ In their view, any ‘friend’ of the Xhosa was construed as the enemy of settler interests and an instigator bent on fuelling Xhosa bellicosity. ¹¹⁷ Such opinions could lead to a dilution of ‘Englishness’: sympathy with the Xhosa in any form would undermine the allegiance a British citizen should feel towards the British soldier and settler. About four years before Harriet Ward arrived at the Cape, a different picture of the Xhosa had been painted by ‘Justus’ in *The Wrongs of the Caffre Nation* which was published in London in 1837. The latter text provided an index of ‘humanitarian’ attitudes towards the Xhosa and much of its intention was to present an attack on certain colonial practices in the Eastern Cape. The ‘Preface’ suggests that not only were settlers culpable of dishonesty and land-grabbing they were also the ‘oppressors’ of the Xhosa:

“History, therefore, has in her annals of the British rule in South Africa to record all that is disgraceful, tragic and disheartening; it must be written against us, and never can be erased, that up to the present hour, we have been the scourge to the Aborigines, that we have at very great cost to ourselves, stretched out the arm of oppression against our neighbours, and with shameless dupery made dishonest treaties, which we have dishonestly broken and by sheer robbery seized on a vast extent of territory...which even now is thinly inhabited by a scanty population of unquiet settlers.” ¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848, p 97.

¹¹⁵ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol II, 1850, pp 144, 145.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 1850, p 425. ‘Exeter Hall’ appears as a generic for ‘liberalism’ in Napier’s writings. Later in his narrative he is more explicit and he refers to the “Aborigines Protection Society” in England which he proposed was attempting to “bias Sir Henry Pottinger against the colonists and in favour of the Kaffirs.”

¹¹⁷ Bank, *‘Of Native Skulls’*, 1997; Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996. Both authors argue that the Frontier Wars led to an increasing settler antagonism towards the Xhosa and the decline of the ‘humanitarian’ era. Although they consider the reasons for this antipathy to be multifactorial, their theses are a bit ‘Whiggish’ in their teleological conspectus. Colonization in the 1840s and 1850s was far too convoluted and to follow consecutive ‘steps’.

¹¹⁸ Justus, *The Wrongs of the Caffre Nation*, 1837, p iv. ‘Justus’ has been identified variously as Robert Beverley, John Philip and Lord Glenelg whose papers were cited in the book.

The Wrongs of the Caffre Nation was but one of a number of texts which espoused 'humanitarian' ideas in the 1830s and which sort to confront the British public with its ignominy and into an acknowledgment of their complicity in colonial atrocities against the Xhosa. Dr John Philip's *Researches in Southern Africa* and the prose publications of Thomas Pringle were identified by Napier as being part of this assemblage of texts. By association these works were considered by Napier to be both tendentious and obfuscatory, and he writes that,

"...it is no longer matter of surprise that the British government and British public should have been so long blinded and kept in the dark as to the real state of our relations with the Native Tribes of this part of the world..."

119

Napier is one of the few military narrators who provided references in his narrative and not only does he refer pejoratively to 'humanitarian' authors, he also turns to 'men on the ground' to substantiate his oppositional position towards the 'humanitarians'. For Napier, while the sphere of the philanthropist was slight and ephemeral, the 'weight' was on the side of 'experience' which rested on a form of 'hard headed' militarism:

"And yet, by some writers, it has been gravely asserted that the Kaffirs "are not a cruel and vindictive people!" Sir Harry Smith, however, whose long experience in Kaffirland entitles his opinion to some weight on this subject, says that self-interest and fear are the only motives which influence their conduct: "possessing the character natural to the uncivilized man, easily pleased, readily offended, cunning, avaricious, treacherous and vindictive....It is, nevertheless, in favour of such an amiable set of beings, that forbearance and conciliatory measures have been so long preached...."" 120

Napier also quoted D'Urban who in a letter to Glenelg in June 1836 identified "Dr Philip of the London Mission and his subordinate partisans, together with the baneful doctrines propagated by a Colonial publication" as being particularly mischievous. The publication was "edited by a relative and organ of the above-named reverend gentleman" 121 The 'colonial publication' referred to was John Fairbairn's *Commercial Advertiser* and Fairbairn was Philip's son-in-law. However, Napier's criticism of Fairbairn might have been dilatory: Keegan proposes that "there was no anti-war party to speak of in 1846-7, in sharp contrast to 1834-5." 122 He attributes this to the expansion of settler capital in the Eastern Cape which presented an enticement to Cape Town merchant houses to support settlers in the Eastern Cape. Fairbairn was part of this weather change and Keegan suggests that, "Nothing revealed the collapse of

¹¹⁹ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol II, 1850, p 163.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 1850, p 143. The above was quoted from an address made by Sir Harry Smith in Cape Town, 1837. Napier was prone to cite sources and in this instance he makes use of Chase's earlier narrative, *The Cape of Good Hope*, on pages 84 and 85. Chase wrote: "...in neglecting to curb certain intriguing demagogues and mischievous partisans in the Colony, who under the mask of philanthropy, tampered with the ignorant natives on the subject of their imaginary wrongs, and thus precipitated them upon their own countrymen, the unoffending settlers." Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope*, Pelham Richardson, London, 1843, p 151.

¹²¹ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol I, 1849, p 151.

¹²² Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, p 216.

humanitarianism as a political force more than John Fairbairn's desertion of the cause". Fairbairn, by the time of 7th Frontier War had become an "ardent militarist" and he wrote in October 1846: ¹²³

"...that the Xhosa had to be "put down or expelled, though it should require 10 000 troops to accomplish it...not victory but conquest is to be the end of this outbreak.""¹²⁴

Keegan attributes this *volte face* to Fairbairn's association with the South African Mutual Insurance Company, as "three quarters of its initial assets were invested in mortgages in the eastern districts". ¹²⁵ Keegan also suggests that Dr John Philip was a spent force by the mid- 1840s. ¹²⁶ So why did Ward and Napier pursue their course: were they ignorant of the shifts in colonial attitude towards the Xhosa? Was this an instance of a metropolitan lag? Ward and Napier were not that far off the mark in designating the 'philanthropists' as adversaries: in the 1840s British missionary societies were still influential. ¹²⁷ In addition, Napier generally used texts from the 1830s, and could have overlooked contemporary shifts in colonial opinion. Ward and Napier might have been unsympathetic observers of 'philanthropists' but they opposed a sizeable and influential constituency. Darwin writes that "by the later 1840s, the missionary societies had mapped out a vast field of operations...throughout the British domains. ¹²⁸ There were other features to their narratives: what defined a 'Christian' also formed a part of the rhetoric used on both sides. In the 1840s, the missionaries in the Eastern Cape presented a fragmented constituency and Ward would have encountered pro-settler missionaries, such as the Graham's Town Methodists, and she probably would have read the opinions of the 'pseudo-philanthropists', comprising London Missionary Society representatives such as Dr John Philip. ¹²⁹ in the 1830s, Philip had been concerned with the assimilation of polities such as the Xhosa and that they should become Christianized, British subjects:

"British protection should be extended over neighbouring peoples (he [Philip] had the Xhosa in mind), but they should become British subjects and their lands secured against settler incursion. Britain's true interest lay in fringing its borders with independent black nations sharing a common Christian civilization." ¹³⁰

However, as Justus points out, the policy of assimilation of the Xhosa into the British domain, albeit on the fringes of their territory, was characterized by brute force:

"But the Gonaquas and Caffres were both now to retire before the civilized and Christian foe; and to the amount of 20,000 souls were forcibly driven out of the country, leaving much of their cattle behind them, and all their huts

¹²³ Keegan, *Colonial South Africa* 1996, p 216.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 1996, p 216.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 1996, p 216.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1996, p 216.

¹²⁷ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013.

¹²⁸ In South Africa between 1838 and 1840, there were 85 mission stations. Ibid., 2013, pg 47.

¹²⁹ See Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 1996, pp 206, 207, who argues that Methodist missionaries had "a commitment to the conversion and civilising of the local Africans – in a way that complemented rather than challenged the interests of the settler economy."

¹³⁰ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 2013, p 47.

and villages in flames, in which incendiary work, as well as in trampling down the fields of corn, and the other crops of native culture, the troops were employed for several weeks together.”¹³¹

Yet a review of Ward’s narrative suggests that:

“Once more Kaffraria was to be ruled with the same mistaken leniency. But the meekness and gentleness of Christianity, Mrs Ward truly remarks are preached in vain to the Kaffir – why, indeed, should we expect them to be more operative with savages than with some more favoured races?”¹³²

In this exchange, we see a clash of interpretations around notions of Christianity found in Justus’s sarcasm about the “Christian foe” and Ward’s disapprobation of the ‘philanthropic’, evangelical variation of Christianity. Hofmeyr suggests that studies in book production of the 19th Century tend “to follow two separate analytical channels”: one is concerned with religious books and the other with secular publications. However, in this slight analysis of Ward’s writing, it would seem that it is perhaps not prudent to treat these two “arms....discretely”; for even publications as ‘secular’ as campaign narratives offered commentary around religious interpretation concerning the missionary project at the Cape and what it meant to be a “Christian’. By the 1840s, as we have seen, there was an increasing, unequivocal negativity against evangelistic notions of ‘Christianity’ and we find the discursive appearance of more ‘realistic’, if not more muscular, forms of ‘Christianity’. Ward’s narrative in particular presented itself as a ‘moral’ force. As a woman author she was also disabusing a male readership and the implication in some of her commentaries was that men who were ‘humanitarian’ were to be found, somewhat uncomfortably, on the side of the effete. It took a woman to tell a man how misguided his sympathies were towards the Xhosa and it took a woman to shame her readership into a reformulation of their attitudes towards the Xhosa.¹³³ In relation to the 7th Frontier War, Ward writes,

“As an Englishwoman, I grieve that I can give no record of success by British arms. I must, however, premise, that no other country but England would have treated a savage foe with such lenity, forbearance, and humanity as we have done. Had we not been guided by these truly British attributes, we might have conquered our unworthy enemy by annihilating him.”¹³⁴

In the same way as Justus and others attempted to prick their readers’ Christian consciences, Ward attempted to reveal the ‘cant’ espoused by a portion of the missionary sector to assist her readership in developing a more ‘astute’ perception of the Xhosa. The supposition in Ward’s quote is that her readership needs to be shocked out of their complacency: to be British might have signified leniency and toleration but such thinking was weak and threatened received notions of masculinity.

However, the narratives of the 1830s and 1840s which emanated from the humanitarian and anti-humanitarian perspectives did not constitute a dyad. Instead, the texts were deeply complicit, and here Ward’s text is emblematic, in that her narrative frequently invokes and exploits the humanitarian view

¹³¹ Justus, *The Wrongs of the Caffre Nation*, 1837, p 4.

¹³² *New Monthly Magazine*, Vol 83, 1848, p 254

¹³³ This is not my idea. See Freedgood, who makes a similar point about one of Harriet Martineau’s characters in Freedgood, *‘Banishing Panic’*, 1995, pp 43, 44.

¹³⁴ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol II, p 234.

as a means to demonstrate the need for a revocation of its notions. Thus, evidence of this suture in the texts, does not immediately lead to the assumption that 1840s narratives were indicative of a deep ideological fissure and a concomitant decline in the importance of humanitarian thinking. Instead, the texts and their metropolitan commentary placed the Xhosa in an interstitial position within their 'overlapping territories'.

Metropolitan commentary

Lyotard observes that ideas require a conduit to ensure their distribution¹³⁵ and Ward's and Napier's narratives held sufficient sway and in the late 1840s and early 1850s to result in their transportation from the fairly narrow domain of the military journal to popular, non- military journals and publications.

¹³⁶ Ward's and Napier's narratives were also used as references in publications as tangential as Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851).¹³⁷ In a private letter, Ward wrote about the 'hunger' of the public for news about the war:

"The book I bring out will be one of reference and history...I have no fear for the sale of the work."¹³⁸

She expected *Five Years in Kaffirland* to be popular and she claimed that, "England seems greedy now of any kind of information..."¹³⁹ Ward fed this interest into a number of publications and, in turn, periodical reviewers included her in their columns. Part of the 'greed' for information concerned the economy of warfare: the middle class public became more interested in the principal 'enemy' at the Cape because each frontier war led to the increased expenditure of tax payers' money. Ward recognizes this concern in her text and in this personification of Britain she wrote:

"Blind as she was, and deaf, till the war-cry roused her, and even this would have had, perhaps, little effect, if her treasury had not been compelled to open her strong box."¹⁴⁰

An article in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1848) which was edited by Harrison Ainsworth provides an overview of both Ward's and Napier's narratives of the Cape and the 7th Frontier War.¹⁴¹ The 'review' was written by an anonymous author, possibly Ainsworth himself, and it provides an exemplar of how metropolitan authors configured the Xhosa and how they accepted and extended Ward's and Napier's representations of the Xhosa:

"The Kaffir war has, according to every testimony, except that of a few mistaken philanthropists, been a very great mistake. The good men who argue the rights of savage aborigines in the luxurious twaddle of fashionable

¹³⁵ Lyotard, *The Post Modern Condition*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984.

¹³⁶ See *The New Monthly Magazine*, 1848 and *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1848. Also a lengthy article published in 1851 entitled "The Fate of Kaffirland" in *The New Monthly Magazine and Humorist*, Vol 93, 1851, edited by Harrison Ainsworth. "Mrs Ward" is one of the sources used in the article on p 271.

¹³⁷ Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, George Woodfall, London, 1851. I shall return to this publication later in the chapter.

¹³⁸ From Brenthurst Letter, 24, 24/12/1847. Quoted in Letcher, 'Trespassing the Boundaries', p 59.

¹³⁹ From Brenthurst Letter 7, April 1847. Quoted in Letcher, 'Trespassing the Boundaries', p 10.

¹⁴⁰ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol 2, 1849, p 231.

¹⁴¹ *The New Monthly Magazine and Humorist*, Harrison Ainsworth (Ed), Vol 83, 1848.

sentimentality, are too ready to sacrifice the interests of the hardworking colonists, or the lives of dutiful soldiery, to theories that can only live in the very hotbeds of civilization – where there is, in reality, a total ignorance of facts; and where the sense of justice is supplanted by a fallacious interest too easily awakened among those who are in search of sentimental impressions and excitement.”¹⁴²

Moreover the author echoes Ward’s proposition that the Xhosa were pernicious by suggesting that,

““The impudence of the Kaffirs, their intrusiveness, and begging habits, are what might be expected from the mistaken principles of concession and forbearance which it has been the fashion to show towards these restless thieves and reckless savages.”¹⁴³

The implication is that sentiment towards the Xhosa can only live in the overheated confines of the metropolitan middleclass and any sympathy directed towards them is reduced to a vagary of fashion. The article continues to expose philanthropic dupery:

“The missionary and the philanthropist has for years labored to depict to us the descendants of the Bedouin Arabs who people portions of Southern Africa under the name of Kaffirs or infidels... as an amiable, peaceful, innocent and patriarchal race. Lieutenant – Colonel E. Napier’s able papers, now publishing in this Magazine, must have done much towards disabusing the public mind on the score of what the gallant colonel justly calls “a mawkish affectation of feeling and philanthropy”. Mrs Ward’s excellent work will assist in rendering the truth still more familiar....”¹⁴⁴

This review is significant in that it draws the attention of the readership of the journal to Ward’s book and it also widens the number of people who come into contact with her ideas. The last sentence in the quote provides a telling allusion to the cumulative effect of narratives in the collation of imagery concerning the Xhosa. The insistent rehearsal of the corpus of ideas and attitudes representing the Xhosa attempted to persuade the metropolitan public into an abnegation of previously held sentiments. As ‘authorities’, Ward and Napier emanated from the correct class position: Napier is described as “gallant” and “able” and Ward “as a lady of distinguished literary attainments”. In addition, Ward is credited with being a dependable war correspondent as she remained ‘close’ to the scene of the war while accompanying her officer husband. According to the reviewer:

“...she provided a complete and faithful record of campaigns most honourable to those who were engaged in them, but most discreditable to those who originated them [the Xhosa], and to those at home who disregarded the losses which they entailed.”¹⁴⁵

The text presents an unambiguous allegiance between Eastern Cape settlers and the British public. British citizens at home are induced to become more sympathetic towards their fellow Britons on far-flung shores.¹⁴⁶ The article also intones that “English settlers in Southern Africa have been for years

¹⁴² *New Monthly Magazine*, Vol 83, 1848, p 251.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1848, p 252.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1848, p 252.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1848, p 252.

¹⁴⁶ There are concerns around the solidification of an ‘English’ identity in the review. So much so that one can detect a nascent jingoism.

openly robbed with impunity.”¹⁴⁷ The English alone were the victims: no mention is made of Cape Dutch grievances and the Xhosa, whose narrative position *qua* victim could have been reversed as in Justus’s monograph, were persistently discredited. In this reviewer’s eyes, the days of the ‘noble savage’ were long gone: there “...is not a greater political mistake than that of treating savages as refined, honourable, and highly civilized beings”.¹⁴⁸

Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine also published commentary on Ward’s Five Years in Kaffirland, but this time she was reviewed along with two other contemporary texts: Nicholson’s *The Cape and its Colonists* and Barnard’s: *A Three years’ Cruise in the Mozambique Channel, for the Suppression of the Slave Trade* all of which were published in 1848.¹⁴⁹ Nicholson’s narrative concentrated its efforts on the Cape as a British emigrant destination. This focus roused the anonymous author to make a series of observations on the need for emigration. Firstly, he notes, “It is always with fresh interest that we address ourselves to the perusal of books relating to Great Britain’s colonial possessions.”¹⁵⁰ This is followed by a Malthusian rationale for emigration to the colonies:

“In the presence of a rapidly augmenting population, and of the prodigious progress of steam and machinery, the question naturally suggests itself and more so in England than any other country - how employment and support shall be found for the additional millions of human beings with which a few years (judging the future from the past) will throng the surface of a country already densely and superabundantly populated?....We may assert without contradiction, that emigration is the simplest and most direct remedy...”¹⁵¹

The reviewer then proceeds to discuss the 7th Frontier War and, yet again, the ‘pseudo- philanthropists’ come under fire:

“The Kaffir war is, of course, a prominent subject in the three books before us. We find...most of it in Mrs. Ward’s volumes, which consist principally of details of that unsatisfactory contest....Here, again, is to be traced the hand and mischief-making tongue of the pseudo –philanthropists. By those tender-hearted gentry was the original impulse given to the series of changes which have done so much towards the ruin of a prosperous colony.....The Kaffirs were told of grievances they previously had never had dreamed of, they were rendered unsettled and dissatisfied (greedy and rapacious they already were), and at last they poured into the colony, sweeping off the flocks and herds, murdering the peaceable settler, and setting the flaming brand to his roof-tree.”¹⁵²

‘Unpatriotic’ settlers are also implicated in the ensuing colonial maelstrom:

“...they [the Xhosa] only waited till they should have sufficient muskets and cartridges. These they easily obtained; there was no lack of unpatriotic traders ready and willing to supply them. This done, the warwhoop was raised, and hostilities recommenced, - the Kaffirs confident of victory. There had been so much parleying and lawyers’-

¹⁴⁷ *New Monthly Magazine*, Vol 83, 1848, p 251.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 252, 253.

¹⁴⁹ *Blackwood’s Magazine, American Edition*, Scott, New York, August 1848. Blackwood’s started in 1817 and remained in publication until 1980. From the start it provided a ‘miscellany’ of articles ranging from gothic stories to articles by ‘radicals’ such as Shelley and Coleridge. Despite its Tory affiliations it practised a measure of political inclusivity.

¹⁵⁰ *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1848, p 158.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1848, p 158.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 1848, pp 163, 164.

work with them, threats had so often been uttered and so seldom carried out, that the savage heads had formed an immense idea of their own consequence and power.”¹⁵³

In the following passage the Xhosa are represented in a manner which appears more aligned to the popular broadsheet than a ‘family-oriented’ periodical:

“...it strikes us, when we contemplate, in one of Mrs. Ward’s illustrations, a parcel of naked monsters, more like Mexican apes than men, howling and capering, and hurling javelins at an advancing party of infantry.”¹⁵⁴

Most soldiers who took part in three Frontier Wars did not write like this; at least they did not express opinions such as this in the public domain. Life was tenuous on the ‘frontier’ and most soldiers writing about the wars tended to acknowledge their vulnerability while on campaign. Also, your enemy reflected your own fighting ability and if the opponent was brave, then you were equally so. So from a simplistic anthropocentric position an ‘honourable’ soldier would not be risking life and limb against a ‘Mexican ape’. I shall return to this issue in the following chapter.

Mayhew

The ramifications of the two narratives were intricate and there was a transposition of Ward’s and Napier’s texts to Henry Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851).¹⁵⁵ Mayhew’s intention behind the publication was to invoke the compassion of his readers for the London poor. He wrote that his readers should:

“...lay to heart the revelations we have made [about the poor]; and to perform this duty too long left unperformed – taking up the cause of the poor as that one, above all, which is divinely ordained as the noblest sacrifice of humanity...We are no Christians in deed while these things go unremedied”¹⁵⁶

Mayhew’s study demonstrated a strand of 19th Century journalism which featured ‘radical’ liberal metropolitan politics, sympathy for the indigent and calls for social change but concomitantly presented criticism of colonial projects and emigration schemes. In these terms, reform was to be rooted in Great Britain. This meant that frequently schemes to convert and ‘civilize’ the colonized were looked upon as preposterous and compassion for the ‘home-grown’ poor was not transferred to the colonized and more often than not autochthonous people in the colonies became the objects of classification and acute racialization. Many of Mayhew’s classifications of the ‘indigent’ now appear risible but, in the 1850s, one of his primary intentions was to counter the generalizations that beset the ‘working class’ and the ‘poor’ and to provide a more detailed and nuanced account of workers and of the vast ‘underclass’ present in London.¹⁵⁷ In Mayhew’s *Classification of the Workers and Non-Workers of Great Britain*, we find five categories under the rubric: “Those who will not work”: this multifarious body included vagrants, professional beggars, cheats, thieves and prostitutes. Each of these categories was further divided into

¹⁵³ *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1848, p 165.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1848, p 166.

¹⁵⁵ According to E.P. Thompson in *‘The Political Education of Edward Mayhew’*, 1967, p 42, Mayhew’s text “...contains the fullest and most vivid documentation of the economic and social problems, the customs, habits, grievances, and individual life experiences of the laboring people [of London]”.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 1967, p 42. Mayhew quoted in Thompson.

¹⁵⁷ Thompson, *The Political Education of Henry Mayhew*, *Victorian Studies*, Vol 11, No 1, 1967.

subcategories and in relation to the interests of this thesis the military appears in at least two of these: the first includes “*Professional beggars and their dependents*” and the second, “*Turnpike sailors, Spanish legion men &c and veterans*”. Under the heading “*Prostitutes and their dependents*” we find written next to category “A 4”: “*Sailors’ and soldiers’ women*”. This presents a bald representation of women who were involved with men in a military or naval capacity: by association they were ‘prostitutes’.¹⁵⁸ Officers’ wives are not let off the hook: they appear in the section designated: “C”: “*Cohabitant prostitutes: 5*”. The latter section is composed of, “Those who forfeit their income by marrying, as officers’ widows in receipt of pensions, and those who hold property only while unmarried.”¹⁵⁹

Thompson maintains that, “Mayhew’s claim to importance rests, in fact, upon the authenticity of his work as an observer and instigator.”¹⁶⁰ Ward and Napier presumably appealed to Mayhew because they too were reputed to possess qualities of observation and ‘objectivity’.¹⁶¹ Mayhew cited their texts under the improbable rubric of ‘*Prostitution*’ and then more specifically in a sub-section entitled: *Of Prostitution Among African Nations*. The latter enquiry into African women did not pertain to prostitution *per se*; rather the concern rested on the ‘condition of women’ in Africa and on imagined social relations between men and women. Xhosa women were not presented to readers as ‘prostitutes’; instead information about them was used to provide a ‘global’ context for indigent London women. Mayhew, drawing on Ward, proposed that Xhosa women were generally held to be virtuous. However, Khoikhoi women had a far more precarious status in Mayhew’s publication and here Napier was appealed to for his remarks on their ‘disreputable’ dispositions:

“It was remarked also in 1840 by Colonel Napier, who describes them [Khoikhoi women] as “proverbially unchaste... Indecency and lewdness are their characteristics, for though now accustomed to clothing, it is no uncommon thing for them, when drunk at their festivals, to strip naked and perform lascivious dances, to music of the rudest harmony, many among them appear to prostitute themselves readily to strangers; some from inclination, others for money, many for a gift of finery; but in what numbers this disreputable class exists we have no means of knowing.”¹⁶²

Mayhew conceded that a ‘superior order’ of Khoikhoi women was “...scattered among these degraded creatures, and many lively, intelligent well-conducted women have been observed by travelers.”¹⁶³ However, the Xhosa, despite or because of the recent war, were described as “...perhaps a more moral though a more ferocious people than the Hottentots. They are, indeed, superior in mental and physical characteristics, being more addicted to arms and less to debauch.”¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, within their polity,

¹⁵⁸ Ward, to her credit, writes about soldiers’ wives sympathetically.

