

## **Chapter Four: 'The Semiotics of Schooling': the Inscription of Youth onto Krugersdorp's Built Environment and Ideological Plane, 1902–1910**

### **Introduction**

After the South African war Milner's young officials promoted a scheme of active recruitment of white female domestic servants from Britain, many of whom married the single miners on the Rand and started families. The 'Kindergarten', as Milner's youthful administrators were called, were, thus, responsible for the building of many real kindergartens and nursery schools on the Rand as large numbers of infants and young children suddenly appeared within the Rand's urban environment.<sup>1</sup> In addition, many of those miners who were already married but who had left their families behind, decided to settle permanently, and thus sent for their families to join them on the Rand.

Towns like Krugersdorp soon abounded with working-class children who joined the older children of the white English- and Dutch-speaking middle class that had raised families during the 1890s. In the locations the numbers of African, Coloured and Indian children also grew apace, as these residents also felt more optimistic about their economic future and started families too. Thus, Krugersdorp rapidly became a youthful town with a large percentage of its population under the age of fifteen years. Demographic developments on this scale had a profound impact upon Krugersdorp, helping to shape it into a new kind of town. So many changes occurred to Krugersdorp's society and its built environment as a result of the advent of children, that it would be no exaggeration to say that it became, for a brief while at least, a child-centred town.

Krugersdorp's urban layout and architecture, for example, was substantially altered by the sudden efflorescence of schools. These architecturally distinctive new buildings which occupied large spaces, were located in prominent places around the town. In close proximity to these schools, a number of related buildings, closely associated with

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<sup>1</sup> See J. P.R. Maud, *City Government, The Johannesburg Experience*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1938.

education, were also built. These included a local library, commercial establishments that specialised in children's books, supplies and uniforms, as well as gymnasia. The presence of children even influenced the directionality of roads and the use of street signage near schools. There was also a growing urgency to remove unpleasant, unsightly or dangerous structures, such as the local prison, that were located close to these schools.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of children in the town, not only in schools but in residential areas as well, was used to justify all kinds of changes to the urban environment and to urban practices. The schooling of Krugersdorp's children created a new kind of contested ideological terrain for 'the soul' of Krugersdorp analogous to the South African War. English- and Dutch-speaking children were subjected to an intense 'Anglicisation' process that aimed to inculcate the Victorian and Edwardian values of diligence, temperance, thrift and duty as well as to instil a sense of patriotism and pride in the British Empire.<sup>3</sup>

In the afterglow of patriotic fervour shortly after the War, the English-speaking middle class was determined to support the Milner regime's plans to make the Transvaal a 'British' colony in every sense of the word. This class also shared Milner's desire to inculcate the 'rising generation' with the 'right' kind of values that ensured that they would grow up industrious, thrifty, patriotic and well-behaved citizens and so facilitate the reproduction of the capitalist system, a British liberal democracy and support for the British Empire.

Schooling was to achieve these goals by means of a variety of strategies imbedded in the design and content of the curriculum that focused on examples of British heroes and heroines in history, as well as the depiction of the British Empire in geography. Ideology was smuggled into every nook and cranny of every subject and even infused into the very process of teaching young children to read through the subtle manipulation

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<sup>2</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 March 1906, 'The Local Prison'.

<sup>3</sup> Rose, E., *The Edwardian Temperament, 1895-1919 (Edwardian Temperament)*, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 1986.

of basic Readers. Ideology was even inculcated through the control over children's bodies in the form of sport and the military drills of the school cadet system.<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu refers to this role of schooling as the 'moral' and 'cultural integration function', reproducing in all minds, across a generation,

...a fundamental homogeneity which makes... all...share the same treasury of admiration, patterns, rules and, above all, of examples, metaphors, images, words, a common idiom.<sup>5</sup>

To counter this process, some Dutch-speaking parents removed their children from Milner's state schools and placed them in alternative 'Christian National' education environments that promoted Boer values and nationalism. By 1905, Milner's ideological project began to collapse and was steadily replaced by a more moderate education policy that emphasised a nascent 'South Africanism'. While the resistance offered by Boers to Milner's Anglicisation policy has been well-documented as a reason for the failure of Milner's policy, this Chapter will offer additional reasons by focussing closely on local conditions in Krugersdorp, notably the resistance offered by working-class parents to the imperial project, the middle class's disillusionment with ideology and, most interesting of all, the role played by the children themselves in sabotaging this process.

This Chapter will argue that Krugersdorp's children were far from *tabula rasa* on which ideology could be inscribed, but rather were active agents in the making of their own lives who acted (mostly unintentionally and out of concern for their own interests) to frustrate the ideological projects designed for them by adults. This resistance, even if not purposeful and deliberate, contributed to the new, embryonic South Africanism that emerged by the time of Union as school authorities, parents, local notables and education authorities reacted to this resistance and sought new ways to make schooling more attractive to these youngsters by ensuring that their education corresponded to their daily realities.

<sup>4</sup> See J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*, Falmer Press, London, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> P. Bourdieu, 'Systems of education and systems of thought' in R. Dale *et al* (eds.), *Schooling and Capitalism: a Sociological Reader*, Routledge and Kegan, Paul, London, 1976, p. 193.

The local middle class, the most reliable of British patriots in the town, grew increasingly disillusioned with 'jingoism' and various late Victorian