¹⁵⁹ Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851.

¹⁶⁰ Thompson, ‘*The Political Education of Henry Mayhew*’, 1967, p 57.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 1967, p 57, Mayhew’s usage of Ward’s and Napier’s narratives was current as their books were published between 1848- 1850 and Mayhew published *London Labour* in 1851. This practice seems to be congruent with his accrual of information about the ‘poor’ in London: he often used ‘immediate’ methods such as the interview.

¹⁶² Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851, p 28.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 1851, p 28.

¹⁶⁴ Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851, p 58.

“...no professed class of prostitutes has been described...”¹⁶⁵ Mayhew evidently relied on Ward for this insight, for she had stated in her narrative that,

“It may be observed that the young girls of Kaffirland are brought up with strict notions of female propriety; to forfeit their reputation, is to entail on themselves severe punishment, and on their families perpetual disgrace.”¹⁶⁶

Xhosa women might have been ‘chaste’ but they were not deemed to be maternal: according to Mayhew, “...mothers possess less affection for their children than is observed even in the Australian savage.”¹⁶⁷ Ward again is cited as a reference. Women also no part of the British class system:

Mayhew’s inclusion of the marital and sexual relations of autochthonous Africans in his section on prostitution presents an example of baffling Victoriana. The ‘overview’ had a very slight introduction and for the 21st Century reader it is not always clear that the inclusion was for the purposes of analogy or whether it was intended as a source of mild titillation. However, it becomes evident that Mayhew was placing ‘prostitutes’ within a kind of Prichardian ‘natural history of woman’ in which he attempted to provide a generalized and global milieu for the ‘degraded position’ of indigent women /prostitutes in London. He writes that in Africa,

“...we meet with numerous tribes belonging to seven separate races of mankind: the Hottentot, the Kaffir, the Negro, the Moor, the Abyssinian, the Arab, and the Copts or descendants of the true Egyptian stock”¹⁶⁸

He also made use of imagined African communities to provide examples of disparities in social class and morality:

“Many degrees in the inferior scale of civilization are represented, from the uncouth Hottentots of the south to the wandering Arabs of the desert, in whose blameless lives we have the picture of original simplicity...As in our own, among other civilized states, the ratio of profligacy is greatest at the opposite poles of society – the wealthiest and the most indigent – so in Africa it is among the basest savages and among the most highly polished communities that immorality prevails to the greatest extent.”¹⁶⁹

These ‘races’ might have had a ‘variety of manners’ however, “...everywhere in Africa one circumstance is prominent: the degraded condition of the female sex.”¹⁷⁰ So, according to Mayhew, there were protean African communities but there was one constant: women were mistreated by men in their own communities. This was a well-worn trope in colonial writing: women were construed as degraded in, for example, Xhosa communities and this cultural ‘deficiency’ was often intended to demonstrate not only a paucity of moral values but also an inadequacy of ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’ in these societies.

Post –colonial criticism extends colonial objectification of women to a more pervasive ‘masculinist’ domination. Robert Young in *Colonial Desire* writes,

¹⁶⁵ Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851, p 59.

¹⁶⁶ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1848, pp 279, 280.

¹⁶⁷ Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851, p 59.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 1851, p 58.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 1851, p 58.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 1851, p 58.

"Spivak argues that taken always as an object of knowledge, by colonial and indigenous rulers who are as masculinist as each other, the subaltern woman is written about, argued about, even legislated for, but allowed no discursive position from which to speak for herself." ¹⁷¹

Hence the subaltern woman is subject to a "double colonization" in that she is subject to levels of alterity, and desire, by her colonizers but she is also rendered voiceless by her own 'masculinist' communities. ¹⁷² The position of South African women was the subject of debate by commentators in the mid-19th Century: earlier in the 19th Century, authors such as John Barrow and James Alexander had 'spoken for' South African women in their narratives of Southern Africa. Alexander provided a chapter on the Xhosa which included a stock description of women: they were "well-formed, and plump; their features regular and pleasing; and their teeth and eyes very good." ¹⁷³ This was followed by a more detailed description of their dress and their modesty: "the women are...studious to conceal their persons..." ¹⁷⁴

In Ward's volumes Xhosa women were presented in more complex ways. She was not averse to including negative commentary about Xhosa women but her most persistent observations concentrated on a 'community of women' who were deemed as 'disappointments'. In one instance she provides a vignette of 'Konky', a Xhosa chief's daughter:

"Even though a Kaffir may be brought up among Christians, from his youth, and accustomed to his dress by day and his bed by night, in manhood he will most joyfully return to his kraal, his kaross and his mat. The daughter of Cobus Congo (Konky) is a striking example of this. Educated in the house of an excellent missionary, taught the value of principle, Konky is now married to a chief who has many other wives; she wears the kaross, and rides an unsaddled horse, after the same fashion as her husband and his cortege." ¹⁷⁵

Konky might have been in a polygamous relationship but, despite herself, Ward has conveyed a measure of complexity in the description of "Konky": she independently has left the fold of the missionary, she rides a horse but she is also subject to social constraints. However, in Ward's narrative it is 'Konky's' apostasy that takes centre stage: it is used, tendentiously, to indicate the failure of missionary efforts in the Eastern Cape.

The "Clique of Living Clios"

The following account positions Harriet Ward within the context of metropolitan women authors in 1840s. The following commination is taken from a review of Mrs Forbes Bush's book, *Memoirs of the Queen of France*, by Francis Palgrave in the *Quarterly Review* of 1843: Forbes Bush is described as "a fair average specimen of the whole clique...of living Clios". ¹⁷⁶ Her reviewer then proceeds to lament the presence of 'literary ladies' in the sphere of publication:

¹⁷¹ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 1995, p 162.

¹⁷² Ibid., 1995, p 162.

¹⁷³ Alexander, *Excursions in Western Africa*, 1837, p 390.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 1837, p 391.

¹⁷⁵ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol I*, 1848, pp 122, 123.

¹⁷⁶ Maitzen, 'The Feminine Preserve', *Victorian Studies*, Spring, 1995, p 372. Palgrave, quoted in Maitzen, *Quarterly Review*, 71, 1843.

“...the confidence of the public is abused at present by literary ladies, who ought to be contented with marking pinafores and making pots of jam.”¹⁷⁷

Harriet Ward might well have been relegated to this dubious assemblage of Victorian muses but she defended her position as a writer proficiently and within the confines of a patriarchal, Victorian literary sphere she had a number of male adherents, not least of all Edward Napier, who acknowledged her authorial status in the introduction to *Excursions in Southern Africa*. He noted that:

“...my chief motive for abandoning the idea of writing a “History” of the Kaffir war of 1846 and 1847 was the circumstance of having already been forestalled in the undertaking, by one far more qualified than myself for so important a task. Mrs Ward’s “Five Years in Kaffirland” (which shortly ran through two editions) had appeared, and would have made my story “a twice-told tale.””¹⁷⁸

So Ward’s narrative was considered to be an uppercase ‘History’, at least by Napier, who went so far as to suggest his attempt at a campaign history of the 7th Frontier War would have proved otiose in the light of her contribution. Napier’s advocacy of Ward’s narrative relied on their political conjunctions and a shared alliance to the British army. As discussed, both authors asserted their presence in the discursive political domain by countering the influence of the ‘philanthropic set’ and by their generally unsympathetic representational delineations of the Xhosa. Ward certainly thought that she was writing a history of the Cape and the 7th Frontier War and she was confident enough of her abilities to note in her private correspondence that: “The book I bring out will be one of reference and history....I have no fear for the sale of the work.”¹⁷⁹ Letcher has demonstrated that the 7th Frontier War proved to be a catalyst in relation to Ward’s writing career and it undoubtedly provided breadth to her *oeuvre*.¹⁸⁰ Much of Ward’s narrative reprised scenes of the war which she based on officers’ dispatches and on Military Orders and in this regard her work did not differ markedly from male campaign writers. However, unlike masculinist campaign narratives, in which women were an indistinct category, Ward included depictions of soldiers’ wives, Khoikhoi and Xhosa women in her not always flattering panoply of representations.¹⁸¹ Ward’s account of Maqoma’s daughter, ‘Amakeya’ provides a noteworthy exception to these intermittently unsympathetic depictions.¹⁸² ‘Amakeya’ is described as “the beauty of Kaffirland”¹⁸³ and she clearly captured Ward’s imagination when she “made her way to the tent of Colonel Campbell” and offered ‘to sacrifice’ herself to him “if her father’s sentence of banishment might be rescinded.”¹⁸⁴ Ward’s remarks which follow this tale are favorable and she writes that ‘Amakeya’ “was guided by motives worthy a lofty cause (sic) – motives, how desecrated! How degraded! Poor

¹⁷⁷ Maitzen, *The Feminine Preserve*, 1995, p 372.

¹⁷⁸ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol II*, 1850, p viii.

¹⁷⁹ Brenthurst Letter 24/12/1847, quoted in Letcher, *Trespassing Beyond the Borders*, 1998, p 59.

¹⁸⁰ See Letcher, *Trespassing Beyond the Borders*, 1998, whose research unearthed more than 70 articles, reports and books written by Ward.

¹⁸¹ Ward often denigrated Khoikhoi and Xhosa women but she did manage to make some individuals, such as Macomo’s daughter ‘Amakeya’, more complex than the “black belles” portrayed in Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858. However, Ward referred censoriously to the fashionable fads of “sable belles” who held “certain fancies relative to their beads”. Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, pp 196, 197.

¹⁸² Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, pp 278 – 280.

¹⁸³ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, p 278.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1849, p 279.

Amakeya!”¹⁸⁵ Colonel Campbell did not accept her proposal and Ward writes that ‘Amakeya’ subsequently went into exile with her father.

To initiate this interrogation of Ward’s location as a women author within the mid- 19th Century publishing realm, I shall examine her narrative of the wreck of the *Abercrombie Robinson*: a significant and ill-fated moment in Ward’s life. The event is narrated in the first chapter of *Five Years in Kaffirland* and its position in the narrative provides a presentiment of Ward’s attitude to the Eastern Cape and to the 7th Frontier War. In a number of ways the experience of shipwreck delineated Ward’s existential anxieties around the Cape Colony.¹⁸⁶ In her account of the shipwreck Ward demonstrated an acceptance of the British class-based social hierarchy, the authority of the officer class and the imperatives of masculine discipline in times of crisis. These were themes that Ward returned to repeatedly in her narrative.

Both Ward’s and Napier’s books engaged with the subject of misadventure and their narratives were redolent with accounts of arduous journeys and the grievous problems of 19th Century travel: ill-health, discomfort, dirt and poor food. The ‘suffering traveller’ according to Carl Thompson formed an important constituent of the ‘Romantic imagination’ and a number of early 19th Century texts compared the category of ‘traveller’ disparagingly to that of the ‘tourist’.¹⁸⁷ In order to obtain the more elevated position of a ‘traveller’, one had to have suffered particular indignities and discomforts while travelling and one had to have accrued a form of existential insight as a result of these hardships. The colonial impetus of the 18th and 19th Centuries both informed and expanded the notion of the suffering traveller as a rich narrative tapestry of ‘romantic’ and perilous situations confronted travellers who traversed foreign countries inhabited by ‘unpredictable’ autochthonous peoples. The apogee of the ‘traveller’ was the ‘explorer’ whose intrepidity opened up new ‘frontiers’ and led to geographic ‘discoveries’.¹⁸⁸ Thompson’s construal of the ‘Romantic traveller’ holds some weight in relation to mid- 19th Century military narratives which presented themselves as noteworthy components of the travel genre mainly because campaigning provided abundant opportunities for ‘suffering’ and death was omnipresent. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the soldier was a more typical example of the ‘enforced’ traveller than the tourist; however, this did not preclude military narrators from applying the tropes of the suffering traveller.¹⁸⁹ In the *Preface to Five years in Kaffirland*, Ward’s editor writes:

“Thence she proceeded direct to the theatre of war in Kaffirland; and kept a Journal in which she noted down, from time to time, everything that passed under her own immediate observation, which she considered worthy of

¹⁸⁵ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, p 279.

¹⁸⁶ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, 2007, devotes a number of chapters to shipwreck narratives: one of which deals with existential themes while another examines the political themes which emanate from the dystopia of the shipwreck.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 2007.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 2007, p 32. The explorer was also seen as being at the pinnacle of the hierarchy that informed travel narratives.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 2007, p 32. The word ‘tourist’ dates from the 1780s and ‘tourism’ from the 1810s. ‘Tourism’ had an equivocal status from its inception. Thompson writes that there were various responses to the notion which was “a cultural phenomenon which struck some contemporaries as praiseworthy, others as regrettable.” Rank and file soldiers’ wives were also enforced travellers and certainly bore very little resemblance to tourists.

record, as well as whatever was related to her on unquestionable authority. It is from this Journal that she has written these volumes, in which she has recorded the great fatigues and privations endured by our gallant soldiers, and the unexampled difficulties and dangers with which they had to contend.”¹⁹⁰

Not only did the ‘gallant’ fighting forces experience privation, but according to her editor, Ward too experienced the rigours of the campaign. She is prefigured in the editorial preface of *Five Years in Kaffirland* as demonstrating:

“....in her own person an example of courage and fortitude under privation.... She is compared to Lady Sale in Afghanistan.”¹⁹¹

Even though they were both military wives, Lady Sale’s narrative differed markedly from Ward’s account of the 7th Frontier War in that Lady Sale’s publication was, by and large, a captivity narrative. Ward was never under direct attack from the Xhosa, although she did experience the anxieties of a feared attack on Graham’s Town. On the other hand, Ward endured the unpredictability and discomforts of a campaign and her ‘suffering’ provided her narrative with a gravitas which it would not have been acquired if Ward had managed to evade these ‘lived experiences’.

An event which must have presented itself as the epitome of suffering for Harriet Ward was the experience of being shipwrecked near Cape Town while a passenger on the troopship the *Abercrombie Robinson*. The shipwreck translated the trope of the suffering traveller into a reality and could only have added to Ward’s standing in the eyes of her readers.¹⁹² The *Abercrombie Robinson* was to stay anchored in the Cape harbor for five days whence it was to proceed to Port Elizabeth; therefore most of the passengers and crew, among them Harriet Ward, her husband and their daughter, remained on board. A party of officers went ashore to dine with the Governor of the Cape, Sir Peregrine Maitland; this party included the ship’s Agent, Lieutenant Black, who was to feature with some acclaim further into the narrative. With the departure of Black, the ship was placed under the command of the Master, John Young. That evening a strong wind arose and the sea became heavy. At about midnight the ship started to “shiver” and “tremble at every joint” and touched the sea bed “with some violence”.¹⁹³ The anchorage of the ship was deemed to be sufficiently strong by the ship’s crew and Harriet Ward, remarkably, went back to bed and fell asleep only to be woken by her husband who informed her that both anchor chains had snapped and that they were to make their way to the upper deck. She writes,

“I have no distinct recollection of all that happened for the first half hour of this awful intelligence. I remember hearing the water splashing about my cabin, and our little lamp swinging violently backwards and forwards. I

¹⁹⁰ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848, p vi.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 1848, p vi; Lady Sale, *A Journal of the Disasters in Affghanistan* (sic) 1841 – 2, John Murray, London, 1843. The publication is based on the journal of Lady Sale, wife of the British army officer Sir Robert Sale, which she kept in Afghanistan and which features an account of her experiences when she was captured and held hostage by Akbar Khan. She was imprisoned along with other British women, children and soldiers. She and the remaining captives were ‘rescued’ after nine months in 1842. Lady Sale died in Cape Town in 1853.

¹⁹² Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, 2007, p 60. Thompson, in relation to the Romantic period, writes that the “hapless voyager” was a “figure that fascinated a great many writers of the age.” This interest persisted well into the 19th Century and most readers had a ‘generic awareness’ of shipwreck narratives. .

¹⁹³ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol 1, 1848, p 12.

remember being dragged in unshod feet along the wet deck, up the storage hatchway, while my husband carried my child I can remember, too, her little voice issuing from my bed, into which she had crept to fasten on her warm boots, and begging me not to be frightened."

"How calm she is!" said I to my husband.

Poor thing!" he whispered, "she does not know her danger."

"Yes, I do," she answered, overhearing us; but mamma has often told me that God Almighty can take care of us if He pleases; and I keep saying that to myself, and then I am not half so frightened."¹⁹⁴

Part of the appeal of shipwreck narratives for readers was the multiplicity of inferences which could be drawn from the experience. Many shipwreck narratives had marked religious and didactic dimensions and in this instance Ward's child is identified with the trope of the innocent child whose fearlessness and youthful wisdom rested on her faith in a 'special' intervention by God. Providential intervention in Ward's narrative becomes explicable, and desirable, in relation to the trusting child who is worthy of redemption. As Thomson points out it is usually the 'good' who survive in the slavific portions of the shipwreck narratives, however, as we shall see, Ward's vignette of pale sentiment significantly did not include the children who drowned in the coincident wrecking of the *Waterloo*. Ward continues:

"I can remember when the water rose to my knees, being carried between decks with my child, through rows of shrieking women and silent soldiers."¹⁹⁵

At dawn, an archetypal moment, the ship seemed to steady and it was thought that that it had become lodged in the seabed. In fact, the ship had drifted perilously closer to the littoral which by then was crowded with spectators. According to Ward, "through God's mercy", and more mundanely through the physical effort and intrepidity of the crew, the ship was finally anchored. The first surf boat leaving the littoral brought Lieutenant Black back to the ship, an undoubted act of duty and bravery, and on his arrival, "our men gave nine hearty cheers, and in a few minutes we commenced our disembarkation; the women and children being lowered into the boats first: I waited for the third boat."¹⁹⁶ Ward proceeds to bestow an encomium on the officers and men of the regiments on board the ship:

"Such a noble example had been shown by the officers to their men, and its effects on the latter had been so important, that in spite of my anxiety to land, I felt unwilling to exhibit it by hurrying from the ship to the shore, and thus creating unnecessary fears among the poor uneducated women, whose terrors I had witnessed during the awful hours of the night. As I was carried between decks, I had been struck, in spite of my fears, with the scene that met my view there. Pale women with dishevelled hair, stretched themselves from their beds, wringing their hands, and imploring me to comfort them."¹⁹⁷

In her retrospective, self-dramatizing account, Ward was both comforter and 'noble example' to the women on board the ship: she waited her turn to board the lifeboats and did not take advantage of her

¹⁹⁴ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol 1, 1848, pp 13, 14.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 1848, p 14.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 1848, p 16. This privileging of the women and children predates the renowned Birkenhead decision of 1852.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 1848, p 16.

status as an officer's wife. In fact she conveyed a restraint which would have been construed as a necessary index of her 'breeding' and her status as a 'lady'. Ward also presented herself as an example to the 'poor uneducated women' in this instance, her conduct filtered into her role of officer's wife; a role in which she was obliged to display fortitude to the wives in the ranks. As will be discussed later, Ward was obliged to tread a thin line in her narrative: as well as providing a 'history' of a campaign, she had to convey the affective, 'womanly' attributes of compassion and maternal concern: an exclusion of these affects would have impinged on her credibility with her reading public.¹⁹⁸

As intimated above, the theme of Providence had serpentine byways in the subgenre of the shipwreck narrative. Ward's description of a convict ship, the *Waterloo*, which was wrecked on the same fatal day as the *Abercrombie Robinson*, provides an index of the homiletic purpose which informed many shipwreck narratives. The *Waterloo* was notably less sturdy than the troop ship on which Ward was a passenger: convict ships were notoriously unseaworthy but the *Abercrombie Robinson* "was a stout vessel and held well together."¹⁹⁹ Perhaps of more importance was the discipline and composure conveyed by the soldiers and crew on the *Abercrombie Robinson*, whereas, according to Ward's narrative, a very different picture emerged from the *Waterloo*.²⁰⁰ From the latter ship the sound of musketry rolled which "led us to believe that the convicts were mutinous."²⁰¹ Unlike the *Abercrombie Robinson*, which finally was stabilized near the estuary of the Salt River, the *Waterloo* collided violently against the Cape rocks. Not long after Ward and her family had been conveyed to land, the *Waterloo* parted in four different places and "200 unfortunate beings were precipitated into the raging surf."²⁰² Approximately 70 people survived the wreck and here Ward resorts to the topoi found in the lines of some of the more sensationalist shipwreck literature. The *Waterloo* passengers and crew were,

"....crushed between the falling spars; ghastly face gleamed up from the boiling waters with outstretched arms implored for help from the shore. Eyes, glazed with agony and despair, burst from their sockets as the rising heads of the sufferers got jammed between floating timbers; and mothers, with infants clinging to their bosoms, were washed off the rafts to which they vainly strove to cling..."²⁰³

Here at the most dramatic and appalling point of the narrative the 'eye-witness' trope which invested Ward's narrative tended to fragment. A page or so earlier, Ward had written, somewhat bathetically, that she had been carried off in a friend's carriage to a "charming villa in the neighborhood of Cape Town".²⁰⁴ She stated that from the carriage they could see the inverted flag on the *Waterloo*'s mast but the more graphic and immediate descriptions can only have been gleaned from other more proximate sources. I do not mean to undermine Ward's veracity, nor do I wish to suggest that her subsequent

¹⁹⁸ Maitzen, *The Feminine Preserve*, 1995.

¹⁹⁹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848, p 17.

²⁰⁰ The *Abercrombie Robinson* conveyed companies of the 27th Foot and the 91st Regiment and a small number of Cape Mounted Riflemen. The *Waterloo* also had a number of the 6th Foot on board, as well as a transportation of convicts.

²⁰¹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol 1, 1848, p 17.

²⁰² Ibid., 1848, p 18.

²⁰³ Ibid., 1848, pp 18, 19.

²⁰⁴ She states that "Had I dreamt of the awful calamity which afterwards befell our unfortunate neighbour, the *Waterloo*..." Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol 1, 1848, p 18.

narrative was appropriated from other sources. Ward most certainly experienced the horror of the shipwreck and the subsequent hardships of an army wife, however, the account above does provide a salutary reminder that as an on-the-spot observer she leaned fairly heavily on other witnesses: especially on British officers who informed her about military actions against the Xhosa.

As Thompson proposes, shipwreck narratives espoused both providential and political themes and in the case of the *Abercrombie Robinson*, Ward affirmed the incontrovertibility of British 'authority' and military order. She suggests that,

"Great praise was afterwards deservedly bestowed on our men for their steady conduct and ready obedience to the officers..... The real secret, however, can be traced to the example shown to them by their officers..."²⁰⁵

Thompson explores how shipwreck literature "returned repeatedly to issues of authority, insubordination, and mutiny...."²⁰⁶ Ward's narrative as can be deduced from the above quotes emphasized the imperatives of authority and order and the "ready obedience to the officers" by the men. One can safely infer that leanings towards mutiny would have been unsympathetically rendered by Ward. Ships were frequently used metaphorically to signify "emblems of the Social State" and Romantic readings of shipwrecks inflected the meaning of shipwrecks in a number of ways. Shipwreck narratives could assert the authority of the state or, and these emanated from more 'liberal' commentators, they could include reflections and evaluations of the crew's responses to the shipwreck and the legitimacy of mutiny.²⁰⁷ Ward is clear that all those on the *Abercrombie* survived because the soldiers followed the example of their officers and their obedience was rewarded. There is an inference in Ward's texts that convicts, as law-breakers, were less worthy of survival for while there was order on the troopship all was chaos and death on the *Waterloo*. In her narrative Ward combined notions of Providence and human discipline both of which she deemed as instrumental in the salvation of the ship's company and the passengers. Thompson's study focuses on the early 19th Century Romantic period, but the form and content of shipwreck narrative demonstrated a notable resilience and allusions to Providence and political commentary concerning social order continued into well into the 1840s. A further theme that emerges from this fragment of maritime calamity is that Providence smiles on the disciplined. Thompson writes that:

"....it was still very common, in all accounts of misadventure in this period for writers to try to find some means of explicating all such sufferings, providentially, that is to say, to find evidence of the guiding hand of God in the midst of the travelers travails, and thus to offer a consoling sense of there being some larger purpose or justice inherent in the disaster. And this explicatory framework, which typically entailed the use of a well-established repertoire of stylistic features..."²⁰⁸

Ward was not free from the power of such explications. She too included the generic scriptural allusions which threw a mantle over countless shipwreck narratives. She writes retrospectively that:

²⁰⁵ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol 1, 1848, pp 19, 20.

²⁰⁶ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, 2005, p 107.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 2005, p 107.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 2005, pp 63, 64.

"She [the *Abercrombie Robinson*] now lies a wreck upon the sands of Africa, a true type of the littleness of man's work, and the power of Him who "blew with His winds and they were scattered.""²⁰⁹

Further on Ward proposes that,

"In cases of shipwreck, the Captain is frequently blamed for what he cannot help, for what in fact is a visitation of the Almighty."²¹⁰

Providence spared Ward but not her possessions: this was a material blow as she and her husband were not wealthy and her frequent appeals to her publishers for imbursement testify to this. She was profoundly marked by the experience but it also meant that she could project herself as the hapless traveler who had survived to tell the tale of 'Kaffirland' and, on top of it, with great 'fortitude' and 'vigour'. She could tell the tale in a mode that, putatively, was untrammelled by preconception: Ward arrived in the Eastern Cape metaphorically 'bare'. Standing forlorn and empty-handed on the shore she demonstrated, to her readers, her British 'backbone' by meeting head on her new residence at the Cape and by conveying its truths in a form which was 'naked and undisguised' especially in relation to the misconduct of 'philanthropy'. As we have seen in this chapter a reading of Ward's volumes reveals that these assertions of 'truth' did not always square up to the tendentious aspects of Ward's work. However, for the interests of this discussion, we find that many of the tropes which were present in the 'small' narrative of the shipwreck were sustained throughout her two volumes on the frontier war. Ward's narrative is authoritative because it depicts events which in the very thick of the calamity inexorably point to the importance of maintaining social hierarchies. These were themes that were sustained throughout her narrative of the Frontier Wars and they bore down heavily on the Xhosa who were represented as lacking discipline and obedience and who would not or could not be providentially 'saved' because they were simply too 'unruly'.

Gendered differentiations also appear in her account of the shipwreck: the men are silent and ordered, the women were 'shrieking'. These women, mainly soldiers' wives, and unlike Ward, lacked the education and 'breeding' to show restraint in the face of disaster. Ward is not consistent in her appraisal of women, but generally she writes sympathetically, if somewhat patronizingly, about the women in 'our regiment'. However, she does convey in her criticism of British Governmental army policy some sympathy with the ranks; the coterie of 'cambric pocket handkerchiefs' stood accused of neglecting the interests of soldiers and their wives. In a passage in which Ward criticized the poor compensation offered to soldiers on the *Abercrombie Robinson*, she wrote:

"As for the officers' baggage, who cares about that? They will get remunerated for about one-fourth of their legal losses; as for the soldiers who cares about them, or for their wives and children? (a certain number of the former being permitted to each company to wash for the men.) They are never taken into consideration at all; the cambric pocket-handkerchief society has never admitted them to be legitimate objects of compassion: like the gypsies, I suppose, it is imagined that, "their own people" will assist them in their difficulties and misfortunes."²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848, p 3.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 1848, pp 23, 24.

²¹¹ Ibid., 1848, pp 73, 74.

A number of women writers of the 19th Century have been considered in the light of recent historiography which has focused on the identity of women travellers. Some authors have suggested that because of their subject status in society women travellers had the ability to regard the colonial process and the colonized subject with more perception and, at times, with more compassion.²¹² Bird suggests that women's travel writing had the potential to 'transcend' masculine imperial institutions and did not always reflect the, male, strictures of official, colonial policy -making. Although many women authors espoused contemporary ideologies of racial and cultural superiority, the relative informality and the 'decentralization' of women's writing had the capacity to contest at least some aspects of these ideologies.²¹³ This insight seems to me to be blunted in the case of Ward who was often more scathing about indigenous peoples at the Cape than some of her male contemporaries. The 'transcendence' of imperial participation and affiliation that Bird refers to is perhaps more appropriate to the context of 'vagabondage': a central notion in Bird's thesis. 'Vagabondage' implies that there are few 'fixed itineraries' attached to the travelling experience and the concept privileges an "internal process of identity construction."²¹⁴ So expressions of individuality, non- conformity and cross-dressing are all possible subjects for the 'vagabondage' study. Bird also makes the point that 'vagabondage' did not present a "universal feminist rallying point – rather a personal quest for a less restrictive gender identity."²¹⁵ The latter could be applied more successfully to the writing of Ward: she exerted her individuality as a writer, and her contemporary reviewers attest to this, and she alluded to the freedom of movement allowed by a colonial context. But Deleuzeian notions of the coalescence of motion and identity are not consistently applicable to Ward who could make sorties into the countryside on horseback accompanied by a troop of 'guards' but she was also a traveller confined by the fixed itinerary of the British regiment.

As Mills suggests in her 'materialist' analysis of women travellers, it is not useful to argue that "British women had imposed on them spatial confinement, thus assuming that British males had complete freedom of movement."²¹⁶ Instead, she suggests that a variety of 'spatial frameworks' operated for men and women in the colony. Class differences, manifested as rank in the army, were acute and Ward had more freedom of movement as the wife of an officer than a man had in the ranks. Ward's social class offered her access to colonial outposts and provided a conduit to officers' reports and their insights into the Eastern Cape campaign. As discussed above, Ward's status as a middle class woman in the male dominated sphere of the military narrative did not seem to have worked against her. She was able to articulate her politics with the support of her publisher and various commentators in middle class periodicals. Many women authors in the 1840s faced barriers to their writing careers and, the 'institutions of publication' should be examined to try to understand the exclusion, and the inclusion, of women authors from publishers' lists.²¹⁷ It would seem that significant numbers of women authors were included in the institutions of travel publication in the 1840s. An examination of Colburn's

²¹² Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, p 6.

²¹³ Ibid., 2012, pp 6, 7.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 2012, p 3.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 2012, p 1.

²¹⁶ Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, 2005, p 27.

²¹⁷ Shaffer, *Women and the Bush*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

publication lists at the back of Ward's *Five Years in Kaffirland* (1848) demonstrates the significant numbers of publications by women: of twenty-one volumes in the publisher's lists, which comprised travel narratives, compilations of letters and memoirs, more than half of the authors were women.²¹⁸ Maitzen suggests that it was often subject matter and authorial status which led to constraints on women rather than their presence as writers per se, particularly in the genres of travel writing and the memoir.²¹⁹ In general women authors who aspired to be 'historians' did not reach the heights of the 'canon' and were confined to the less celebrated genres. Ward would possibly have been constructed as a 'Clio' by reviewers, whereas her contemporary, Lord Macaulay, was the 'true' historian. As Maitzen suggests, women writers in the 19th century have been largely relegated to the status of novel writers but they also engaged in non-fiction writing and there were a number of women, such as Harriet Martineau,

"...who sought to appropriate the public, didactic, and politically- charged role of the historian. Their work ranged from the grand sweep of politics to the minutiae of everyday life..."²²⁰

The most productive arena for women writers of history was in the genre of the historical biography which "proliferated in the early and mid- Victorian decades".²²¹ A significant group of Victorian women authors dominated a form of 'social history' in the 1840s which was expressed through the genre of the 'life' or the 'memoir'. Memoirs showed "the private aspect of public affairs..." and

"...because of their overt focus on women they uncover the gender inflections of the turn to social history. They [the Clios] offer their books as supplements to the historical master-narratives in which both women and the women's sphere are either invisible or marginal, and they vigorously assert a feminine presence in history, while at the same time relying on a theoretical model that negates the disruptive potential of this revisionist practice."²²²

Many women authors, Ward included, did not adopt an overtly 'disruptive' position nor did they take the part of the underdog: their narratives were far more concerned with princesses than paupers. The majority of Victorian women historians adapted their work to comply with the presuppositions and 'cultural pressures' which existed around gender roles. To avoid a transgression of the boundaries of historical discourse, women writers often cited a nameless assemblage of historians as authorities, as in the following reference: "Nitcris, Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia, is spoken of by historians..."²²³ As Maitzen points out, this evasion allowed women authors to distance themselves from the historical

²¹⁸ This clearly does not stretch to anything approximating an empirical study. The lists contained the works of twelve women authors. Some of the titles in the list are dubious to our eyes: for example, *Women and Her Master* by Lady Morgan. Other titles allude to the increasing number of travel books written by women: *Travel and Travellers* by Mrs Trollope; *A Winter in Italy* by Mrs Ashton Yates; *Memoirs of the Babylonian Princess* by Maria Theresa Asmar, Daughter of Emir Adallah Asmar. Patriarchal associations seem to have been indispensable in the 1840s and hint that the social status of women writers was uncertain. Nearly all the authors were entitled 'Mrs' or 'the Daughter of'. However, the list of books also demonstrates that travel writing and memoirs were genres that were appropriate to the female domain.

²¹⁹ Maitzen, *'The Feminine Preserve'*, 1995.

²²⁰ Ibid., 1995, p 371.

²²¹ Ibid., 1995, p 371.

²²² Ibid., 1995.

²²³ Ibid., 1995, p 374.

canon but it also provided them with the opportunity to 'appropriate' its authority.²²⁴ Women authors of historical works might have been considered lightweight but the 1840s saw a historiographical 'turn' towards a type of 'social' or 'cultural' history which found an expression in Macaulay's *History of England*. He wrote that his history intended:

"...to relate the history of the people as well as the history of government....and not pass by and neglect even the revolutions which have taken place in dress, furniture, repasts and public amusement."²²⁵

Despite this turn towards the mundane, historical biographies continued to be considered by a number of critics as 'gossipy' and remained differentiated from 'serious' histories which focused on government, diplomacy, war and politics. Historical biographies depended on the importance of the concrete and on details such as diet, dress educational and manners: in effect they reflected the private realm. What is of significance for this study is that there were certain congruencies between these 'social' histories and the ethnographic accounts of indigenous South Africans, as these too addressed social 'manners and habits' albeit in an 'exotic' locale. Not only did Ward's narrative hold an uneasy position between the 'memoir' and a campaign history, she was positioned by one reviewer in an epicene authorial category. The following quote offers a revealing insight into what was seen to constitute a female author:

"Mrs Ward writes like a man. We mean this in no uncomplimentary sense; on the contrary. Her clear, natural and lively style, has a masculine vigour and concision; her opinions are bold and decided. To those she emits upon the subject of the colony and its prospects, we are inclined to attach considerable weight. Women are keen observers, and Mrs Ward is evidently no ordinary woman, but a person of great energy and penetration....A soldier's daughter and wife- a life of change, hardship and danger, has quickened her perceptions and ripened her judgment."²²⁶

So, on one level, Ward could be compared to male campaign writers and was considered by her editor as someone who could contravene, at least some discursive boundaries. Ward herself wrote, "But women must cease to be fine ladies in Africa."²²⁷ The attribution of 'masculinity' is pertinent to Ward's narrative: she provides political commentary and her descriptions of campaigning are robust and more often than not pervaded by the violence inherent to the colonial project. She frequently used the reports and dispatches from officers to provide depictions of the campaign which did not differ significantly from military narratives. As is furnished by the following example:

"On the 23rd, men and horses began to fail in strength, for want of provision; and, tired and famished, the troops had to fight their way, as the enemy fired from every ambuscade along the line of march: horses and cattle dropping fast. After sunset, they were again beset by savages, whose fires were visible from the bivouac. Lying in a circle round the cattle, little rest could be obtained; the Kaffirs shouted and yelled as usual, saying they now had the Umlunghi "in a calabash""²²⁸

²²⁴ Maitzen, *The Feminine Preserve*, 1995, p 374.

²²⁵ Ibid., 1995, p 284; Macaulay, *History of England, Vol I*, London, Longman, 1849, p 10.

²²⁶ *Blackwood's Magazine*, Vol LXIV, 1848, p 168.

²²⁷ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, p 300.

²²⁸ Ibid., 1849, p 7.

Mills writes that in the realm of the travel narrative, “women travelled as honorary men”.²²⁹ This ‘independence’ was seen to be marked in the colonies, yet concurrently there was considerable anxiety around the delineations of the women traveller and around the demarcations of status and respectability. There are instances when Ward retreats from her ‘masculine’ narrative voice, despite her confident descriptions of skirmishes and campaigning, and turns to claims such as: “I have only hearsay evidence”.²³⁰ In some instances, she also evades the role of political commentator and reverts to her persona of the ‘fact-finder’:

“I have so great a dislike, as a women, to touch on what ought to be done anywhere, that I feel a great reluctance to speak of public matters connected with this colony; but I have always found, that a statements of facts, from which my readers may draw their own inferences, has more weight than an individual opinion...”²³¹

Maitzen suggests that women biographers tended to minimize “their challenge to patriarchy by showing that their subjects contributed to history in acceptably female ways.”²³² The Preface to Ward’s volumes provides an index of this “minimization of challenge to patriarchy”. Her editor assures readers that Ward had not lost the feminine virtues of emotion nor had she evaded her wifely and maternal role. He writes:

“Our authoress, moreover, endured perpetual anxiety of mind on account of those who were dear to her.”²³³

Ward was acutely aware of her status and respectability as an officer’s wife. In general, the army was not viewed as a respectable institution by the 19th Century public. Officers’ wives were obviously in a different category and as Holmes points out “officers were expected to marry ladies.”²³⁴ There were, however, lingering suspicions in relation to women and the army: these assumptions frequently were class-based as working class, and sometimes destitute, women tended to marry soldiers. Once women married into a regiment they were subjected to the most acute constraints:

“....regimental women were also subjected to discipline and, up until 1816, it was permissible to inflict corporal punishment upon women attached to regiments. There were also stringent social mores within the army structure. It was considered an offence for officers to set up dalliances with soldiers’ wives as this was seen as “a breach of trust, and second, because it demeaned the officer’s status.”²³⁵

The number of women allowed to marry men in regiments was restricted to four to twelve percent of the strength of the regiment. If they formed part of the married roll they were allowed certain concessions and were permitted to sleep in the barracks and take on certain remunerable duties such as laundry and cooking. Wives who were ‘off-strength’ were not allowed to sleep in the barracks nor could they accompany their husbands when the regiment was deployed abroad. The number of married women accompanying the regiment when sent on duty to far -flung destinations such as India and South

²²⁹ Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, 2005, p 37.

²³⁰ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol II*, 1849, p 99.

²³¹ Ibid., 1849, pp 96, 97.

²³² Maitzen, *‘The Feminine Preserve’*, 1995, p 381.

²³³ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland, Vol I*, 1848, p vi.

²³⁴ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001, p 298.

²³⁵ Ibid., 2001, p 296.

Africa was determined by ballot. Women, with their children in tow, surrounded the ballot box into which slips of paper with the providential signifiers of “to go” or “not to go” were placed. The ballot usually took place the night before embarkation or on the day the ship embarked. In the first part of the 1800s, the number of women allowed ‘to go’ was confined to six percent of wives: which amounted to “six women per company of hundred men”.²³⁶ This practice continued until the Crimean War (1853 - 1856) after which women were no longer allowed to accompany regiments sent to war.²³⁷

There were persisting prejudices against women attached to the army in the 19th Century and these were compounded by the stigma of prostitution, a practice which was closely associated with the army. Garrisons inevitably attracted prostitutes and women were termed ‘wrens’ which was a reference to the women who camped around the camp in makeshift shelters.²³⁸ Despite social disapprobation and hardship, most women preferred to accompany their husbands and to face a campaign in an alien country rather than being abandoned to the social and financial insecurities which would have beset them at ‘home’. Even officers’ wives, such as Harriet Ward, had to contend with certain restrictions: officers had to obtain the permission of their commanding officer if they wished to marry and officers also had to be a certain age and to have some seniority in the regiment. However, officers’ wives were not subject to quotas and could, if they wished, accompany their husbands on foreign duty.²³⁹ Ward is generally silent about other officers’ wives; when she writes about women in the army her sympathetic imagination is directed towards women who were below her in social status. Ward is at her best in the portions of the narrative in which she attempts to dispel some of the prejudice directed against soldiers’ wives. Ward provided a ‘female’ voice in her narrative, but intermittently. She had a range of voices: she wrote a campaign narrative and she was a campaigner of a different stripe in that she supported army reform. Within her gendered confines, she had the dispensation to write about other women sympathetically, even sentimentally, she could pronounce on colonial politics. Most 19th Century women travellers demonstrated dominant ruling class views regarding race and colonization and Ward was no exception.²⁴⁰ Ward’s narrative confirmed rather than questioned conservative colonial precepts about autochthonous peoples and she reaffirmed a number of social norms in relation to masculinity. However, her narrative demonstrates that a gendered reading can expand the conspectus of the military narrative.

Conclusion

Ward’s and Napier’s narratives could be reduced to a handful of tropes: foremost we find representations the ‘certainties’ of Xhosa infamy and settler victimhood in the narratives and then we have the deceptions of the ‘pseudo-philanthropists’ which form a penumbrous backdrop. These representations then can be dispersed into arguments around settler and Xhosa land claims and to notions of progress, or lack of it, in the colony.

²³⁶ Venning, *Following the Drum*, 2005, p 28.

²³⁷ Ibid., 2005, p 37.

²³⁸ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001,

²³⁹ Ibid., 2001.

²⁴⁰ See Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, 2005.

Both Napier's and Ward's texts challenged and attempted to redefine representations of the Xhosa and both authors demonstrated a deep unease about the sustainability of the Eastern Cape as a colony: aspects which fed into the more overtly polemical sections of their texts. Through the metropolitan publishing machine, both Ward and Napier and their periodical reviewers, endeavoured to change the British reading public's ideas about the Xhosa as an 'enemy' and as an 'ethnographic' subject. Their texts challenged notions of evangelical humanitarianism and strove to present the Xhosa "in the true". We find a set of reiterations in the texts which attempted to make the Xhosa recognizable to metropolitan readers and which endeavoured to ossify their 'habits' and their characters. So the 'small stories' that surrounded the Xhosa became part of a grander edifice which purported to present them in a 'correct', that is, in an 'accurate' manner. However, much of the textual representation of the Xhosa resulted in their interstitial positioning. The argument has been raised that after each war animadversions against the Xhosa became more pronounced and that settler antipathy and anxieties became more prevalent. I have argued elsewhere, that this presents a teleological conspectus which is not always apposite: ideas and attitudes about the Xhosa remained uneven and genres were hybridized in texts well into the 1850s.

Chapter 7

The Xhosa as ethnographic subjects

Introduction

Central to this chapter is a consideration of how 19th Century British military and imperial writers represented the Xhosa as 'ethnographic' subjects during the Frontier Wars. To this end, I shall examine a selection of 19th Century expositions which purported to describe the Xhosa ethnographically. Most military narratives were ordered in a specific manner: they contained chapters which provided purviews of the natural history and geographical features of the frontier, contextual and historical detail and accounts of people autochthonous to the area.¹ In general, however, it was the campaign narrative and the vagaries of regimental duty which dominated the texts. A number of propositions will govern this chapter: firstly I shall suggest that descriptions of the Xhosa in military texts were often derivative and were dependent on previously published travellers' impressions and on established ethnographic studies.² So soldiers' narratives contained very little that was new in relation to ethnographic studies of the Xhosa. In fact, ethnographic representations of the Xhosa were prone to duplication and there was a propensity for certain phrases and metaphorical allusions to linger through the decades. There is some evidence of discontinuity in the writing of authors such as Edward Napier but this did not constitute a major realignment in the ethnographic narratives over the period of the three frontier wars.

The term most frequently used by 19th Century authors was 'ethnology', however, in the main, I shall be using the more contemporary terms 'ethnography' and 'anthropology'.³ A number of the military texts on the Frontier Wars drew from the work of 'ethnologists', such as James Prichard, whose studies strove to formalize a universal history of humanity and to examine various cultures by using 'analogical investigation' as a methodology. The attempt to understand the enemy in from an 'anthropological' perspective has had a long, although inconsistent, history.⁴ According to Van Creveld, some of the best examples of anthropological accounts of the enemy are to be found in ancient Chinese documents, around 400 BC, and in the later Byzantine military treatise, the *Strategikon*.⁵ The logic of these narratives lay in the necessity to understand the complexity of the 'enemy' and not only in terms of his numerical composition and weaponry.⁶ Concerns around the 'character' of the enemy, his weaknesses

¹ See King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853; Elers Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I and II*, 1850, Fleming *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853.

² Prichard, *History of Mankind*, Bailliere, London 1843.

³ Ibid., 1843.

⁴ Van Creveld, *The Art of War*, 2000. Van Creveld uses the term anthropology in his overview.

⁵ Ibid, p 55. The *Strategikon* "...provides brief anthropological analyses of the principal enemies facing the Empire, their weaknesses and their strengths, and suggests ways for dealing with each one."

⁶ Ibid, p 55. This example from the *Strategikon* provides insight into early descriptive conventions concerning enemy attributes: "...the light haired races place great value on freedom.....they are hurt by fatigue...[as well as] heat, cold, rain, lack of provisions (especially of wine) and postponement of battle. Therefore, 'in warring against

and strengths and his tactical skill, or his ineptitude, were perpetuated in 19th Century military texts on strategy, but were expressed far more succinctly. For instance, Jomini in the *Art of War* had very little information on the character of enemy forces: his most detailed account of 'character' is in the sections concerning the morale of armies and of the advent of panic amongst the troops.⁷ This attenuation found in 19th Century military treatises could have been the result of the proliferation of technical texts concerning warfare which tended to stress the 'geometry' of war and promoted the formalization of intelligence systems. However, in contradistinction to 19th Century manuals of military strategy, representations of the Xhosa in frontier war memoirs not only included ethnographic discussions of the Xhosa but they also provided detailed, 'on the ground' accounts of skirmishes against the Xhosa. This has much to do with their status as campaign narratives, which displayed individuation in relation to the authors' experiences and which provided expressions of the Xhosa in fairly detailed, although derivative, ways.⁸

Soldiers were by necessity also travellers and unsurprisingly tended to turn to other travellers and to fellow soldiers for information on the Xhosa. The style of their memoirs, with some exceptions, was closer to Cape travellers of a more prosaic stamp: the tone was matter- of- fact and 'soldierly', in the sense that endurance and impassivity were privileged constructs, and any strains of self-aggrandizement tended to be deeply submerged in the narratives.⁹ What sources did the soldiers tend to use in their narratives? On the rare occasions when sources were acknowledged, 18th and early 19th Century travellers such as Barrow and Lichtenstein emerge frequently enough to constitute something of a canon. These authors held an appeal for 19th Century narrators of military campaigns as they tended to avoid the flourishes and fabulist inclinations of earlier narratives. Le Vaillant is used as a source by writers such as Elers Napier but generally travel narratives such as those of Barrow were considered more suited to the more settled narratives of the early to mid- 1800s which sustained the regulation of 'factual' information about indigenes. By the second half of the century, we see a miscellany of information and entertainment characterizing books such as Thomas Lucas's *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa* and John Bisset's *Sport and War*. Benedict Anderson refers to the "jocular-sophisticated fiction of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe" and these attributes are reflected in chapters which were specifically troped as 'amusing', anecdotal accounts of campaigning but which also portrayed the condescension of metropolitan surveillance.¹⁰ In general, the shape of military narratives comprised a compendium of campaign narrative, natural history and Ward and Napier in particular provided disquisitions on the political conditions of the Cape. Texts were heterogeneous in content but by the early to mid- 1800s their form had settled into a recognizable order. The narrative usually ended where it began: on a shoreline or on the Cape Town dock departing for their next station, India in the case of a number of regiments, or going back 'home' to Britain.¹¹ The sequence in the texts was reliant

them one must avoid engaging in pitched battles.....but make use of well-planned ambushes, sneak attacks and stratagems."

⁷ Jomini, *The Art of War*, Greenhill Books, London, 2006. First published in French in 1834.

⁸ See Elers Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I and II*, 1850; King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853.

⁹ A number of texts were imbued with the category of 'bronzed masculinity'.

¹⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 2006, p 36.

¹¹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I, 1848; Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I and II*, 1849.

on the diarized progress of events and time; this practice meant the author could move on and away from the inconsistencies and uncomfortable dilemmas generated from some or other dubious colonial encounter. Hence, the diary was an advantageous construct: the requirement for a logical sequence was sacrificed to the imperatives of the chronology and the demands the 'event'.

One of the most striking features of the narratives is the reiteration of ethnographic accounts of the Xhosa. On one level this ensures the entrenchment of types if one accepts the argument that repetition stabilizes difference into a coherent ordering. In the 19th Century texts, repetition established the 'veracity' of the text because readers could 'cross-reference' information. Furthermore, the use of memoirs in current historiography often assumes that soldiers' 'experiences' and observations influenced their representations of the Xhosa. However, an analysis of ethnographic accounts raises questions about this assumption. Firstly, there is the issue of omniscience: soldiers who wrote their memoirs were not ubiquitous, a variable of which they themselves were aware.¹² Secondly, 'experience' had very little to do with the portions of the texts devoted to describing the Xhosa ethnographically. As proposed above, military writers tended to lift information from previously published texts and from journals and newspapers such as the *Graham's Town Journal*. The question is whether more authentic representations emerged from descriptions of skirmishes and campaigning. I shall return to this inquiry in the following chapter.

The Xhosa

During the 18th Century, a theoretical position developed from the writings of Montesquieu, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson which espoused that there were progressive stages in the 'civilization' of humanity. Montesquieu drew out a distinction between barbarism and savagery, although many 19th Century writers writing about the Cape tended to use the terms synonymously, and proposed that 'savages' lived as hunter gatherers in small polities whereas 'barbarians' were pastoral and lived in larger communities. Other stadial theorists, such as Smith and Ferguson, "...adapted the savagery/barbarism distinction into a model that explained historical change by relating social organization to modes of subsistence"¹³ Thus a more materialist reading of history emerged that based the different stages of development on the political economy of communities. For instance, societies could only become 'civilized' if they emerged from hunter-gatherer and pastoral stages and embraced the agricultural stage and then finally the highest stage of commerce.¹⁴ As Fulford points out,

"... the causes of the differences between the human societies existing in different parts of the globe could be explained by observable natural features. There was no need to speculate whether Native Americans had been created differently by God or whether they had originally migrated from Asia. Their savagery resulted from their hunter/gatherer existence which precluded large settled communities that generated towns, laws and formal government."¹⁵

¹² King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, King includes this limitation in the *Preface* to his book.

¹³ Fulford, *Romantic Indians*, 2003, p 42.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2003, p 42

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2003, p 42.

Stadial theory also privileged notions of progress and autochthonous peoples were positioned as less advanced in terms of their social, ethical and political structures than the more 'highly developed' and 'civilized' Europeans. However, a number of early 19th Century theorists remained committed to notions of monogenesis which argued that humanity originated from one 'pair': Adam and Eve. Blumenbach, a German, a protagonist of monogenesis, considered humanity as being shaped by social, climate and environmental factors which acted on the formative fluid, *nisus formatives*, which Kant in the 18th Century had identified as being common to all humanity. Blumenbach's model of social conditioning through forces such as geography and his idea that there were no clear demarcations between groups of people was to remain influential until the advent of theoretical and scientific racial differentiation, influenced by social Darwinism, in the latter part of the 19th Century.¹⁶

The late 18th Century the ethnologist Kames, in his *Sketches of the History of Man*, presented further ramifications of stadialist theory. He accepted aspects of the theory, such as Indians being at the hunter-gather stage, but proposed that God had created the 'New World' separately and significantly later than the old. Hence Native Americans had descended from a different primal pair. He also suggested that New World inhabitants were not as advanced as the occupants of the old world because they had had less time to progress through determined stages. In fact, this theory was not confined to the Americas but was applied throughout the world; where there existed original pairs of the human race whose descendents demonstrated both physical and 'internal' differences.¹⁷ These theories of polygenesis were pursued into the 19th Century and the idea that peoples were separated into different groupings and that there was a hierarchy of superior to inferior human beings was to have profound consequences especially for those deemed inferior. However, polygenesist ideas also had a history of refutation and counter-theories argued that Native Americans were not separate, later incarnations of humanity but were 'fully human'¹⁸ They were merely 'savage' because they had not yet progressed through the requisite stages from barbarism to commerce and modernity and the progressive nature of the stages enabled them to become capable of 'improvement' through western civilizing missions.

Even though the theories of mono- and polygenesis diverged on a number of issues, their protagonists both relied on the accounts of travellers as sources for detail and for the requirements of exemplification.¹⁹ However, travel narratives came to be considered as dubious by certain authors as travellers' comments and insights were attenuated by a reliance on hearsay. In addition, the impressionistic inclinations of their observations meant that they could not be considered properly scientific. Hence, the more 'precise' science of comparative anatomy emerged as a counterbalance to the caprices of the travel genre. Camper, a late 18th Century Dutch anatomist, was an early protagonist of what was considered to be a more scientific method for devising classificatory systems. He designed a piece of equipment to calculate facial angles and hence the head, or the skull, rather than the counters

¹⁶ Fulford, *Romantic Indians*, 2003.

¹⁷ Ibid., 2003, p 85.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2003, p 88.

¹⁹ Ibid., 2003.

of the body, became central to a racialized scientific discourse that had previously relied on more the variable constructs of travel writing.²⁰

In the context of the Cape during first half of the 19th Century, Bank suggests that,

“The fact that anti-liberal extremists...worked within a biblical and therefore monogenist framework – highlights the continuing centrality of theology in Cape intellectual life. There is no contemporary evidence of support for the polygenist belief in the early mid-century Cape Colony in the separate creation of different ‘races’ and therefore little to support claims that the British settlers of 1820 “straddled an earlier environmental monogenism and a later polygenetic racism.” [Bank cites Crais] Even in Britain, the hegemony of the biblical paradigm was only effectively challenged in the latter part of the century, as the monogenist ethnographic model of James Cowles Prichard dominated Victorian anthropology from 1830 through to the late 1850s.”²¹

An examination of military texts corroborates this statement: it would seem that most writers explicitly or implicitly subscribed to versions of monogenesis and the biblical origins of the Xhosa were invoked well into the 1850s. At no time were the Xhosa represented as anything other than ‘human’: their differentiation more than often lay in their ‘undeveloped state’; in their ‘savagery’ or ‘barbarism’ and in notions of their unresolved virtue. As mentioned above, military narratives also relied on travellers’ accounts for ethnographic detail. The ‘scientific’ insights of Camper and a ‘science’ such as phrenology was alluded to rather than expounded on in any length in the narratives. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, the works of monogenesists such as James Prichard were consistent references in the ethnographic chapters in the military narratives.

A further important delineation in representations of the Xhosa in the texts was that of ‘nationhood’: the Xhosa were distinguished and imagined as a collective in a variety of forms.²² In the 1830s, Godlonton referred to the Xhosa as comprising ‘tribes’, which he described as ‘thinly scattered’, but Godlonton used the word ‘polity’ as in “The Kafir polity or form of government” in his *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*.²³ Godlonton’s source in relation to the composition of the Xhosa polity was Shepstone, the Wesleyan minister who by at that time had resided amongst the Xhosa for eleven years. Shepstone had previously devised a genealogical table which was published in the *Irruption*:

“From this table it will be seen that the Tambookies, or Amatembu, and the Amaponda or Mambookie tribe are both branches, in a direct line of what the colonists usually term the great Kaffir family; and must, therefore, be considered as so many parts of one distinct nation or people, amongst the numerous and diversified kingdoms of the African continent.”²⁴

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Xhosa were described as a ‘great family’, ‘nation’, ‘people’, kingdom and ‘tribe’ in the same breath. Despite the diversity of the enunciations on Xhosa political organization what

²⁰ Fulford, *Romantic Indians*, 2003, p 91. “By measuring the angle between the forehead and the jaw line, he could show that a hierarchy existed. At the top was the face portrayed in ancient Greek statuary: its facial angle formed Camper’s aesthetic and intellectual ideal. Near the bottom was the ‘Negro’ only just above the ape.”

²¹ Bank, ‘Of ‘Native Skulls’’, 1996, p 339.

²² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2006.

²³ Godlonton, *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965, p 217.

²⁴ Ibid., 1965, p 210.

was to remain constant in most contemporary military writings was the collectivity which the characterized the Xhosa polity and which differentiated it from more loosely constituted nomadic groupings. However, 'nation' also was used figuratively, and negatively, as in "a nation of freebooters" another phrase used by Godlonton to describe the vaguely construed 'Matiwana' in the 'north'.²⁵

Sources of ethnographic accounts

It could be claimed that John Barrow was a progenitorial figure in the British travel narrative tradition concerning South Africa. Barrow's account of his travels in of the eastern parts of the Cape (1797/1798) in the late 18th Century was an influential texts in 19th Century military and travellers' narratives and his description of the Xhosa was frequently invoked by writers to complement their own interpretations of the Xhosa.²⁶ Prichard also used Barrow in his discussions on the Khoikhoi and considered him a reliable source. In his section on the eastern reaches of the Cape, Barrow describes his first direct encounter with the Xhosa composed of "a party of women" who approached his entourage while they were encamped "on the banks of the Kareeka".²⁷ According to Barrow, at that time the Xhosa were:

"...bordering upon the country of the Hottentots, their manners, their persons, and their whole character, seemed as widely removed from this phlegmatic race as the equator from the pole."²⁸

Having polarized the Hottentots and the Xhosa, Barrow proceeded to describe the women and the men he encountered. The women were found to be "modest without reserve".²⁹ In addition:

"The rapid movement of their dark sparkling eyes gave animation to their countenances: their teeth were beautifully white and regular; they had neither the thick lips nor the flat noses of Africans in general; and the whole contour of the face and head was equally well-formed as those of the Europeans."³⁰

Barrow found Xhosa men to be exceptional:

"The men...were the finest figures I ever beheld: they were tall, robust, and muscular. Their habits of life had induced a firmness of carriage, and an open manly manner, which added to the good nature that overspread their features, shewed them at once to be equally unconscious of fear, suspicion, and treachery. A young man of about twenty, of six feet ten inches high, was one of the finest figures that was perhaps ever created. He was a perfect Hercules..."³¹

Barrow's positive reading of the Xhosa was to prove influential, as we shall see in the following discussion, but there were also the marks of imperial interest in his *Account*. The tendentiousness of the text is particularly marked in his descriptions of the 'Dutch' living in the deep rural Cape. For instance, if one compares his account of the Xhosa with his descriptions of the 'Dutch peasantry', which are deeply unflattering, one can develop a sense of how the narrative promoted British interests in the area. The

²⁵ Godlonton, *Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965, p 204.

²⁷ Barrow, *An account of travels into the Interior of southern Africa*, Vol 1, 1801, p 168.

²⁸ Ibid., 1801, p 168

²⁹ Ibid., 1801, p 168

³⁰ Ibid., 1801, p 168

³¹ Ibid., 1801, p 169.

Dutch are exposed as ineffectual colonizers at the Cape whose supersession by the more industrious British settler appears justified. He is concessionary about the Cape Town Dutch but their rural cousins are a very different kettle of fish:

“...a true Dutch peasant or boor as he styles himself, has not the smallest idea of what an English farmer means by the word comfort....Placed in a country where not only the necessities, but almost every luxury of life might by industry be procured, he has the enjoyment of none of them.”³²

This generalization is followed by a graphic description of a slothful peasant living in a scruffy house in which scorpions and spiders scuttled about in the thatched ceiling and an “earthy floor” which was “covered with dust and dirt” and “swarmed with insects”. The inhabitant of such an abode:

“Unwilling to work, and unable to think; with a mind disengaged from every sort of care and reflexion, indulging to excess in the gratification of every sensual appetite, the African peasant grows to an unwieldy size, and is carried off the stage by the first inflammatory disease that attacks him.”³³

Barrow falls back what was a familiar analysis of people by the early 19th Century: that of environmental influences, such as habitat and food on human character. The body, its health or its pathology, defined people’s place in the scheme of things and in social hierarchies. In Barrow, the Xhosa were depicted as perfect illustrations of humanity whereas the ‘Dutch peasants’ live “in a very uncomfortable manner in the midst of profusion” and have become apathetic and degenerate in *Luilekkerland*.³⁴

The valorization of the Xhosa body found in Barrow’s narrative is a common thread in most of the 19th Century military and travel writings that followed and is evident in Pringle’s later publication, *Narrative of a Residence* (1835), which includes a chapter on the Xhosa, although according to Shum, this was a later incorporation “written almost a decade after Pringle had left South Africa.”³⁵ Pringle drew directly on Barrow and other travel writers whereas his own experiences seem curiously limited in his discussion of the Xhosa in his *Narrative*. His reliance on other authors for knowledge of Xhosa ‘customs’ is evident and he refers to the familiar stock of travel writing for ethnographic information.

Both Barrow and later Pringle were preoccupied with the origins of the Xhosa and both propounded the notion that the Xhosa were ‘Semitic’. Barrow claimed that,

“The Kaffers most certainly are not the Aborigines of the Southern angle of Africa. Surrounded on all sides by people that differ from them in every pint, in color (sic) in features, in form, in disposition, in manners and in language, it would be absurd to consider them as indigenous to the small spot they now possess. To speculate on their origin, it might not be far from the mark to suppose them to have sprung from some of the tribes of those wandering Arabs known by the name of *Beduins* [his italics].”³⁶

³² Barrow, *An account of travels into the interior*, 180, pp 76, 77.

³³ Ibid., 1801, pp 77,78

³⁴ Ibid., 1801, p 78.

³⁵ Pringle wrote: “For ample details relative to the manners, customs, and internal polity of the Caffer tribes, I must refer to other writers – Barrow, Lichtenstein, Thompson, King.” In Shum, *Thomas Pringle and the Xhosa*, 2000, p 3.

³⁶ Barrow, *An account of travels into the interior*, 1801, p 211.

He substantiates this claim by instantiating their 'Arab' features, their 'way of life', their pastoral habits, their character and their 'treatment of strangers'. However, circumcision was the deciding category: described by Barrow as "the grand feature of Islamism", the Xhosa became integrally associated with Islam through similarity of cultural practice.³⁷

Pringle's version returns to a number of recurring themes:

"In their customs and traditions, there seem to be indications of their having sprung, at some remote period, from a people of much higher civilization than is now exhibited by any of the tribes of Southern Africa; whilst the rite of circumcision, universally practised among them without any vestige of Islamism, and several other traditional customs greatly resembling the Levitical rules of purification, would seem to indicate some former connection with a people of Arabian, Hebrew, or perhaps Abyssinian heritage."³⁸

Pringle's use of the words "resemble" and "would seem to indicate" are telling, for the intimation is that the Xhosa are 'Semitic' in origin but it also insinuates that a polity, more heterogeneous and less 'pure', has developed out of something ancient, sublime, transcendent and sacred. The "shattered wrecks" of a former unitary, higher culture is all that remains in the wilderness of 'Cafferland'. But the Xhosa are narrated by Barrow and by Pringle as being more crepuscular than benighted: they might in the shadow of more 'progressive' cultures but they demonstrate a nascent power to progress and are not entirely irredeemable. The judgment of their being irredeemable was to come later from Donkin after his inconclusive campaign against the Xhosa in the 1834 Frontier War and was to find its extreme expression in the language of 'extermination' in the 1850s.³⁹

Barrow's contention that autochthonous peoples in South Africa had Semitic origins was not new either; a similar claim had been made in the 17th Century by Kolb in relation to the customs of the Khoikhoi which he suggested resembled those of the "Jews or Ethiopians".⁴⁰ In fact, Barrow was to echo Kolb's theory of the origins of the Khoikhoi in his own study of the polity in the late 1700s. Within the confines of the present study, it would be otiose to attempt to trace the source of such ideas much further back than Barrow as this chapter purports to be an examination of the main references for early to mid -19th Century military works and I wish to focus on what is germane to these texts. Suffice to say, these ideas had a long incubation.

Military and Travellers' Texts 1800- 1855

The apotheosis of 'gentleman' scholar at the Cape was to be found in Sir Charles Bunbury, the 'Foreign Secretary of the Geological Society', geographer and botanist. Although he was not a member of the regular army he had close contacts with the military establishment and his diary instantiates his many visits to forts and outposts on the frontier where he gathered some his material for his book, *Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope, Notes on the Natural History and the Native Tribes*, which was published 1846.⁴¹ Bunbury's narrative was significant for its acknowledgment of a number of literary

³⁷ Barrow, *An account of travels into the interior*, 1801, p 212.

³⁸ Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, 1835, p 282.

³⁹ Legassick, *The Struggle for the Eastern Cape*, 2010.

⁴⁰ Penn, *'Written Culture and the Cape Khoikhoi'*, 2011, p 181.

⁴¹ Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope*, 1848.

sources and as such is worthy of some examination. The narrative which covered the period 1838-1839 (post the 6th Frontier War) is notable for citing the surgeon and ethnologist James Pritchard's book: *The Natural History of Man* (published in 1843) which was an abridged version of his voluminous *Researches into the Physical History of Man* (1813).⁴² By the 1830s there was a well-established tradition of thinking about 'ethnographic' issues. Bunbury's exposition of the Xhosa was inflected by Pritchard's research: his work demonstrated an ethnological interest in the body, in the cultural and language practices of the Xhosa and he supported the notion of humanity's common origins. But there was also a pronounced colonial strain in his account of the Xhosa which ran counter to contemporary liberal humanitarian dissertations. The Xhosa are described as a "...bold, crafty, savage people of inveterate predatory habits."⁴³ However, these innatist, negative inclinations were juxtaposed with positive aestheticizations of the Xhosa. In one instance, Bunbury describes a public meeting which he attended and which comprised a party of the Xhosa (a number of 'chiefs' accompanied by a 'multitude' of commoners), the Governor, Sir George Napier, with his retinue:

"The chiefs were in English dresses, mostly old uniforms which had been given to them by the Lieutenant – Governor and other authorities on the frontier, and which did not become them at all but the multitude were in their national dress....It was a curious and striking sight to behold these dark warriors, some wrapt in their cloaks, others naked but armed with their clubs or *kirries*, sitting on the floor in profound silence and in attitudes of earnest attention, with their intelligent countenances and keen eyes turned towards the speakers. I never saw a public meeting in England half so orderly. I was reminded of the accounts that are given of the North American Indians, and of their demeanour on such occasions."⁴⁴

Bunbury's opprobrium towards Xhosa chiefs for wearing 'western' often military apparel was a familiar motif in travellers' commentaries on the Xhosa. It demonstrated a disapproval of the affectation of such dress which hid the true 'form' of the Xhosa. There was also an implicit displeasure in the transgression of a dress code which determined that only a British soldier should be dressed in uniform. Language was an important component in early 19th Century ethnographic theory and was a crucial determinant in the argument that humankind, whatever their cultural differences, shared certain commonalities. Bunbury is positive about the Xhosa language but is also intent on differentiating it from that of the 'Negroes'. This separation of the Xhosa from 'Negro' peoples was to dominate a number of texts concerning the Frontier Wars and fed into ideas of the origins of the Xhosa:

"Their language seemed to me soft and agreeable to the ear, they spoke very distinctly, and in general slowly with much emphasis...their speech is perfectly free for the strange *gobbling* sound I have often remarked in that of the negroes."⁴⁵

⁴² Bunbury makes explicit reference to Pritchard in a footnote on the language of the Xhosa: "It is a curious fact stated in Dr Pritchard's work on the *History of Mankind* (ed 3rd Vol ii p 213) that the Caffer language resembles the Coptic, in forming of tenses of verbs..." Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence at the Cape*, 1848, p 157.

⁴³ Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence at the Cape*, 1848, p 136.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1848, pp 151, 152.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1848, pp 156, 157.

Theological expositions of the origins of the Xhosa were incorporated pervasively into ethnographic understandings of the 'enemy'. Proponents of the theological origins of the Xhosa continued to have their work published into the 1850s and Francis Fleming's book on 'Kaffraria' provided a detailed account of the 'Semitic' origins of the Xhosa. Fleming was the Anglican chaplain to the British forces in King William's Town from 1849 – 1853. He had a military background and started off his career as an ensign in the 81st Foot. He then went on to study theology at Cambridge and "was ordained in the Anglican Church in 1847".⁴⁶ While he was in King William's Town, Fleming researched his first book about Southern Africa entitled *Kaffraria and its Inhabitants* which was published in 1853. His book was intended to provide a compendium of information on the area and covered the history, geography and natural history of the area known as British Kaffraria which he described with a precision particular to colonial boundary circumscription as:

"The country which lies along the north eastern boundary of this colony [the Cape], between the Keiskamma and the Buffalo Rivers is styled the "neutral territory"; and that from the north of the Buffalo to the south bank of the Great Kei river constitutes "British Kaffraria" which, with its tribes, forms the more immediate subject of the following pages."⁴⁷

The book included an obligatory chapter on the Xhosa and chapter subheadings embraced the usual litany of customs, physical attributes and so on: "Tribal Subdivisions, Personal Appearance, Language, Dress, Weapons, Manners, Customs, Superstitions, Religious usages, Origin".⁴⁸ The *Preface* to his book outlines Fleming's sources:

"The part performed by the pen, has been arranged from Notes, taken during a residence on Kaffirland of nearly three years. These notes were collected from personal observation and inquiry, as well as from the reports of various individuals, long resident in the Cape Colony."⁴⁹

Whereas most military narratives tended to lift information without bothering to acknowledge sources, Fleming is unusual in that he cites his references with some care.⁵⁰ He is also keen to provide information that has not had a previous airing:

"My main object has been to supply information upon the subject of British Kaffraria; and those matters only have been described and delineated, which have not been *prominently* [his italics] exhibited elsewhere....The pencil sketches are selected from a Portfolio taken from nature, during my stay in Kaffirland. They lay claim to nothing but accuracy in the delineation of the views."⁵¹

This statement tells us something about Fleming's intentions behind the text and the prints of his drawings that accompanied it: principally they were mimetic in that he wished to paint an accurate picture from the natural environment or of 'manmade' settlements such as King William's Town.

⁴⁶ *Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol V, 1987, p 268.*

⁴⁷ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, p 13

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1853.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1853, p i.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1853, p i.

Fleming also published a second, lengthier book, *Southern Africa: A Geography and Natural History of the Country* in 1856. As was the case with his book on 'Kaffraria' it was essentially a "portable and readable" guide book for missionaries, officers, immigrants and travellers to 'Kaffraria'. Fleming, in fact, had a direct interest in the promotion of missionary activities in Southern Africa and was involved in establishing St Luke's Mission in the Eastern Cape.

The provision of a 'history' of the territory was not the major intention of his first publication, *Kaffraria*, although in the first chapter Fleming does provide "a sketch of its past history".⁵² Instead, Fleming strove to present *Kaffraria and its Inhabitants* as an authoritative and accurate account of the territory and its physical and political geography. He expressed the difficulty in obtaining "...exact [his italics] information required on any particular subject connected with the Cape and its dependencies, for the work of the travellers are so voluminous; whilst those of officers or other casual visitors, are so locally confined in the information given."⁵³ A centralizing order of Fleming's narrative is that of space: 'Kaffraria' is a geographical entity inhabited by people and the 'natural world'. In *Tropics of Discourse*, Hayden White discusses the "literature of fact" which is characterized by the desire "to remain within the ambit of plain fact" and is concerned with classification and the "data of natural history". He identifies the components of the narrative and its grounds:

"This means it deals with two problems: how are events to be described as possible elements of an argument; and what kind of argument do they add up to once they are so described?"⁵⁴

What sort of argument does a text such as Fleming's add up to and how does it cohere? In relation to the latter problem, the notion of coherence presents a difficulty which springs from many of the colonial texts under review; in 21st Century eyes they are frequently not sufficiently consistent to claim veracity for the whole. Fleming's book is a miscellany: he provides broad geological information and there are also a number of 'small' narratives about fossils and snakes which coalesce around the 'environment' of the area. If there is veracity in the 'whole' it is to be found in the 'plain facts' of the natural history and geographical information in the book. We cannot dispute *Salix Gariepina* exists in Kaffraria so can we doubt the theories which are posed about the origins of the Xhosa?

But the text is sophisticated enough to assume that the reader can question certain aspects of the narrative. Even though Fleming posits that the origins of the Xhosa are the product of a transcendental power in that the source for their origins is the Bible and ultimately God is responsible for their descent, the origins of autochthonous peoples in South Africa are posed as tentative. Fleming's section on the origins of the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa demonstrates that the existence of error rather than falsity and that misguided theories can be disputed and rectified. For example in his account of the Khoikoi he suggests: "their origin is at present involved in obscurity, though it seems not unlikely that further research may do something towards discovering it..."⁵⁵ Fleming's approach imbues parts of the book with a hypothetical orientation but these tentative statements are often placed contiguously to biblical

⁵² Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, p 1.

⁵³ Ibid., 1853, p x.

⁵⁴ White, *Tropics of Discourse*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1978, p 31.

⁵⁵ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, p 6.

exegesis. To make sense of this one has to consider the narrative within its 19th Century context. The Bible was still regarded by many as providing knowledge, that is, was not merely a congeries of myths. Concurrent interest in geology, palaeontology and ethnography was extensive amongst the educated middle classes and Fleming's interests cohered with many of the mid-19th Century preoccupations of the educated middle classes of that period. The combination of religious precept and 'scientific' inclination seems to have been a characteristic of a syncretic Anglicanism in the first half of the 19th Century and which managed to circumvent the storms created by Darwinism at a later stage in the 19th century.⁵⁶

The 'problem' of argument in Fleming's book is evident: the Xhosa indeed are 'heathen' but they are convertible and their 'barbarism', they are not 'savages' but pastoral people, could be alleviated provided they come into sufficient contact with 'civilized' people that is colonists and imperial servants and most importantly if they are converted and educated by missionaries. According to Fleming, the Xhosa have some good traits and much physical appeal: so there was symmetry in their bodies but in certain instances their characters disturbingly were flawed: cupidity, stealing and craftiness were posed as common characteristics.

In what follows I shall concentrate on how Fleming construed the Xhosa and their origins. In the first part of his account he discusses their geographical position and their relatively recent arrival in the Eastern Cape (the *terra nullius* argument was well established by this time):

"The Amakosa tribes of Kaffirs, which are those who dwell nearest to the present eastern colonial border, and extend from that to the Great Kei River, form one of the three great branches of that nation, who have appeared in Southern Africa, migrating from towards the north, and succeeded about the year 1760, in subduing the aboriginal Hottentot and Bushmen possessors of that part of the soil."⁵⁷

Their appearance is described in detail although most of the features in Fleming's account are by now commonplace:

"In personal appearance and formation, these Kaffirs are a race of the most manly and handsome people known among savages, and in many of their points resemble the New Zealanders. In stature they are generally tall, their height varying from five feet eight or nine inches to upwards of six feet. Their muscular frame is remarkable for symmetry and beauty, as well as great strength; but their arms from want of proper exercise to develop the muscles, (owing to probably to their usual indolent mode of life) appear small, and disproportioned in size to the legs and the body....In all of them, the lower limbs are strikingly robust and fine, and cases of deformity are very rarely to be noticed amongst them. Their carriage is stately and upright – in many even majestic; and this is particularly observable in their chiefs, whose habitual attitudes of ease, and abrupt, yet graceful actions in giving their commands are truly elegant and imposing....Their heads are large, but not disproportioned to their bodies; the forehead being elevated and intellectually formed, and in many cases very high, and finely developed in a phrenological point of view."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Harvie and Matthew, *Nineteenth Century Britain*, 2000.

⁵⁷ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, p 14

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1853, p 91. Phrenology appeared in campaign narratives but, in general, fleetingly. Fleming does not elaborate on this method of analysis.

A comparison of Fleming's account with Alexander's earlier description of the Xhosa demonstrates the reliance of writers on previous accounts of the Xhosa body. In turn, Alexander's use of the Herculean metaphor pays obeisance to Barrow:

"...the persons of the Amakosa are not disagreeable. The chest is not so broad, nor are the arms so strong, as those of Europeans; for the Kaffir males perform little manual labour: but the lower limbs are muscular in the extreme. The trousers of few Europeans are large enough for the brawny Kaffir thigh: the legs are really "Pillars of Hercules"." ⁵⁹

Fleming's description of Xhosa oratory, which is reliant on direct observation, is far more evocative:

"In speaking, they use a great deal of declamation, and conduct their arguments under various heads [headings] or divisions, using the fingers, severally, to represent each, and holding up and out at arm's length, that one, which denotes the particular head to which they are referring at the time. Their enunciation is slow and distinct, their voices very musical, and used pleasingly, with impressive and well-timed cadences." ⁶⁰

This encomium is followed by a less sanguine account of the Xhosa 'disposition' imbued with commonplace colonial rhetoric concerning the 'innate' character flaws of the Xhosa:

"...the inherent love of marauding and robbery in the Kaffirs soon induced them to recross the boundary and commence pillaging the colony." ⁶¹

Fleming's exposition of Xhosa origins goes back thousands of years to the diaspora of the sons of Abraham. ⁶² His account concedes to the homogeneity and cohesiveness of the Xhosa polity, whereas Peires's more recent discussion highlights the heterogeneous, incorporative nature of the Xhosa who included a number of groupings, such as the San, into their polity along with certain language and cultural borrowings. ⁶³ Were the Xhosa of Jewish or Islamic descent? According to Fleming, they originated from the Red Sea and spread to the West and the South:

"We are led from all these facts to conclude that the Kaffirs are a wandering and marauding race, not directly connected with the aboriginal tribes of Southern Africa, but who have gradually advanced from towards the north –east and in many respects are not unlike the wandering Arabs of the Desert." ⁶⁴

Fleming suggests that "On many accounts there are good grounds for supposing that they were of Ishmaelitic descent and as a consequence they are of the same origin as many of the tribes of Arabia." ⁶⁵ Their cultural practices could be associated with a number of biblical texts which Fleming enumerated. For instance, before going on a journey or errand the Xhosa "raise a heap of stones near their kraal" this

⁵⁹ Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 1837.

⁶⁰ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, p 93.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1853, p 15.

⁶² Fleming used Appleyard as a reference: "On many accounts, there are good grounds for supposing that they were of Ishmaelitic descent that they are of the same origin as many of the tribes of Arabia." *Ibid.*, 1853, p 118.

⁶³ Peires, *House of Phalo*, 2003.

⁶⁴ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, p 114.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1853, p 118.

practice was symbolic as the stones were “witnesses that they have left and mean to return and they are talisman for a propitious journey.” This practice purported to have “some resemblance to the Mizpeh and Ebenezer of Scripture” and as further evidence he cites: “Gen xxviii, 16, 22, xxxi, 43, 55 xxxv 7, 14” .⁶⁶

Further evidence of Semitic origin was to be found in practices concerning death: the Xhosa shaved their heads during mourning and in their dietary habits they showed an “aversion to eating swine, the hare, fowls ...none of which, nor indeed any unclean animal will they consent to eat.”⁶⁷ The latter proclivities according to Fleming: “....seem to proclaim their close connexion (sic) with the Israelitish or Eastern nations.”⁶⁸

These similarities were not only habitual but also pertained to character: “...for we may trace among them, with all their faults, some of the finer parts of the old Jewish character – as for instance, a strong sense of justice. There is nothing they dislike so much as any appearance of unfair dealing. They cannot *demand* as a *right* what does not belong to them. And even a Chief cannot deprive any of his people of their own...”⁶⁹ Finally, reference to the practice of circumcision which “is rigidly enforced upon every male at the age of fourteen” and was found to be ‘universal’ among the Xhosa is considered to be a defining quality of Semitic association. This practice according to Fleming, lent a “strong corroboration to the conjecture which refers the origin of this people to Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar.”⁷⁰

Fleming’s account of the Xhosa retains a biblical rendering of their origins which neither challenged British superiority nor the ameliorative powers of Christian conversion and education. Fleming’s ideas about the Xhosa as descendants of Abraham conveyed a moral authority provided by the Bible. However, his description of the Xhosa remained true to notions of a single family of humanity. It is perhaps not surprising that as a theologian, Fleming privileged biblical exegesis in his rendition of Xhosa ‘origins’ but what is noticeable is that he also draws on secular, ‘materialist’ and environmental accounts which tend to attenuate the certainties of creation.

Soldiers and the Xhosa

King’s *Campaigning in Kafirland: or Scenes and Adventures in the Kafir War of 1851-2*, follows the usual chronological path and starts with the arrival of his regiment, the 74th Highlanders, at the Cape and the author’s first impressions of the country. King then projects his readers into the exigencies of the campaign in the Amatoles on the eastern frontier, although his narrative includes a number of authorial digressions into the scenery, flora and fauna of the area. Once the reader has been putatively absorbed in the more adventurous campaign vignettes and is contemplating the qualities of ‘the enemy’, King commences with the ‘ethnographic’ section to his narrative which comprises two chapters on the Xhosa. King is not alone in his placing of descriptions of the Xhosa in the middle of the book; Harriet Ward and

⁶⁶ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, p 113.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1853, p 113.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1853, p 113.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1853, p 113.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1853, p 117.

Edward Elers Napier used a similar stylistic convention.⁷¹ Chapter VIII of King's book contains the most concentrated account of the Xhosa although there are innumerable commentaries on aspects of the Xhosa as fighters and on their tactics throughout the book. A major concern of the chapter is to provide accounts of the main 'tribes' found on the frontier. The first part covers the 'Fingoes' which is followed by a description of the Xhosa and their 'customs'. A number of pages are devoted to the Xhosa language and these seem to have been drawn from Appleyard, 1850 and Boyce, 1844, but there are no citations of their work. His account recounts the by now commonplace habits, religious notions, language, customs, dress, ornaments, food, weapons of the Xhosa. We also find the usual allusion to good looks and the affiliations to Judaic or Islamic origins: King writes that,

"The Kaffirs are undoubtedly one of the finest races of savages in existence, and of a physical type very different from and superior to all other South African races. Their customs and institutions also, are in many cases so peculiar and remarkable, exhibiting strong traces of a similarity to the wandering tribes of Arabia, that they have naturally led to the supposition of a distinct origin, and there is certainly much to confirm the belief that they are descendants of Ishmaelite tribes, who had wandered down east coast by the Red Sea...In their divisions and subdivisions into tribes and families, their system is patriarchal; their wealth, like that of the Arabs and other nomadic tribes of the east consists almost entirely of flocks and herds; in their abhorrence of pork they are as cordial as the most devout Mussulman or Jew. Polygamy is common and what is most remarkable, circumcision is regularly performed by the Kaffirs; and at the age of about fourteen, which has a singular correspondence with the recorded fact that Ishmael himself was in his fourteenth year when circumcised by Abraham." ⁷²

Although the King's ethnographic representations are generally positive and follow the pattern of distancing the Xhosa from the more 'savage Negro', Xhosa character remains a problem in the text. According to King, Xhosa children are "trained in duplicity and cunning" and "as soon almost as they can run they are initiated into petty acts of theft..." ⁷³ Furthermore, "lying is another accomplishment held in high esteem... and is diligently cultivated." ⁷⁴ What is significant in this instance of stereotyping is that King clearly considers character development as learnt behavior and as being conditioned by the family rather than as innatist. It is assumed that readers are by now familiar with the specifics of dress and King writes about "the only covering worn by the Kaffirs is the well-known karross." ⁷⁵ The use of the words 'well-known' is telling in that it assumes his readership is already conversant with this article of clothing, consequently, King in his relatively short exposition glosses over many of the details included in other narratives.

His final discussion concerns the dietary habits of the Xhosa which consists "mainly of milk, fruit, vegetables, berries, leaves, roots, corn, mealies... Flesh is not eaten much in times of peace [except for game]." ⁷⁶ In fact soldiers had a good grasp of what the Xhosa ate partly because they observed their gardens while on patrol and were sold milk and vegetables by women who entered their camps to trade

⁷¹ Ward, *Five Years in Kaffirland*, Vol I and II, 1848, 1849; Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol I and II, 1849, 1850.

⁷² King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 167.

⁷³ Ibid., 1853, p 168.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1853, p 169

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1853, p 170.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1853, p 170.

with soldiers. They also were familiar with Xhosa cultivation for more nefarious reasons: gardens and plantations were burnt down in the scorched earth policies of the British army and if they were not destroyed they were plundered by soldiers.

Thomas Lucas's *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa* which was first published in 1879, just before his death. An earlier book on the 8th Frontier War, *Pen and Pencil Reminiscences of a Campaign in South Africa* was published in 1861.⁷⁷ There is little biographical information available about Lucas.⁷⁸ He seems to have been in a British regiment before he joined the Cape Mounted Rifleman (CMR) in 1848 and was stationed in Graham's Town in 1850. He saw action in the 8th Frontier War as an officer in the CMR; he is listed as Lieutenant on the Medal Roll.⁷⁹ *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa* provides perhaps one of the more 'popular' accounts of the 8th Frontier War. It is clearly intended to be entertaining: vignettes of "An old dragoon" and "One of the Queen's hard bargains" are included in the narrative; although these were interspersed with informative notes on the "puff adder" and the "ant-bear". Lucas's chapter entitled: "Fingoes, Hottentots and Kaffirs" provided the ethnographic detail of the narrative and pronounced various aspects of their looks and dispositions. 'Fingoes' according to Lucas are:

"Natives of a hotter climate, they are darker in hue, and show more of the Negro type than the Kaffir, and are not so symmetrical in their proportions as the Amakosoe, whose physical attributes are of a very high order, and who, indeed, often present perfect models of strength and grace."⁸⁰

'Hottentots' however, "no longer exist as a people, having become completely absorbed amongst the mixed population of the colony...". They are the most "reckless and degraded of mortals" and stand in sharp contrast to the Xhosa who is "both physically and intellectually, vastly superior to the Hottentot, averaging five feet nine inches in height, and very finely formed, with features more regular and the Negro type less prominent." This is followed by the inevitable negative character analysis: "They are all incorrigible thieves, regarding colonial horses and cattle as their legitimate spoil".⁸¹

Lucas's narrative, despite its obvious prejudices, held an interstitial status not uncommon in military writing in that there was evident loyalty to a rather broadly conceived 'Englishness' but there was also a subtle undermining of the regular army and its practices in the text. This was particularly evident in the asides made about army incompetence and its irresistible and foolhardy sorties into colonial expansion. Lucas had an axe to grind for before the book was published he had received little recompense from the army for his uninterrupted campaigning career and consequent broken health. Lucas,

"...was turned down by his adjutant-general for a medically recommended extended sick leave, and then, when eventually forced to retire a cripple from the army, he did so a few months short of the fifteen years of service that would have entitled him to claim a pension of half the amount of his normal pay."⁸²

⁷⁷ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p ix.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1975, p v.

⁷⁹ Everson, *The South Africa 1853 Medal*, 1978.

⁸⁰ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 90.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1975, p 95.

⁸² Ibid., 1975, p viii.

Lucas demonstrated some insight into the spoor system which he wrote was devised “for the protection of the colonists”, However, its system of penalties imposed on the Xhosa was,

“...generally the indirect cause of our Kaffir wars; the natives being seldom known to attack the whiteman in his homestead, or to make war on him to gratify revenge or indulge in the abstract pleasure of murdering, so much as to have some pretext for stealing cattle, or regaining what they or their ancestors have lost in former encounters, and never indeed risk their lives without some immediate prospect of gain.”⁸³

Lucas also took a swipe at pomposities and the hierarchies of colonial power:

“They are far from deficient in intellect, however, and have shown themselves on various occasions able politicians. At some of the great meetings called together by the governor for the time being, for the purposes of impressing the Kaffir with the justice of some particular measure, which that wily individual does not consider quite so much in his own interest, he will listen patiently with seeming conviction until the Great Man has wound up his discourse with some eloquent peroration, when he will ask some home question or put some sarcastic interpretation upon it, which shows how perfectly he understands the exact merits of the case – sometimes completely nonplussing the wary politician.”⁸⁴

A number of points emerge from narratives such as Lucas’s: the inflection of race remains a determinant in the representations of the Xhosa in the more ‘popular’ texts. The body is disaggregated into racialized ‘parts’, but the Xhosa body is also presented as the hands-down winner of the South African colonial beauty competition. However, physical beauty, as has long been held in the popular imagination, is not necessarily consonant with good character and in the case of Lucas, King, Fleming and others the Xhosa are presented as being worthy subjects of sculpture while simultaneously being ‘incorrigible thieves’. Various renderings perhaps unconsciously, separate the devious, ‘bent’ mind from the fine, upright body.

Elers Napier’s *Excursions in Southern Africa: Including a History of the Cape Colony, An Account of the Native Tribes etc* (1850) covers the 7th Frontier War. Napier was a staff officer on leave who while at the Cape was seconded to the British army on the frontier as “superintendent of the Native Levies to the First Division”. His book includes a specific ethnographic chapter: ‘*The Amakosae*’ as well as numerous asides and paragraphs representing Xhosa temperament and habits. Napier stands out, however, as contradicting most of the received wisdom of the previous writers. The Xhosa were not Semitic but of the “Bechuana race”; the three Bechuana races comprised: “the Amatombae of Tambookies, the Amapondae and the Amakosae”:⁸⁵

“Of all the ramifications into which the human species is divided probably few exceed in number and the wide extent of territory they occupy, those of the Bechuana race, of which the Kaffir nation is a widely spreading branch. And if similarity of language, customs, and appearance, be proof of a common origin, the course of these people may be traced as flowing south of the equator, from the furthest discovered limits of the interior of Africa

⁸³ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 96.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp 96, 97.

⁸⁵ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa, Vol I*, 1849, p 125.

along the eastern shores....across the peninsula, to the western coast, through the country of the Demaras, and extending to the Portuguese settlements of Benguela and Angola.”⁸⁶

Elers Napier was almost completely unsympathetic towards the Xhosa and his account was at variance with most of the points made in the proceeding narratives. His primary disputation rested on his claim that the Xhosa were neither Jewish nor Islamic:

“The unusual practice of circumcision amongst the Kaffirs, has, by some authors been adduced as a certain proof of a Jewish or Arabic extraction. But a like custom prevails amongst some of the Negro tribes to the north of the equator, [Napier’s citation: Mungo Parke’s Travels, p 226] and affords no more grounds for such a hypothesis than the habit of exposing their dead to be devoured by wild animals, would lead to the conclusion of a common origin with the ancient Guebres, or fire-worshippers of Persia....The Kaffirs have other striking peculiarities to which an imaginary importance has been attached by writers wishing to establish some favourite theory – such as an aversion to the flesh of swine and to certain kinds of fish. Nothing either in their appearance or language (the latter the strongest of all evidence in such cases) seems however to justify the supposition that Kaffirs or in short any of the Bechuana race, being of Caucasian origin.”⁸⁷

Napier also makes a common assumption about the Xhosa, that is, they were ‘barbarians’ (when they were not being proclaimed as ‘savages’) because they were a pastoral people:

“Notwithstanding the Kaffir possess a knowledge of cultivating the ground, even make bread, and also brew a sort of beer, they may be considered as almost exclusively a nomadic race, living chiefly by the produce of their herds.”⁸⁸

There are intimations of stadial thinking in Napier’s account but his assumption that the Xhosa were nomadic pastoralists was fairly typical as most authors precluded the work of women. If women had been acknowledged as agriculturalists, stadial terminology would have designated the Xhosa as ‘farmers’ and hence to a higher ‘stage’ of ‘progress’.

The seat of representation of the Xhosa from a racialized point of view would appear to be the obligatory ‘anthropological’ or ‘ethnographic’ account of the Xhosa which was included in most published military memoirs and settler accounts. However, these representations were sometimes equivocal and were consciously intertextual in that previously written texts were inserted and identified with the emerging texts of the early to mid- 19th Century. Without exception, the propositions about Xhosa origins and social environment were heavily reliant on a collection of external sources; a practice which questions the notion of private insight or singular experience associated with the memoir.

The ‘ethnographic’ chapters for all their essentialization of the Xhosa demonstrated that the interest in nascent ‘pseudo-scientific’ interpretations of the Xhosa, which Bank argues was current in the Eastern Cape from the early 19th Century, seems to have eluded most military writers in up until the 1850s. Theories of phrenology and race propagated by writers such as Robert Knox in 1850 and De Gobineau in 1854 which viewed race as key concept for understanding human variation and proposed that that racial

⁸⁶ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol I, 1849, p 124.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 1849, p 129.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1849, pp 129, 130.

differentiation was distinct and permanent⁸⁹ seem to have been less influential than the ethnological theories of Prichard and the strands scriptural exegesis that pervaded the texts.

Stadial theory remains part of the backdrop against which we can examine the ethnographic texts: most writers compared the Xhosa favourably with what they considered less 'advanced' groups. The majority of comparisons were made between the Xhosa and other autochthonous groups such as the Khoisan and the Khoikhoi. Bunbury's conclusion is a fairly common one: the Xhosa's "... tribal polity is quite a patriarchal" and it demonstrates a "...scale of offices" which "...dispels...the remnants of a system of organization amongst them, far superior to that of the South African aborigines [the 'Hottentots' and 'Bushmen']".⁹⁰ The Xhosa in general were considered more advanced along the path of civilization than other South African groups but there were also aspects of Xhosa practice which were considered retrogressive: most writers strove to find reasons for these 'anomalies' as well as for the 'vestiges' of civilization in cultural and habitual practices which in Pringle's metaphor resembled the "...shattered wrecks of ancient religious institutions."⁹¹

Prichard's work demonstrated an alignment with the theory of monogenesis which proposed that humankind had a single origin and which stressed humanity's unity. Monogenesis was also a theory which was compatible with scriptural texts: all humanity sprang from an original pair, Adam and Eve. The theory was affiliated to 19th Century liberal notions that human beings sprung from the same 'family' and that there was a cultural unity and commonality of humans through the development of language and myth. Polygenesis, a contemporaneous and yet oppositional theory, was based on the idea that that humankind had developed from distinct 'pairs' which resulted in a differentiation of humanity into separate groups, each with its own genesis. Strands of polygenesis might have been skeptical of scriptural explanations of the origins of humanity but its central argument that there were several distinct human races facilitated notions that humans were divided into different groups such as 'white' and 'black' a factor which encouraged doctrinaire thinking and facilitated segregationist practices.⁹²

⁸⁹ Rattansi, *Racism*, 2007.

⁹⁰ Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope*, 1848, p 114.

⁹¹ Pringle, *Narrative of a South African Residence*, 1835, p 283.

⁹² Augstein, *John Cowles Prichard's Anthropology*, Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam – Atlanta, 1999.

Chapter 8

Representations of the 8th Frontier War and the Xhosa as fighters

Introduction

There is a fragment from Thomas Lucas's narrative on the 8th Frontier War which contains a summation of South African colonial warfare: it evinces the dubious status of 'frontier warfare' within military discursive renderings and presents certain stock images of the Xhosa. Lucas writes:

"Some discriminating individual has truly observed, with more originality than elegance, that a Kaffir war is "the snob of all wars". In this service the British warrior neither lives nor dies like a gentleman. Opposed to savages, who are in the habit of skulking behind stones and bushes, and literally stalking their opponents, he falls ingloriously, without having seen the enemy and deprived even of the poor satisfaction of a shot in return." ¹

Lucas's suggestive linkage of the word 'snob' to the Frontier Wars associates campaigning in the colonies with a pervasive theme in military narratives: that of 'savage' and the 'ungentlemanly' warfare. However, the colloquialism 'snob' had a very different resonance to that which we expect today. It made an appearance in an earlier journal concerning the 6th Frontier War written by Charles Lennox Stretch and a footnote provided by the editor of the journal casts light on its contemporary usage. The 19th Century meaning of the word was antithetical to its present usage: then it was used to denote persons of a 'lower class' or to refer to someone lacking in gentility. ² The association forged in Lucas's text raises the supposition that colonial war was a 'low-bred', unrefined type of a war in which 'gentlemen', the regulars and above all regular officers, were compelled to fight under parlous and unsporting conditions. Indeed, the quote above reflects a number of themes which recur in frontier war narratives and which will be examined within the ambit of this chapter. It contains a characteristic derogation of the 'skulking enemy' but it also provides a fleeting representation of enemy elusiveness and skill. Furthermore, the word 'gentleman' is a construct upon which much turns within representations of the Frontier Wars. In Lucas's reading of the 8th Frontier War, colonial campaigning conspicuously was not a 'gentleman's war'. Even death was 'inglorious' and made even more ignoble because the fight was not 'fair': the regular soldier, in a fairly common inversion in frontier war texts, became the prey of the 'savage'. Lucas's estimation of frontier warfare is representative of a number of colonial texts which tended to elide over colonial culpability and represented the Xhosa, within an ensemble of related 'myths', as the perpetrators of 'barbarous' acts. However, as we have seen, military texts also demonstrated variability in that they were not merely campaign narratives but also purported

¹ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa*, 1975, p 139.

² See Le Cordeur's editorial footnote: Stretch records the usage of the word 'snobs' as a rebuke made by the officers of the 72nd Regiment which was directed towards "the Provisionals and Jervis". 'Provisionals' is a reference to the local levies used during the wars, generally composed of Khoi and Mfengu men, and Jervis was Captain Henry Jervis of the 72nd Highlanders based at Fort Wiltshire. During the 6th Frontier War he was second-in-command to Major Cox. Our current understanding of snobbery befits a number of officers in the 19th Century regular army who were quick to look down on their fellow officers. Le Cordeur, *The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch*, 1988, pp 129, 194.

to present the 'origins' of the Xhosa, to provide commentary on the British regular army and its performance in the colonies and to proffer ruminations on life and death.

I have covered aspects of guerilla warfare in earlier chapter but this chapter draws more concertedly on military representations and conceptions of the Xhosa as fighters and as tacticians in the wars.³ Particular attention will be paid to those military narratives which sought to portray the protracted 8th Frontier War; a war which led to the further displacement and colonization of the Xhosa and which was a precursor to the catastrophic 'Cattle Killing' episode in the late 1850s. This discussion develops out of the preceding chapter which was primarily concerned with early to mid-19th Century British considerations of the 'origins' and the 'history' of the Xhosa. The two chapters are associated through their focus on contemporary military representations of the Xhosa and share an interest in the configuration of the Xhosa on the one hand as ethnological subjects and on the other as combatants in the Frontier Wars. Within this historical context, I shall investigate whether there was more 'movement', metaphorical complexity and insight into the descriptions of the Xhosa in the textual segments that dealt with direct conflict between the Xhosa and the regular and colonial forces than in the more speculative renditions of the 'origins' of the Xhosa. Furthermore, I intend to address whether the ethnological accounts of the Xhosa discussed in the previous chapter diverged from those which concentrated on the experience of campaigning.

The significance of these conjoined chapters lies in their detailed reference to military narratives. Revisionist historiography frequently has subsumed military narratives into totalizing statements concerning colonial power. In part, the research is driven by the concept that representations formed an important part of how the 'west' construed the identities of the 'colonized' in imaginative and material ways through the print media; however I shall suggest that certain features of the texts complicate the latter 'totalizing effects'. One such complication is found in the alterity displayed by the military in relation to the Xhosa. As discussed previously, the 'othering' found in the texts, at times, collapses into 'sameness' particularly around tactical decisions. This chapter turns to memoirs and travel writing to investigate the 'diverse ideological practices of colonialism' and what Young terms "the mechanics of cultural contact, intrusion, fusion and disjuncture" represented by the texts.⁴ This study is, after all, influenced by the 'cultural turn' in the discipline of history and seeks to demonstrate that an examination of texts produces meanings that purport to go beyond interpretations of economic repression and social dispossession.

Military texts contained representations of the Xhosa but not necessarily 'knowledge' about them, and should not be considered as instruments of veracity, or of 'untruth', despite their frequent and uncritical

³ Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 2003, argues cogently that the 8th Frontier War and its aftermath of despair was one of the direct reasons for the 'Cattle Killing' catastrophe of 1857/58. Crais, using Etherington's thesis as a source, suggests that the Xhosa were not so much as dispossessed as more effectively colonized and some of the land into which they were concentrated were lands that they had defended rather than lost. Crais states that "The Eastern Cape's great disaster of 1856-1857 followed closely on the heels of one of the most intense and brutal colonial wars fought anywhere in the nineteenth century." Crais, *Poverty, War and Violence*, 2011, p 39.

⁴ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 1995, p 5.

use as an archive.⁵ Even though war was, and is, material, sanguinary and physically maiming it was also, in its textual renderings, the product of interlocutors who mediated its effects discursively. However, counter to some 'cultural' studies, I shall not dismiss the colonial archive as irrevocably tainted for there are traces of the past contained in the narratives which can help to complicate the description of events and practices in the wars.⁶

Within the context of the 8th Frontier War, this chapter will return to 19th century ideas in the texts that proliferated around the practice of irregular warfare on the frontier. I shall argue that distinctions between regular and irregular conflict played a vital role in how the Xhosa were represented in military texts. Issues of dominance and power located within the parameters of the colonial theatre of war will be addressed in this section. I shall pose the question: who was doing what to whom? In fashioning a response to this inquiry, what surfaces most immediately is British imperial incursion into the territory of the Xhosa. However, it is not hyperbolic to claim that the Xhosa determined a number of the conditions that delineated the type of warfare conducted on the frontier. The impasse that developed during the 8th Frontier Wars, particularly in the Amatole and Waterkloof theatres, tended to infuse textual renditions of the conflict. Most soldiers who wrote about the 8th Frontier War were participants in the campaigns in that area and it was used for its dramatic natural scenery and for its narrative import as a sanguinary and melancholy 'space'.⁷

Background to the 8th Frontier War

The traces of the 8th Frontier War that remain invoke a story of tragedy, shock and displacement. After the conclusion of the 7th Frontier War, Sir Harry Smith was appointed as Governor to the Cape in 1847.⁸ Smith also exercised the position of Commander-in-Chief of the 8th Frontier War until 1852, after which his governorship was taken over by Sir George Cathcart. Prior to the 8th Frontier War, Smith conducted a gubernatorial tour of the Eastern Cape in which he not only compelled obeisance from the Xhosa chiefs but in a series of public speeches, in towns such as King William's Town, informed the Xhosa of the British policy to annex the land between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers. This territory was divided into areas which were to be parceled out to British settlers, Mfengu allies and a number of 'loyal' chiefs. The resulting strips of land were intended to bear a resemblance to the British county system and indeed bore the names of English counties and cities. Godlonton recorded that,

"This region was subdivided into the counties of Lincoln, Bedford, Cambridge, Middlesex, Sussex, Yorkshire and Northumberland – the whole being apportioned to the respective Chief and followers, who came forward and solemnly declared themselves to bear true allegiance to the British Crown".⁹

Numbers of the Xhosa, who were now British subjects, were to be confined to the territories between the Keiskamma and Kei Rivers. This area was to be controlled by Sir Harry Smith, in his self-represented role as *paterfamilias*, and by a number of appointed Native Commissioners. The configuration of the

⁵ Lalu, *Deaths of Hintsa*, Human Sciences Research Council Press, Cape Town, 2009, pp 9 – 15.

⁶ Ibid., 2009. See Chapter 3, p 101.

⁷ One such 'space' was 'Mount Misery' on the plateau of the Waterkloof. See previous chapter for a discussion on the landscape and on notions of 'place' and 'space' as per Le Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1988.

⁸ The conclusion of the 7th Frontier War also saw the end of Pottinger's term of office as Governor.

⁹ Godlonton and Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War*, 1962, p 7.

Xhosa people in the quote above was to approximate the model of the British settler located in South African versions of English 'counties'. In Kaffraria, trade was to be encouraged and the value of money inculcated amongst the Xhosa. In addition, it was intended that sheep farming take over from the centrality of cattle in the Xhosa political economy.¹⁰ As Peires points out, Smith's more outlandish policies were incongruent with the practicalities of colonial administration in the Eastern Cape but despite this lack of organizational authority the Xhosa were to feel the immediate effects of land dispossession and overcrowding in the territories to which they had been banished.¹¹

In the Eastern Cape, a further series of crises emerged around the attempted arrest of Mlanjeni, the influential Xhosa prophet who had been active amongst the Xhosa from the latter part of the 1840s. In 1850 the Lieutenant Governor, MacKinnon, sent a contingent of police to apprehend Mlanjeni who, protected by his followers, managed to evade the colonial penal system. Around the same time, Sandile refused to attend a meeting with Smith in October 1850 and as a punitive measure Smith precipitously replaced him with Charles Brownlee, the British agent of the 'Ngqika'. This bewildering shift in policy led to a meeting of Xhosa chiefs, who after consulting with Mlanjeni, were instructed by the prophet to order every man who supported their cause to kill one head of cattle (only dun and yellow cattle).¹² In addition, men were instructed to sacrifice cattle to Mlanjeni: instructions which bore a close resemblance to those delivered during the Cattle Killing catastrophe. Most headmen followed these precepts while Mlanjeni "also made preparations to doctor the Xhosa for war."¹³ In a prescient letter quoted by Godlonton in his 'Narrative of the Kaffir War' an anonymous colonial writer proposed that,

"The question to the Prophet [Mlangeni] by all the great Chiefs was – what they were to do under present circumstances – the English had their land, and were treating them like dogs, drying up the country with the sun, and if left alone would starve them all to death?"¹⁴

Some Eastern Cape settlers, who had their ears closer to the ground than Sir Harry Smith, were alarmed by what they perceived as preparations for war and induced Smith to return to the Eastern Cape.¹⁵ Once there, Smith initiated what was intended to be a conciliatory meeting with the Xhosa but it degenerated into one of his perorations against the chiefs in which Maqomo was singled out for particular contumely. On the 24th December, a force of 650 men under Colonel MacKinnon, comprising soldiers from the CMR, 6th, 43rd and 73rd Regiments and auxiliary forces, was sent "up the bushy valley of the Keiskamma"¹⁶ as a spectacle of British military strength. Lucas refers to it laconically as a "sort of royal progress in fact".¹⁷

¹⁰ Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 2003.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2003.

¹² Long, *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol 2, 1949 and copies of the Graham's Town Journal, 1850.

The 8th Frontier War was presaged by a number of environmental calamities: drought, swarms of locusts and an earth tremor in the Eastern Cape all of which contributed to the unease that pervaded the area.

¹³ Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 2003, p 33.

¹⁴ Godlonton, *Narrative of the Kaffir War*, 1962, p 15. The tone of the letter has the stamp of Charles Brownlee but it is anonymous in Godlonton's text.

¹⁵ Long, *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, 1948, p 126. "We farmers that had seen and sufferd in the last two wars is not to be decved [deceived] with all His Excellency [Sir Harry Smith] Proclamations and promeses for we know that if a Kaffer comes as a frend to worn you you may rely on them." All spelling and syntax 'sic'.

¹⁶ Godlonton, *Narrative of the Kaffir War*, 1962, p 48.

¹⁷ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa*, 1975, p 173.

This force was ambushed in a narrow, forested 'neck', the 'Boomah' Pass, on the 24 December 1850.¹⁸ The Xhosa then proceeded to attack a number of farms and trading stores in the area and on the 25th December the military villages of Auckland, Woburn and Juanasburg were attacked during which forty colonials (men and boys) were killed.¹⁹

The 8th Frontier War continued for nearly three years, it extended into the early months of 1853, and was the most prolonged war of the three under review. It was distinctive for the military and political alliance between the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi most of whom came from the Kat River area. A significant number of Cape Mounted Riflemen also defected to the Xhosa. The major theatres of war were the Amathole mountain range and the Waterkloof area near Fort Beaufort; the Fish River 'bush' and the Northern Front around the small town of Whittlesea.²⁰ There were also British incursions into the trans-Kei territory which had been subject to campaigns in all three of the wars. Increased levels of callousness, violence and frustration were particularly evident in the 8th Frontier War and these were to find expression in the campaign narratives.

Campaigning: the 'men' versus the 'enemy'

Soldiers had particular views on colonial warfare and their attitudes about how their opponents fought had implications for their representations of the 'enemy'. Military writers delineated the Xhosa but they also identified themselves in certain ways and inherent to most soldiers' texts were the analogies that they made between themselves and the Xhosa. Before embarking on an examination of textual representations of the Xhosa as fighters, it is apposite to consider soldiers' self-representations and how they constituted themselves in relation to the Xhosa. Who composed the military in the Eastern Cape in the 1850s? In December 1850, the garrison strength within the Cape Colony comprised five battalions and together with one battalion in Natal was made up of a total of "3,369 all ranks".²¹ Numbers were to increase to approximately 8000 officers and ranks during the 8th Frontier War.²² The battalions were made up of companies from a variety of regiments: nineteen regiments in total served over the three wars; this number excludes members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and the Commissariat.²³

Most representations of the Xhosa assume a deeply embedded dichotomy between 'civilization' and 'savagery'. In this construction, the regular army is distinguished as 'civilized' by its association with 'western' values, with regimental pride, training, habit, uniform and military spectacle. Soldiers tended to employ organic metaphors of civilization and 'Britishness' in ways that were 'fixed' in the texts: for instance phrases pertaining to their 'stout-heartedness' and 'stamina' repeatedly appear in the narratives.²⁴ However, there is an uneasiness found in the narratives: as a category, 'civilization' appears to be as unstable as 'savagery' and the narratives of soldiers also included diversions from metropolitan army policy. Nevertheless, other factors influenced the corpus of ideas which

¹⁸ Correctly the Elugudeni Pass.

¹⁹ The inhabitants of Juanasberg saw the smoke rising from the other villages and most of them fled to Alice.

²⁰ Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 2003.

²¹ Boyden and Guy, *'ashes and blood'*, 1999, p 44.

²² Ibid., 1999, p 44.

²³ Everson, *The South African 1853 Medal*, 1978.

²⁴ See Godlonton, *Narrative of the Kaffir War*, 1962.

differentiated the army from 'savage warfare'. One of these was the ranking system in the army which mirrored and perpetuated the British class system. Rank conferred distinction on the officers and designated the place of the private soldiers. However, generally the ranks were accorded the status of 'men' and defended their right to be called such.²⁵ But, these assertions of masculinity were liable to slip as ordinary soldiers often were deemed as socially ambiguous.²⁶ Civilians tended to perceive soldiers as a subdivision of the failed working class and at a time when this sector was conflated in the public mind with the criminal classes, soldiers were barely distinguishable from vagabonds. There was a social chasm between the officers and the 'men' who had been swept up from the ignominy of indigence by recruiting parties. As Holmes writes:

"...most of those who enlisted were unemployed, driven into the army by what one senior officer called the 'compulsion of destitution'. Sergeant J MacMullen thought that this amounted to two-thirds of recruits in 1846...the soldier's poor pay, hard life and low status in society all conspired to make service in the ranks the last resort for many men who took the king's shilling."²⁷

Colonials, especially, were disparaging of 'the military' and many of them only tolerated the regulars because their presence provided an advancement of economic opportunities. Furthermore the culmination of military progress: training, regimental uniforms and regalia were considered liabilities in the colonies. Hence, the regiments in the colonies often portrayed opportunistic and inconsistent patterns themselves: for instance, they changed their uniforms to 'bush dress' and they introduced the ambush as a counter-tactic.²⁸ This unsettled their fixed identities as 'military men' and sometimes resulted in a similitude to the very guerillas they were opposing: if one sustains the logic, they utilized tactics similar to those of the 'savages' they presumed to transcend. However, even though colonial warfare might have 'complicated the line' between invader and the invaded, textual accounts of the wars continued to delineate and assert differences between the two.

By the early 1850s, the expression 'savage warfare' was a familiar feature in contemporary journalism. Godlonton provides a comparison between the Xhosa and the regulars which was a pervasive theme in frontier war narratives. He proposes that:

"There is something in savage warfare which commands admiration – if not for military gorgeousness, at least for the beauty of mechanism, and in some particulars a Kaffir Chief possesses vast advantages over a British General. Picture the numerous bands that Sandilli can call into action in twenty-four hours! And look, on the other hand, at the time and trouble necessary to the enrolment of Volunteers under Sir Harry Smith. Look at the equipment of the respective force, - one party clad in little else than nature's garments; the other toiling under a heavy knapsack and accoutrements, which greatly encumber him.....Climate cannot be strongly urged, as British stamina braves

²⁵ McKay, *Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970. By the mid-Nineteenth Century, there were more consistent attempts to educate soldiers and McKay points out that, "the rank and file of the present day are not merely physical machines to be used as automata, but are men of mental abilities, many being qualified for higher positions among mankind than circumstances have placed them in." McKay's book was first published in 1871.

²⁶ This was an attitude that prevailed particular during times of peace, however, the army tended to gain lustre during periods of war. South African colonials, who were exceptionally sensitive to social status, remained wary of the military even though they were the 'defenders' of the settlers.

²⁷ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 2001, p 149.

²⁸ Maxwell and McGeogh, *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, 1977.

alike the sun of India, or the frost of Greenland. Another feature is the rapidity of Xhosa movements, and the stealth by which they can insinuate themselves into a district. Today not a Kaffir is to be seen or *smelled out* [his italics] within eighty miles – tomorrow the country is over-run with them. The WORD (sic) is given to go forth and despoil – the numerous signal fires speedily shew how implicitly the command has been obeyed.”²⁹

Godlonton’s passage sums up a number of concerns that preoccupied military writers and most of the representations of the Xhosa in the campaign narratives followed a similar order. Biblical allusions to the “WORD”, and to burning bushes which constituted signal fires presaging war, are representative of Godlonton’s ironic application of Judeo-Christian tropes to the ‘unconverted’.

Representations of soldiers’ own ‘realities’ in the narratives often entailed bravado and narrow escapes were the bread -and -butter of campaign narratives.³⁰

Winding through the dense thorns we soon found the “kraal,” and the men having collected together the cattle, we were puzzling our brains how to return. This was a poser. To ascend the cliff by the way we came was impossible; whilst on the other side ran the Keiskamma river, wide and deep. Clearly, the only way out of the difficulty was to find a ford. We were diligently occupied in searching for one, when we perceived a mounted rifleman on the other side, who was gesticulating very excitedly, and evidently trying to warn us of some danger. As he was inaudible, one of the mounted men rode down to the bank, and reported that he was urging us to make our escape, as the bush behind us was full of Kaffirs.

The warning came not a whit too soon; within twenty yards of us, creeping through the bush in all directions, came a whole horde of naked savages, yelling and flourishing their guns and assegais in evident triumph at the success of their stratagem. Loudly shouting at the men who had lagged behind us, to warn them of their peril, we put our horses at full gallop along the borders of the river, anxiously looking for any sign of a ford by which we might cross. It was a ride for life!...Fortunately to our great joy, we hit upon a ford at last; but it was a close shave...”³¹

Military narratives suggested that soldiering was aleatory: fate was seen to be the transcendental roller of dice and the ‘ordinary soldier’ tended to protect himself from harm in a number of ‘magical’ ways.³² This ‘folkloric’ aspect to the army was not often alluded to in officers’ narratives: officers tended to write ‘rationally’ and to avoid recording their men’s more superstitious beliefs. It was MacKay, a non-commissioned officer in the 74th Regiment, who portrayed the irrationalities of his men’s conversations before a skirmish in the Amatoles:

“Men of the 91st informed us that a force of troops were beaten down the ridge by the enemy in a former war. We thought it likely, for apparently a few resolute men stationed at the top might defy thousands to ascend. A Corporal Walker, who sat among the number, remarked, “I shall put some loopers (ounce ball cut into four parts) “into my musket, and if any Kaffir comes within range he will not run far afterwards; but look here,” he said turning to a man named Lyttle, “everything is chance in time of war; my wife is in Cape Town, as you know; take this pair of scissors – they were the last thing she gave me when we parted; she told me they had been her mother’s, and that I was not to lose them on any account – therefore take them and should Walker not be with you at the bivouac fire to-morrow night, do not forget but give them to Mrs Walker.” “And how do you know,” said

²⁹ Godlonton, *Narrative of the Kaffir War of 1850 -51*, 1962, pp 101, 102.

³⁰ Ibid., 1962, p 55.

³¹ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 188.

³² MacKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970.

Lyttle, “but I might be shot myself?” “No fear of that.” said Walker. We all laughed at the conversation but could not help observing the air of sadness with which he spoke to his comrade.”³³

In an exemplar of tidy narrative closure, Walker indeed was shot dead in the ensuing skirmish as was another soldier, Cumming who was killed in an advance towards a ‘heavy jungle’ from which the regiment had detected firing. Cumming’s premonition took the form of a dream in which he saw his ‘poor old mother’ and according to MacKay, Cumming’s spirits were very low prior to the regiment leaving its bivouac. MacKay reflected on these coincidences and proposed: “Is there a something – a connecting link between mortality and immortality, through the land of dreams – a hidden half-ideal mystery that foretells a pending event?”³⁴ He concludes:

“There was a veil of darkness drawn between their mind’s eye and the events which were about to take place. Each felt an uneasy certainty that something would befall him, but fate or futurity denied them the privilege of peering through the gloom to know what that something was.”³⁵

It is tempting to compare the soldiers’ convictions with the ‘magical practices’ of the Xhosa and present this as another incidence of slippage in the sense that soldiers’ ‘lucky charms’ were not different in appearance from the ‘charm-sticks’ carried by the Xhosa.³⁶ However, the two were distinctive and representations of Xhosa ‘magic’ were most likely to feed into colonial misrepresentations and the denial of the social fabric and of the agency of the Xhosa.³⁷

Envy of the Xhosa and representations of evasion

Dreams, scissors, the talisman, luck and fate, the ‘bullet that did not have my name on it’: these were all the rather pathetic reminders of sudden and violent death, or its evasion, and all part of the congeries of imaginings that permeated colonial warfare. The ‘imaginary’ also was invoked in relation to the enemy: one area which preoccupied military writers was the ability of the Xhosa to use the guerilla tactic of evasion. Lucas’s narrative below conveys something close to envy in its espoused desire to possess the abilities of the Xhosa who were perceived as being able to evade bullets and ‘to sink into the earth’.

“Look at the wily Kaffir and take a lesson. Observe him as he creeps noiselessly on, anxiously making for the shelter of some friendly ant-heap or trifling irregularity in the ground, instantaneously dropping when your musket is pointed at him, and leaving no surface exposed to view. How adroitly he springs up when your bullet has whizzed harmlessly over his head, and with what deliberation he takes aim in return. Then again, how cunningly he strives to gain that little strip of bush on the flank unobserved, and seems to sink into the earth when you discover him. On the other hand, regard the unfortunate pipeclay bearing his great coat and furred blanket, as Christian in the “Pilgrim’s Progress” did his sins, in an intolerable burthen, on his shoulders, steadfastly walking after the same Kaffir in the open plain, marching along bolt upright, as if on parade; giving his wily foe five shots to his one. And disdaining concealment: and you will at once appreciate the respective merits of theory and practice.”³⁸

³³ MacKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970, p 32.

³⁴ Ibid., 1970, p 36.

³⁵ Ibid., 1970, p 37.

³⁶ Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2009.

³⁷ Ibid., 2009.

³⁸ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 147.

In this rendition, the bodies of the Xhosa are configured as mythical and powerful. However, instead of soldiers springing up from sown dragon's teeth, Xhosa warriors are represented as having a supernatural ability to sink back into the earth. Frontier guerilla warfare was far removed from the model of the 'decisive battle' in which the enemy is to be pursued by the victor who then prevents him from reforming his battle lines. In the Frontier Wars, any attempt at pursuit was frustrated because the Xhosa used the tactic of retreat so successfully. In a much quoted description, Bisset provides an account of the Xhosa capacity for elusiveness which he experienced during the 7th Frontier War when he was part of a column under General Somerset somewhere in the 'bush' between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers:

"By this time the infantry having come up were sent to attack, and the cavalry was detached to the flanks to intercept or attack. The Kafirs fought desperately at first; but, as in all Kafir wars or bush fighting, when the savages find the tide of fortune going against them they disperse in a manner which no other troops in the world possess, they disappear like needles in straw."³⁹

Drayson writing of the 8th Frontier War narrates a similar capacity when the Xhosa ambushed military wagon convoys:

"To be completely guarded against these Kaffir surprises is next to impossible, the whole thing being done in a few minutes; and perhaps during that short time, two or three spans of oxen are whisked off, which one might as well attempt to follow as to chase clouds."⁴⁰

Drayson also summed up the characteristic guerilla tactic of retreat in the following passage:

"If Kaffirs are attacked in the bush, and they find that they are likely to get the worst of a fight, they do not hesitate a moment about retreating. There is no false delicacy with them, and they are away as fast as their legs can carry them to a more secure and distant locality, only to return again on the first convenient opportunity."⁴¹

Drayson was not entirely disparaging, rather he goes on to compare the Xhosa favorably with the regular troops. The Xhosa had decamped but this action was not necessarily because of panic; it was a consequence of tactical considerations. The Xhosa took on regular forces but at some point in a skirmish they 'melted away' which enabled them to 'reform and regroup' to engage at a later stage of the campaign.⁴² Representations of Xhosa tactics such as these almost always assumed that tactics were integral to the 'natural' practices or habits of the Xhosa. There was very little discussion around who devised these tactics and how they were selected in relation to their efficacy. The 'histories' of the Xhosa presented in the narratives did not provide much of a 'military history' of their leadership and the development of guerrilla tactics; rather the historical focus was on information based on ethnological models and the 'origins' of the Xhosa. This emphasis on the lineage and descent of the Xhosa, which privileged what was considered to be the 'natural order' of humanity and the proper place of the 'body', appears to indicate that military history was patently a 'western' preoccupation and only worthy of

³⁹ Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875, pg 86.

⁴⁰ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes Amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*, 1858, p 27.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1858, p 27.

⁴² The 'problem' not only concerns 19th Century military renditions but can be found in more recent 'resistance' literature. There is a paucity of analysis of how the Xhosa fought and the ideas behind their fighting.

western armies. Yet despite this lacuna there was much written about the Xhosa mode of fighting and as discussed above they were envied for their skills of evasion. Retreat was an unwieldy and dangerous process for regular armed soldiers supported by artillery: the process was reliant on a string of army commands which hampered a rapid withdrawal and a further impediment was the regrouping of the horse drawn artillery and the cavalry mounts. The ability to 'disappear' was almost impossible for the regular soldier because of the impediments of his uniform, his weaponry, although all these appurtenances became compromised during campaigning.⁴³

There is a further insinuation found in texts such as Lucas's which is based on the idea that the British soldier was not of the earth and hence was not a 'natural' being but a 'civilized' one trained in the art of military skill. Xhosa nakedness and their ability to creep through thorny thickets placed them more within the realm of the supernatural, or sometimes bestial, rather than the human. This is where the texts are particularly contradictory: the Xhosa are envied for their lack of constraining uniform but clothes were also perceived as the mark of 'civilization'. Ross argues that clothing probably is the "most universal medium whereby people all over the world make statements to claim status".⁴⁴ He suggests the use of clothing which almost completely covered the body, long sleeves and high necklines, denoted 'civilization' in the 19th Century; whereas "the display of bare skin in the torso arms, legs or feet, let alone near-nudity, was savage."⁴⁵ The latter expressions of 'savagery' however, were represented in a variety of ways in the military texts. The Xhosa, as we have seen, were envied for their lack of uniform and chiefs were often portrayed in the texts and in illustrations as 'dignified' and 'noble' when they were draped in leopard skin.⁴⁶ Chiefs who wore the vestiges of British military uniform were held up to particular contumely. On the other hand, officers in mufti were not viewed as portraying uncivilized behavior; rather they wore 'bush' jackets because that they had been drawn inexorably into a 'savage' war.⁴⁷

The imagined 'warrior'

This study argues that military narratives provided a significant means for configuring, and reconfiguring, the colonial subjectivities of the Xhosa. As we have seen, the publication of narratives of the wars in the 19th Century resulted in the discursive conceptualization of autochthonous peoples within a broader, global sphere. These transnational narratives contributed to the elaboration of the iconography of the Xhosa: who the Xhosa 'were', their imagined identities, and what it took to fight them. The authors of the texts saw themselves as going beyond mere story-telling and transposed themselves into more

⁴³ Some regiments such as the 6th Regiment clung to their redcoats. At the end of the 8th Frontier War: "An eyewitness described them [the 6th Regiment] as having long beards; red coats patched with leather, canvas and cloth of all colours, straw hats, wideawakes and tattered trousers while their broken boots revealed stockingless feet." Everson, *The South Africa 1853 Medal*, 1978, p 55.

⁴⁴ Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 2009, p 85.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2009, p 86.

⁴⁶ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853; Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 2009.

⁴⁷ Photographs depicting British regular army officers in the Crimea in 1854 show the same casual approach to dress.

varied realms which allowed them to comment on events and to produce 'histories' of the frontier wars, despite their rather unconvincing protestations to the contrary in their prefaces.⁴⁸

The narratives included stories of the Xhosa and how they were configured by the imaginary and by desire, that is, how soldiers wanted to see the Xhosa. These forms often demonstrated both domination and ambivalence towards the enemy. How does one analyze these irreconcilables? Robert Young's *Colonial Desire* provides insight into the hybridity and desire found within 19th century colonial texts.⁴⁹ One strand of Young's argument is that "English" identity was prone to an 'internal dissonance' and was distinguished by its sexual desire for the 'other'. Representations of the Xhosa might have contained intimations of desire in relation to the physical qualities of the Xhosa but, as mentioned earlier, far more prevalent were expressions of another vice: envy. In fact, women as objects of colonial desire, a central theme in Young's thesis, generally were marginal to the campaign narrative. Women were either obliquely positioned or merely omitted. Heterosexual desire was usually confined to innuendo; this is evident in the writing of Buck Adams and in that of James MacKay who made sly references to Colonel Somerset's 'coloured concubines'.⁵⁰

Theoretical concessions to the imaginative most often have been associated with the writing of Edward Said. Said's indebtedness to Foucauldian concepts enables him to privilege the 'imaginary' and the subjective in his exposition of colonialism in ways that allow for the influence of material conditions but that did not concede a determining role to the economy. In addition, Said argues that 'Orientalist' texts create knowledge in an abstract sense but are also constitutive of an oriental 'reality' for western viewers. This position is significant because it proposes that there is a western imaginary that shapes the 'Orient'. So, were the Xhosa wraiths of the phantasmagorical? Was the 'clash' between the Xhosa and the regulars an imaginary one and was the Eastern Cape frontier, a capacious metaphor in itself and a space that might well constitute an African version of the 'orient', also a fantasy? The response to these questions is knotty. The military books were constitutive of a particular 'reality' and contained traces of events but they also contained imagined 'contact zones' with the enemy.⁵¹

Military texts were ambivalent: they were suffused by desire and envy and they contained both positive and negative renderings of the Xhosa. In a telling contradictory passage, Drayson a Royal Artillery officer gives his opinion of the Xhosa:

"Although indifferent marksmen, they are not inferior to the average of our private soldiers and they are fast improving. Their training from childhood consists in a course of assegai -throwing and a cunning way of

⁴⁸ Their histories are also infused by contemporary, global literature: so instead of producing merely localized narratives they also proved to be 'intertextual'.

⁴⁹ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 1995.

⁵⁰ In his unpublished diary, Buck Adams's rather condescending encomium to 'Kychee' (Kaaitjie) is indicative of the allusions to sexual desire found in some narratives. "She was a Hottentot, and when I think of all the troubles and hardships she went through for my sake, the many sacrifices she made for my comfort, I am sure she is not unworthy of at least one page in my diary..." Gordon Brown, *Narrative of Private Buck Adams*, 1941, pp 249, 250.

⁵¹ See Chapter 7 on the 'ethnography' of the Xhosa. Representations of the Xhosa were often repeated in the various narratives which lead to knowledge of the Xhosa becoming more widespread but also typified them as a people.

approaching and surprising an enemy. As they are in such cases destitute of clothes, they move through the thorny bush with great ease, and are in such light marching order that their impediments are nothing in comparison with those of our soldiers, heavily burdened and tightly strapped. A Kaffir is also seasoned by hardship from childhood, and keeps fat and sleek on roots and berries which he picks up, occasionally eked out with scraps of meat; while Englishmen rapidly lose their form and flesh by living on the tough old ox that is killed and immediately served out to them as rations....The individual courage of the frontier Kaffirs is undeniable and they have given many proofs of it..."⁵²

There are shades of Godlonton in this quote and while Drayson is suggesting that the Xhosa should be admired for their 'individual courage' there is also a 'primitivization' of the polity. Xhosa children, for instance, are presented as existing in a category somewhere between hunter-gatherers and scavengers. This point amounts to a profound denial that the Xhosa had cohesive agriculturalist societies reliant on animal husbandry and crop farming. The regular army knew all too well that this social matrix existed as they spent much of their time during the campaign trying to destroy it.⁵³ And yet Drayson combines accusations of savagery with a perspicacious remark on the effects of colonization:

"The frontier Kaffir, is in nearly every case, a rogue, a thief, and a liar, no one will, I believe, deny; there is a great deal, however, to be said in excuse for him. He is a savage, uneducated, and misled by the bad example of his forefathers, and he is generally encroached upon by the white men, who, after a war, most unceremoniously appropriate a certain number of square miles of territory, and tell the original owner that he must either move on, or that he is only a squatter on sufferance."⁵⁴

In the following passage, Lucas also configures the 8th Frontier War as being disadvantageous to the British:

"Long night marches, keeping us sometimes twelve or thirteen hours in the saddle, undertaken for the purposes of surprising the Kaffirs an, and inflicting generally more loss of cattle than of human life upon the foe (who could always if he wished, avoid coming to close quarters, and could watch his opportunity to get us entangled in some ambush or difficult position where the advantage was always on his own side), tended to prolong almost indefinitely the campaign, which dragged on its protracted existence for the space of three years, and was not terminated until 1853....The war brought no glory to our armies, nor any substantial benefit, it exposed our troops to continual fatigue and great privations."⁵⁵

This ambivalence can be found in the predicament that faced the regular army: they were drawn into a remote war which resulted in regular soldiers being killed in a country that was perceived as inconsequential in colonial terms. In vestiges of the texts there also seemed to be a lingering acknowledgment that the Xhosa had some rights to their land. This is evident in McKay's apostrophe which concerned the regular army in India but could be construed as generalized condemnation of warfare:

"Ye crowned heads who rule the world and whose lips can pronounce peace or war! – ye master minds, who are adepts in politics and who are the true rulers of empires and kingdoms! – think, pause before you issue the dread

⁵² Drayson, *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*, 1858, p 20.

⁵³ King, *Campaigning in Kaffriland*, 1853.

⁵⁴ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858, p 21.

⁵⁵ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 189.

order for carnage; for were you present - as the soldier has to be - in scenes of wretchedness, misery and woe, acquisition of territory, impositions on neighbouring kingdoms or states, and all but honour would leave your minds, and you would "study war no more""⁵⁶

The context of this adjuration was the discovery of the bodies of a 'Moorish' family after their house had been hit by a shell in 'Hindustan'. McKay draws a figurative distinction between the politician and the soldier who is by profession 'there' and forced to bear witness to atrocities.

Representations of the Xhosa as fighters

"Haec olim meminisse juvabit."

The epigraph above, a quote from Virgil, is included in King's preface to *Campaigning in Kaffirland*. It can be roughly translated in the following way: perhaps someday it will be helpful or it will be pleasing to have remembered even these things. This epigraph gives the readers a foretaste of what is to come the 'even these things' alludes to fighting, death, inclement weather and hardship are part of the exigencies of campaigning. It is an evocative quote which subtly excludes nostalgia and encourages notions of contemplation and self-knowledge. Yet contemplation rarely extended to the effects of colonial violence in King's narrative. The focus in the book is on various actions in the Amatholes and the Waterkloof ranges and the narrative takes the reader through detailed accounts of actions and skirmishes against the Xhosa. How did King see the Xhosa as fighters? He records that,

"The advantages which the Kaffir possesses on such ground over regular troops is immense; armed only with his gun, or assegais, free and unencumbered by pack, clothing, or accoutrements, his naked body covered with grease, he climbs the rocks, and works through the familiar bush with the stealth and agility of the tiger; while the infantry soldier, in European clothing, loaded with three days' rations, sixty rounds of ball cartridge, water canteen, bayonet, and heavy musket, labours after him with the pluck and perseverance which none but the British soldiers possess, and which somehow or other, in spite of every obstacle in all climes, ever wins its way in the end. Sir Harry Smith, in his dispatch of the 18th December, 1851, to Earl Grey, give a very just estimate of the character of the enemy with whom he had thus to contend, whom he describes as formidable as the Algerines or Circassians, and says, "Fraternalized with the numerous and well-trained Hottentot race, they are, in their mode of guerilla warfare most formidable enemies, as much so as I ever encountered; and I speak with some experience in war to which I may lay claim."⁵⁷

The quote sums up a number of the major themes in the military narratives and its invocation of the topography of the Amatole region demonstrates a consistent trope in the narratives of all three of the wars. The inclusion of Smith's opinion of the formidable character of the enemy and the comparison made between the Xhosa with 'Algerines' and 'Circassians' diverges from the usual analogies made in the texts. The rest of the quote provides well-worn 'information' about the Xhosa. In this context, Sir Harry Smith's reference to the Xhosa as redoubtable enemies is indicative of his attempts to save face with the metropolitan government. In this instance, the enemy has been elevated in the text to demonstrate reasons for the prolongation of a costly war.

⁵⁶ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 52.

⁵⁷ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1854, pp 145, 146.

The ethnographic chapters in the narratives delineated the Xhosa in ways which were informed by contemporary theory of autochthonous peoples: in general stadial theories were invoked and the Xhosa are considered to be within the ambit of Prichardian 'universal mankind'. The army had closer and more varied contact with indigenous people on the frontier and hence tended to invoke experiential knowledge of the Xhosa.⁵⁸ Did knowledge gained while on campaign change the way soldiers thought about the Xhosa? The response to this is complicated. Firstly, the narratives were troped as rising from personal experience but their 'knowledge' base was collective and the authors were indebted to insights of former narrators. So the originality of the renditions of their experiences is dubious. Nevertheless, the authors provided significantly more detailed accounts of skirmishing and campaigning than in the somewhat perfunctory ethnographic sections and as is evidenced in the selections taken from King and Drayson the representations were invested with the conflictual tensions of envy and vulnerability. Although some of the narratives appear suspiciously close to adventure stories, there were attempts to separate fact from fiction: the military narratives were not presented as fictional accounts but rather as works that were to be taken seriously even though some of them offered 'amusing' vignettes of campaigning. It was primarily the ethnographic chapters that provided this gravitas.

The Xhosa as 'worthy foes'

One would expect that the privations and military setbacks experienced by the regular army would contribute to a flood of condemnation of the Xhosa and that the representations of Xhosa fighters would be excessively negative. But this was not always so: the wars also led to cynicism and its putative 'benefits' to the empire. We have already seen in the previous chapter that the enemy was an object of ethnographic interest and within that domain was not always represented with undiluted negativity. Prichardian notions of monogenesis tended to be the dominant 'discourse' in these chapters. In an examination of the campaigning parts of the narrative one can detect prosaic reasons for soldierly disenchantment with Eastern Cape 'frontier' warfare. While on campaign, soldiers fought in a 'savage' and desultory war which was often seen as just another posting before moving on to India or 'home'. Perhaps because of this fluidity of movement there were also vestiges of comprehension of the claims of the other side to 'their' land. Soldiers did not lay claim to land in the way settlers did and postings were perceived as being either salubrious or insalubrious.⁵⁹ Fleming, an Anglican military chaplain based in King William's Town during the 8th Frontier War, provides an illustration of these discontinuities in his description of the Xhosa as fighters in the 8th Frontier War:

"They are, however, by no means cowardly – indeed far otherwise. In all positions the Kaffirs are fine, noble, manly fellows, as bold as lions and as daring as eagles, and very unlike the Hottentot tribes who are born cowards, and dastardly and mean by nature. They despise personal danger of all kinds, and like most other savages, are careless and regardless of life. In war, their mode of bush-fighting is perfect, and as experience has proved, they are fully equal to cope with the best disciplined troops. Their skirmishing is very good, and were they better shots with the

⁵⁸ Graham, *Memoirs 1851-1853*, M/s No 8402-5; Alfred Drayson, *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs*, 1858 and even the highest of Tories, Edward Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, 1849.

⁵⁹ See McKay who makes frequent analogies between India and South Africa. Some with hindsight: for example, he refers to the 'reasons' for the Indian Mutiny and compares them to the 'causes' of the 'Kat River Rebellion'. *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970, pp 11, 55, 56 and 84 -85 (Indian Mutiny reference).

musket, and well supplied with arms and ammunition, they would soon expel all intruders from their mountain fastnesses.”⁶⁰

The slippage of the ‘their’ in the above quote is significant and implies that the ‘manly fellows’ only required more ‘western’ military training to defeat the British. The quote is also indicative of the received attitudes of the time: Fleming is disparaging of the Khoikhoi as ‘born cowards’ and this is echoed in Lucas’s narrative in which he describes the Khoikhoi as “the most reckless and degraded of mortals”.⁶¹

In the following passage Drayson also provided a number of positive representations of the Xhosa:

“There is a great mistake prevalent in the minds of most English people, and that is, their habit of under-rating the Kaffir as a foe. He is looked upon as a naked savage, armed only with a spear, and hardly worth powder and shot. But in reality the Kaffirs are a formidable race, and, from their skill in so many arts in which we are deficient, are much to be dreaded. Nearly every frontier Kaffir is now provided with a gun, thanks to the English traders, and very many have horses. The Kaffirs, being also particularly active and always in excellent training, make splendid light infantry. I believe it was Napoleon who remarked that legs won as many battles as arms: should this be true, the Kaffirs certainly have a great advantage over us, as they can go three miles at least to our two.”⁶²

Drayson goes on to suggest that

“Our victories over the barbarians of Africa have not been so very great, but that we might condescend to take some useful lessons from these men, savages as they are...any man who has seen the Kaffirs or Hottentots approach dangerous game, - their perseverance, courage, activity, and hardihood, combined with caution and cunning, may easily understand that they would employ these gifts in a manner that would make them anything but despicable enemies.”⁶³

Stadial models found in the ethnographic chapters frequently eluded writers such as Drayson who mixed the terms ‘savage’ and ‘barbarian’ with impunity. However, the common allusion to Xhosa ‘activity’ and their emergent skill with weaponry such as firearms provides the reader with a sense of the Xhosa as fighters which is fairly composite. Drayson’s reference to English traders is also significant. It was common knowledge at the time that some Eastern Cape settlers and visiting traders, some of whom were American, trafficked in firearms. Complicities existed on a number of levels: through trade and through the enforced collisions of skirmishing. As we have seen in the passages written by Drayson, representations were contradictory: the Xhosa were commended for their fighting skills and in particular for having more appropriate tactics for guerilla warfare but they were also mired in representations of ‘savagery’ and stereotypes of ‘thievery’ and ‘cunning’ abounded in the texts. To compound these comments, ethnographic delineations of the Xhosa focused on the fixed, prior existence of a ‘race’ from which the Xhosa descended, often as the avatars of a degenerate strain. In the chapters on fighting the

⁶⁰ Fleming, *Kaffraria and Its Inhabitants*, 1853, pp 103,104.

⁶¹ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975, p 91. These accounts of the Khoi were contested: Lumley Graham in his unpublished diary considered the Khoi to be braver adversaries and better fighters than the Xhosa. Graham, *Memoirs 1851 - 1853*, M/s No 8402-5.

⁶² Drayson, *Sporting Scenes*, 1858, p 38

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1858, p 38.

Xhosa far more uneasy and inconclusive representations emerge. The Xhosa were delineated in multifarious ways and one mode which is commonplace is the trope of the 'worthy foe'.

A number of authors have argued that the elevation of the enemy by the British regular army was a product of their desire to represent the Xhosa as worthy opponents who were equal to British bellicosity.⁶⁴ An appraisal of the 'military plots' that are embedded in the narratives is a useful: there can be no war story without 'sides' and the 'other side' has to have some ability in warfare. For the stories to sustain themselves they simply had to have a credible enemy. If the Xhosa had lacked skill and belligerence, the power of the narrative would have been diminished and it would no longer have been a 'war story'. Instead, it would have constituted a tale of total victory and this would have presented a very different plot: that of carnage and unmitigated tragedy. The complexities of warfare, however violent and undermining the campaign, did not allow for narratives to convey such triumphalist strands.

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Intellectual lacunae and Xhosa tactics

A productive exploration can be made into those narrative segments which demonstrate intellectual lacunae in their representations of Xhosa tactics. An anonymous letter, written by a 'frontier inhabitant' in October 1850 and printed in Godlonton's *Narrative of the 8th Frontier War*, purported to provide an account of the 'prophet' Mlanjeni's tactics:

"Accordingly, in the morning, he pronounced that war was in the land, and requested them to assemble in two parties; those with guns on one side; those with assegais on the other. The gun party represented the English – those with assegais the Kaffirs. He placed them opposite, and requested the gun party to fire, and others to lie flat on their faces, then arise, run suddenly upon their foes and seize them with their hands, which was done. He told them that was the way to fight the English." ⁶⁶

There was nothing new in Mlanjeni's 'war games': the Xhosa knew from the 6th and 7th Frontier Wars that the most effective manner in which to overcome the regular forces was to ambush them or to wait for them to discharge their firearms and then attack with assegais at close quarters when they were forced to pause to reload their rifles. ⁶⁷ What is significant about the quote above is that the description hints at a conceptual understanding of war: the Xhosa worked things out and predicted British fighting patterns. The Xhosa in fact used these tactics to great effect in the 8th Frontier War. Xhosa fighters favoured close quarters so they could initiate attacks by using assegais as stabbing weapons but they

⁶⁴ Bank, *'Of 'Native Skulls'',* 1996.

⁶⁵ An interviewee presents another take on this: "One officer once remarked to Bowker at the beginning of a fight: "We shall have a good 'butcher's bill' today". Asked what he meant, he said: "Why we shall be able to report to England a large number of English soldiers killed. It's no fun to report hundreds of the enemy killed and none on our side, as in England that will be called *murder*, but if we can show a big loss on our side, then it will be regarded as a glorious affair." Berning, *The Historical "Conversations" of Sir George Cory*, 1989, p 159.

⁶⁶ Godlonton and Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War 1850 - 1852*, 1962, p 15.

⁶⁷ Godlonton, *The Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, 1965. See Godlonton's account of the death of Charles Bailie in the 6th Frontier war of 1834.

also knew that using firearms as well as assegais enhanced their form of attack and they used them in conjunction in attacks.

Most positive accounts of the Xhosa placed emphasis on their actions rather than tactics and the planning and analysis that went into them. A major lacuna in parts of the texts was the unwillingness to attribute an intellectual agency to the Xhosa. They are 'brave, cunning and intrepid' but they are infrequently described as conceptualizing warfare. This is perhaps one of the strongest of the aspects of the narratives: the Xhosa 'do' mainly. They 'are' or they 'are not': they even die in a seamless manner.

⁶⁸Their strategy (in the broader political sense) and their tactics (in the narrower understanding of attack) are represented as 'cunning' and perfidious. Godlonton's appraisal of the Nqgika at the beginning of 1851 espouses that:

"The Gaikas had been thus far eminently successful in all their plans; their deep-laid schemes had been skillfully masked, and the coolness with which they waited a fitting juncture for declaring themselves in open hostilities is worthy of admiration." Cool counsellors and daring warriors were most assuredly at this moment directing the helm of their affairs." P⁶⁹

Indeed, the Xhosa had 'cool counsellors' but, in Godlonton's view, their 'deep-laid' schemes accorded with their 'duplicitous' and their 'seditious' attitude towards British rule. The quality of intellectual ability in warfare, especially in the realm of tactics, is frequently construed as treachery and thievery in the texts. Narrators tended to represent the Xhosa in ways that constrained their intellectual agency: themes of Xhosa bravery and war-readiness became a vehicle for 'verisimilitude' in the texts but the immediacy of these qualities precluded the conceptual work of prefiguring tactics. As Lalu proposes, the "colonial archive...inaugurates a very specific form of the subjection of agency..." through various agencies such as cartography and military dispatches the colonial subject is discursively controlled.⁷⁰ The Xhosa were not only controlled discursively through the formal dispatch they also were subject to the enunciations of the military narrative which had metropolitan reach. What can be called "terms of incorporation" allowed for an interstice to accommodate the Xhosa in narratives but always on the terms of the imperialist narrator. In relation to strategy and tactics, the Xhosa were to fall prey to this discursive subjection of agency.

Violence against the Xhosa

Most authors interpreted autochthonous peoples through their own conceptual schema, so the books are as much about their preoccupations and 'cultural values' as they are about the Xhosa. Alongside the ambiguities in the texts there exist representations of crude colonial violence and many instances portray the Xhosa as horrifyingly bestial. The demonization of the enemy fed into racialized versions of the Xhosa. Although the wars predated Social Darwinism and eugenics, a number of representations of the Xhosa in 1850s demonstrated a racial delineation which offered a presentiment of the more

⁶⁸ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853; Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport*, 1975.

⁶⁹ Godlonton, *Narrative of the Kaffir War*, 1962, p 51.

⁷⁰ Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa*, 2009, p 38.

substantially developed theories of race that were to emerge from the mid-1850s.⁷¹ King provides his readers with this rendition:

“The underwood swarmed with Kaffirs, they were perched in trees, firing upon us from above...rushed from the bush in hundreds, yelling in the most diabolical and ferocious manner, hissing through their white teeth; their bloody faces, brawny limbs, and enormous size, giving them a most formidable appearance.”⁷²

All narratives encoded ‘difference’ and reinforced and solidified opposition to colonial subjects.⁷³ Fulford captures a similar vein of cultural supremacy found in narratives about Native Americans:

“And so on the one hand the narratives of first hand encounter – whether by captives, soldiers, travellers or traders – helped crystallize the racialized orthodoxies of nineteenth-century imperialism – that white men and their civilization were superior to Indians – while on the other, they remained a source of difference, an apprehension of vulnerability that some readers used to question their own society and its colonial ambitions.”⁷⁴

From the start, colonial wars in the Eastern Cape were characterized by an undiluted aggression. The conditions of guerilla war played a key role in this and the violence caused rupture to value systems and systems of morality. The rationalizations of army officers followed well-worn paths: if the Xhosa were averse to fighting in the open as ‘gentlemen’ then they had to be ruthlessly and relentlessly tracked down in their bushy fastnesses in the mountains or in what were referred to as their ‘lair’ or ‘dens’. The conditions of ‘frontier’ warfare affected attitudes of the regulars towards the Xhosa. The attenuated nature of the frontier wars, compounded by the guerilla tactics used by the Xhosa caused not only casualties but also frustration amongst the British regular troops. It was this set of circumstances which tended to elicit pronounced representations of Xhosa ‘savagery’.

Atrocity stories were especially prolific in the 8th Frontier War narratives. Emulative behavior manifested itself in sinister ways through violence and the public exhibition of bodily remains. Narrative accounts accuse the Xhosa of placing the mutilated remains of soldiers in the path of the regulars.⁷⁵ However, corporeal violation was practised by the British: King records how the bodies of Khoi ‘rebels’ were strung up in trees as ‘warnings’ to their comrades.⁷⁶ The body has remained central to this discussion but in this instance the focus is not on the culturally inscribed, ‘distant’ body of the ethnographic account: rather the focus is on the martial body beset by the spectre of the corpse. The carnage brutalized the narrators and military narratives provided a montage of death on their pages. Military narrators demonstrated little compassion for enemy death. The numbers of dead were starkly recorded or were represented as corpses in various states of decomposition. King describes one such encounter in the Waterkloof:

“Along each side of the path, and close to the bush, we found, as we proceeded, the dead bodies of many of the enemies killed in the engagement of the 14th; clouds of flies rose with a startling buzz from the corpses, which lay

⁷¹ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 1995.

⁷² King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 90.

⁷³ Fulford, *Romantic Indians*, 2003.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 2003, p 30.

⁷⁵ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853; McKay, *The Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, 1970.

⁷⁶ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, pp 150, 151.

literally broiling in the hot sun, some on their faces in the long grass, others with their swollen features exposed and legs drawn up, while a few lay half-reclining under the trees, as though they had died there of their wounds...”⁷⁷

Objectification of the enemy was another military fundamental: the Xhosa were construed as ‘sightings’ or as the ‘objects’ of artillery fire. In addition, very few prisoners were taken during the wars and if people were captured these generally comprised groups of women and children. Baines gives an account of prisoners taken in the 8th Frontier War in which he attempts to provide a justification for the killing of women:

“Near the corner of the cliff is the cave in which Macomo’s wives were subsequently taken it is not visible being concealed by the bush. Ten men were killed in it and some women but it was done by shells and distant fire of musketry and if women will put themselves in the way of these things they must expect to be hurt. Don’t let any of these philanthropists persuade you that we kill females when we know them to be such. I have seen scores of women and young children taken but they were *always* [his italics] set at liberty again after being questioned – one of the Fingoes began to ill use some of them but Col Mitchell and the General Somerset interfered and gave them their liberty. We are not quite such brutes as the missionaries try to persuade you.”⁷⁸

The desolation caused by the wars went far beyond skirmishing: the destruction and burning of crops and homesteads by the British regulars profoundly traumatized and reduced Xhosa polities. Crais estimates that around 20,000 Xhosa died in the 8th Frontier War.⁷⁹ This had a ruinous effect on the social fabric of the Xhosa. Crais writes that in the 1850s after the 8th Frontier War:

“Instead of the two wives and five children of a decade earlier, households were now nearly half that size....At the same time, in the area as a whole, an adult population of a little more than 16,000 cared for 3,330 orphaned children. In other words, 17 percent of the population consisted of children who had lost their parents, a remarkably high figure.”⁸⁰

What of the 19th century ‘gentle readers’ responses to the narratives? How did they react to representations of violence and extreme events such as warfare? LaCapra in his discussion of violence and trauma asks the following question of current historiography:

“How can a critical historiography recognize and give a responsive account of the compulsive, typically violent, destructive and at best extremely ambivalent forces that have played such a noticeable role in the so-called limit events and experiences in history?”⁸¹

LaCapra argues that it is vital to narrate ‘limit events’ with circumspection and that to linger over the details of violence, death and trauma can appear salacious. Military narratives, and Harriet Ward is no exception to this, did not seem to harbor such misgivings and the quest for literary realism often exceeded the boundaries of sensibility. Military narratives no doubt provoked incredulity, fascination and histrionic shudders of revulsion. Yet, responses from some of the metropolitan reading public

⁷⁷ King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 66.

⁷⁸ In *Africana Notes and News*, 1952, Vol IX, pp 83, 84.

⁷⁹ Crais, *Poverty, War and Violence*, 2011, p 52.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 2011, p 58.

⁸¹ LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, Cornell University Press, New York, 2009, p 1.

probably would have been multifarious and would have oscillated between guarded sympathy, as can be detected in Baines's comment directed against the 'philanthropists', and contumely.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to investigate how the Xhosa were represented as fighters in military narratives and whether the published 'knowledge of the Xhosa' was in any way different from the theories of the Xhosa found in ethnographical accounts. There are very evident contradictions in the texts but if one traces their source these tendencies can be explained in relation both to contemporary 19th Century theories as well as to prevailing social and military constructs.

Even though the frontier wars were characterized by acute violence, there were certain often enforced reciprocal exchanges between the Xhosa and the British and colonial forces. These were particularly evident in the tactics and fighting methods used in the wars: these junctures can be found in both the Xhosa and regular British army adaptations in their methods of fighting and in the increased adoption of firearms by the Xhosa. The texts also bear the indices of divergence and these were included in the military narratives in a variety of ways, notably through the dichotomous representations of 'visibility', the regular army, and 'invisibility', the Xhosa, civilization and barbarity and through notions of 'savage' and 'gentlemanly' warfare.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This study has concerned itself with military narratives of the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars and has considered how the Xhosa were represented and delimited within these predominantly metropolitan texts. Central research questions have asked: What attitudes did the narrators have towards the Xhosa? What were the relations of power on the 'frontier'? How did the Xhosa become part of the 19th century circuit of colonial and metropolitan knowledge? This thesis has asked what the implications are of posing such questions and has made a preliminary contribution to how military narratives can contribute to an understanding of the process of colonization in South Africa.

The thesis has not focused solely on the historical trajectory of the wars. I have concentrated on primary texts, mainly published memoirs, in an attempt to provide a reading of the narratives which places the narratives within their 19th Century context and acknowledges their social and political contingency. Attention to the narratives has led me to examine how the Xhosa were represented both as fighters and in 'ethnological' ways. In the first half of the 19th Century, the Xhosa 'went metropolitan': not only was there a proliferation of campaign narratives but the texts demonstrated a 'mobility' and commentary on the Xhosa appeared in publications as disparate as Mayhew's disquisition on the London 'poor'. In this thesis, I have argued that metropolitan interest in the Xhosa and the frontier wars far exceeded the parochial boundaries of the Cape and the confines of colonial expression.

We have seen that campaign narratives delineated the Xhosa in various ways but they were also conduits into contemporary political debates. For example, narratives such as Harriet Ward's and Edward Napier's demonstrated that representations of the frontier wars could be used polemically to espouse one political position and concomitantly censure another. In the 1840s, the strident tones of colonial incursion tended to muffle the 'liberal' voice of 'philanthropy'. This political dimension also fed into the complicated relationship of knowledge production which existed between the colony and the metropole. Metropolitan diktats did not necessarily determine policy in the colonies which was implemented in convoluted ways by agents who were 'on the spot'. However, the metropolitan government, and its economizing measures, set limits on expansionist practices in the colonies. This thesis has striven to highlight the transnational circulation of texts between the colonies and the metropole.

Campaign narratives can be read for their insights into Xhosa resistance. However, did representations in the narratives tell us more about how the Xhosa fought? The answer to this is equivocal: vestiges of Xhosa tactics emerge from the texts but as has been discussed in the thesis, representations were conveyed through 'western' schemas and they often recounted more about the British regular army and its perceived deficiencies than about the Xhosa. To this end, the Xhosa, as fighters, were used in analogical discussions about the shortcomings of the regular army. The ethnological sections of the campaign narratives portrayed an overarching Prichardian perspective which privileged ideas pertaining

to stadial theory: but herein is one of the most pronounced paradoxes that pervaded the frontier wars. The Xhosa were portrayed unanimously as intelligent, healthy and physically strong in the ethnographic accounts and yet it is these renditions of the narratives which reveal an appalling disingenuousness. The regular army did its utmost to maim and kill these healthy bodies and destroy the social fabric of the Xhosa. The contradictions in the texts exist because the narratives were miscellanies which were troped in 'realist' ways and incorporated ethnographic, positive renditions of the Xhosa alongside the exigencies of war. As discussed in the thesis, the ethnographic chapters in the narratives strove to delineate the Xhosa in cultural and moral terms; however, even within the more palliative accounts of the Xhosa, the Xhosa were portrayed in racialized and derogatory terms. Although racialized representations of the Xhosa in the narratives did not entail the intricate distinctions of the 'scientific' formulations of race that were to follow in the latter part of the century.

This study has also considered the 'contact zones' and cultural 'borrowings' that emerged in conflict. I have argued that the proposition of war as a binary can circumscribe the boundaries of the study and can lead to a fixation on the frontier as a place denoting separate spheres. This dichotomy can occlude rather than acknowledge complicities in the frontier wars, for instance, through tactics and in the case of the levies through collaboration and alliance. In an effort not to over-determine the category of race, I have tried to present a more complex configuration of representations of the Xhosa by engaging with how soldiers imagined and sometimes envied the enemy in their narratives. In addition, I have examined how connections and cultural 'borrowings' influenced and informed the ways in which the regulars fought. Hence the focus has been on the "rituals of interaction" that develop between disparate groups through their proximity.

This study has demonstrated the significance of terrain in the frontier wars and how topographical images filtered into representations of the Xhosa. The frontier wars took members of regular army beyond the cultivated lands of the colony and into stretches of 'impenetrable bush'. This transposition generated unsettling relationships within the narratives: hunting motifs became entangled with warfare and were present in a number of narratives such as those of John Bisset and Thomas Lucas.¹ These associations often reduced the enemy to the status of 'prey' and the rules of hunting come to be associated with those of guerilla warfare.² In the frontier wars, traditional notions of war were revoked and were replaced with a form of unchoreographed, guerilla warfare which ultimately bore the tragic consequences of death and displacement for the Xhosa.

There are areas of study that require extension in this thesis, but in the interests of space they have not been addressed in detail. The following discussion is necessarily schematic but I wish to trace two subjects, in particular, which should have had more prominence in this thesis. The first is the question of violence and the second is the role of the levies in the frontier wars.

Crais suggests that violence promotes silences: "Violence both produces and silences history. Violence is generative in that it creates new historical patterns. Violence is also by its very nature silencing."³

¹ Bisset, *Sport and War*, 1875; Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa*, 1975.

² Black, *The Tools of War*, 2007.

³ Crais, *Poverty, War and Violence in South Africa*, 2011, p 151.

Crais cites Theal's histories of South Africa which he argues contained 'powerful silences' within their disquisitions and these helped to shape "official and academic productions of South African history."⁴ Secondary histories such as Theal's indisputably 'silenced' the violence of the wars. However, campaign narratives were not that fastidious and were capable of conveying callousness and brutality towards the entire Xhosa population. The 'total war' policies of the British meant the Xhosa were unable to sustain themselves sufficiently and the imprisonment of numbers of women and children resulted in Xhosa supply lines being hampered. Extreme violence was expressed in the texts frequently without qualifying commentary; there were exceptions to this obloquy found in the rhetoric, usually directed towards the metropolitan audience, which attempted to 'explain' the killing of women and children.

The second major lacuna in this thesis concerns the representations of the levies found in military narratives. In the field, the regular army was accompanied by colonial forces which constituted the 'Hottentot Levies' and the 'Burgher Commandoes' comprising Eastern Cape settlers and inhabitants of westerly regions such as Swellendam. After 1835, a number of 'Fingo' (Mfengu) units were established by the British. The Mfengu and the Khoikhoi played a decisive role in the imperial and colonial forces and levies were employed by the British in a number of capacities: as strike forces, in reconnaissance and cattle herding. The levies, and the Cape Mounted Riflemen, often bore the brunt of the fighting and the British recognized their services by conferring allotments of land to regulars and the irregulars. Yet, the execution of the 'reward system' was sporadic and for the allies of the British future frontier policy was to result in an increasing erosion of land ownership and civil liberties. Those soldiers with literary inclinations often saw themselves as authorities on the character and habits of autochthonous peoples, both 'enemy' and 'friend'. Most soldiers were in frequent contact with the Mfengu and the Khoikhoi levies in their battalions and the regulars held strong, and often erroneous, assumptions about the latter as fighters and about their culture. The regulars lived in close proximity to their allies in military camps and although the regiments saw themselves as more 'civilized' and lived in separate regimental barracks, or lines of tents, they were close enough to develop, at the very least, working relationships with the levies.⁵ Soldiers strove to demonstrate this contact in their books as they were particularly keen on providing 'local colour' and to provide their readership with an appreciation of their lives amongst indigenous peoples. They also desired to illustrate that there were colonized sectors who were loyal to the Crown and fought 'side by side' with the regulars.

This study has concerned itself with the vicissitudes of frontier warfare but it has not included a detailed discussion of the consequences of the wars. The most immediate question is why did the Xhosa lose the wars? Their defeat did not reflect their fighting ability; as previously discussed the Xhosa and the allied Khoikhoi in the 8th Frontier War, capitulated because of their lack of commissariat and because their social structure was torn apart by the British tactics of arson and acts of violence against civilians.⁶

⁴ Crais, *Poverty, War and Violence in South Africa*, 2011, p 151.

⁵ In his description of one of the 74th Highlanders' camps, King writes, "Our camp, with two others consisting of European and Fingo Levies, was on a green level plain, between the Fort [Hare] and the River Chumie, beyond which rose a fine range of lofty mountains." King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853, p 27.

⁶ Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 2003.

Over the years, there has been sustained scholarly interest in the exercise of metropolitan economic power in the conquest of colonial territory. This is a well-travelled path in the historiography of the Cape and even though it no longer holds a central interpretive position it does turn up in the general purview of colonization. I wish to return to the effects of the economy and briefly address the issues of metropolitan capital and the transport and communications network which was enabled by the British navy. I shall take a different angle by using De Certeau's notion of 'making do' and how the Xhosa were drawn into the practice of 'making do'. De Certeau's examination of the ways of operating in society in an 'everyday' context provides a body of theoretical questions which attempt to penetrate the "obscure background of activity" and to articulate the "unsaid" of everyday life.⁷ His investigation has yielded the concept of *bricolage* or the "poetic ways of making do" which are expressed in the domain of the 'powerless'.⁸ *Bricolage* is a concept used in relation to consumerism and its 'lexical units': that is how words and thoughts 'guilefully elide' over the prescriptions that society sets within and around the monoliths of advertising, television and the press. *Bricolage* is what ordinary, modern people 'do' when they develop coping strategies to circumvent the strictures of alienating social constructions.

On the face of it, the notion might appear inappropriate to concluding comments on 19th Century colonial warfare. However, unexpectedly, De Certeau in his exposition of *bricolage* deploys military terminology: most specifically the notions of strategy and tactics through which De Certeau discusses power relations. In his disquisition, the employment of the military terms of strategy and tactics are apposite to the conditions of warfare in the colonies. In effect, I shall be returning these concepts to their 'natural' place: that of warfare. De Certeau writes that to understand how power relations inscribe and delimit circumstances,

"...we must pass from a linguistic frame of reference to a polemological [study of war] one. We are concerned with battles or games between the strong and the weak, and with the "actions" which remain possible for the latter."⁹

De Certeau suggests that a characteristic of the less powerful sector, the 'weak', is that it "does not obey the law of place". The regular army had a strong sense of the 'law of place' as it was defined by its spatial arrangements: camps, battlefields and theatres of war, and its obedience to these structures. The latter spatial arrangements were transgressed repeatedly by the Xhosa whose 'transverse tactics' did not 'obey the law of the place'. Guerrilla tactics as we have seen were about surprise attacks, ambushing and the evasion of a fixed place. The Xhosa were often the stronger opponents in this context and they had more 'possibilities' for tactical inventiveness than the regulars; but ultimately, they were undone by the British. As discussed above, their deficiencies of power were not military, because the Xhosa showed themselves to be equal in tactical skill in the field and had larger numbers of fighters at their disposal than the regulars. Instead, trite as it may seem, the Xhosa were unable to sustain the war because of their lack of capital and imperial infrastructure. Crucially, the British Empire had the fiscal resources to sustain expensive operations and its commissariat and ordnance divisions held out because of this financial support. The 8th Frontier War reputedly cost over 5 million pounds: far more than a pre -

⁷ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1988, p xv.

⁸ Ibid., 1988, p xv.

⁹ Ibid., 1988, p 34.

industrial society could ever accumulate. In his distinction between strategy and tactics, De Certeau indicates:

"I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets and threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city....) can be managed....."

¹⁰

In contrast to his construal of a strategy, De Certeau writes... "a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus." ¹¹ Tactics also have demonstrable attributes:

"It [the tactic] does not, therefore, have the options of planning general strategy and viewing the adversary as a whole within a district, visible, and objectifiable space. It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep...it must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them, it creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse.... In short, a tactic is an (sic) art of the weak." ¹²

Clearly the Xhosa had a 'locus' and used territorial bases especially over the Kei River to herd cattle and store resources. They also strategized, for example in the 8th Frontier War when the Khoi and 'Native' Police were drawn into the war as allies of the Xhosa. They used time 'guilefully' and were unmatched in the realm of the isolated, blow- by- blow attack. In effect, they had 'space' but were unable to sustain that space over time in the face of British incursion. Also, their 'locus' had been undermined steadily since the 18th Century. During the frontier wars, the frantic 'clearing' of the Waterkloof and the Amatholes by the regulars and the invasion of the territory across the Kei was partly to ensure that the Xhosa were left without a base from which to operate. So, in De Certeauian terms the Xhosa had to fall back on tactics. In a further definition of the tactic De Certeau argues that tactics are opportunistic and short-lived:

"A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances." ¹³

The above comment is consummately apt in relation to Xhosa guerilla warfare, and it could apply to the regular army tactics in South Africa during the period. The fragmentation of guerrilla warfare both in terms of time and space points to the confusion and ambivalence that assailed the regular army during the frontier wars. We know that the Xhosa were strong because the regular army was forced to adapt its tactics to theirs. Yet the British prevailed, and it was not down to their much-vaunted 'pluck' and tenacity' that they did so. Rather, it was the stretch of resources and the accumulation of metropolitan capital that triumphed. The Xhosa were not without material resources but they relied on seasonal

¹⁰ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1988, p 36.

¹¹ Ibid. 1988, p 37.

¹² Ibid., 1988, p 37.

¹³ Ibid., 1988, p xix.

produce and stores of grain; most of which were destroyed by the regulars and the levies. Furthermore, the constant cattle rustling, on both sides, during the conflict constitutes an extended study in itself. Time was also an essential element: the British won over time and they had the capital to sustain themselves over lengthy periods and to maintain the 'proper boundaries', in this case, the frontier, through their superior resources. Strategy also relies on 'the mastery of places through sight': it is panoptic in that foreign forces can be transformed into 'objects' that can be observed and measured against a Foucauldian 'normalizing judgment. De Certeau asks the question, "Who to control who to include?" The answer lies as much with the levies as it does with the Xhosa.

Part of the control exerted by the British was technological and Porch argues that the "real technological edge enjoyed by the West...was naval."¹⁴ The British navy provided a 'strategic reach' and the capability of British ships meant that the regular army could be sustained through the provision of commissariat supplies. The navy also provided 'tactical mobility' in that the British could transport regular soldiers along the Cape Coast. This was an unpredictable operation, to which the wrecking of the Birkenhead famously attests, but in general the navy managed to transport troops to the Eastern Cape successfully. With a view to future research, naval support is a neglected area in the historiography of the Cape colonization and deserves sustained scholarly attention.

Finally, De Certeau describes the strategic "power of knowledge" which he describes as being "the ability to transform the uncertainties of history into readable spaces".¹⁵ In these strategies knowledge is sustained and determined by the power to provide itself with its "own place". De Certeau argues that "military and scientific strategies have always been inaugurated through the constitution of their "own" disinterested research and power "produces itself in and through this knowledge."¹⁶ The expression of power through the mechanisms of publication has been a central component of this study. This thesis has returned to the lineaments of the narrative and attempted to plot the course of textual representations of the Xhosa and how they were projected into the metropolitan literary circuit. Within these literary endeavours, the Xhosa were imagined in certain ways by the authors of the narratives and their reading public. Military narratives conveyed notions concerning the 'inferiority' of the colonized through the negative representations which permeated these heteroglossic texts. The Xhosa also had their interlocutors, in the writings of 'Justus', amongst others, but despite these sympathetic accounts, the Xhosa remained unspoken for and 'powerless' in the early to mid 19th century metropolitan publishing circuit.

Nevertheless, the Xhosa retorted and some of the more remarkable passages in military and travellers' writings are to be found in the accounts of 'conferences' between chiefs and commoners and British agents and army officers, in the documents the Xhosa dictated to missionaries and in the interjections between the Xhosa and British soldiers during campaigns. In more formal interlocutions, Xhosa oratory incorporated vestiges of 'western' discourse in that they were responding directly to western accusation and the hortatory style of the officials. These vocalizations were not merely products of colonial

¹⁴ Porch, *Wars of Empire*, 2001, p 68.

¹⁵ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1988, p 36.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1988, p 36.

mimicry: the adoption of the colonizer's discourse presented a hybrid and challenging expression. Fulford proposes that 'the affect of hybridity' is simultaneously a mode of appropriation and of resistance because "they [the colonized] do not simultaneously recognize and mock the colonizer's discourse from a position of subjugation, but use it, self-consciously mixed with their own terms and symbols to remind whites of their actual equality with them..."¹⁷ The Xhosa used their eloquence as a 'tactical performance' in their imaginative and varied use of mockery as a form of resistance. Yet, these verbal initiatives deployed by the Xhosa were to falter because of the weight of metropolitan power in relation to textual, publication, production and dissemination.

This study has attempted to extricate the army not from culpability but from conflation with a broad-based, ill-defined 'imperial force' and from studies which tend to view military intervention as mirroring political and administrative authority. The study has concerned itself with the complexities of the military texts within a specific location, the Eastern Cape, but their reach was far-flung and I have attempted to contextualize them within a transnational framework and to acknowledge their contingency to broader, metropolitan social forces.

¹⁷ Fulford is discussing the 'subaltern voice' in this case but the point seems appropriate to the 19th Century Xhosa as well. Some of the sobriquets given to the troops, such as the 'tortoises', were an index of Xhosa superiority rather than equality with the regulars. See King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, 1853. Fulford, *Romantic Indians*, 2003, p 36.

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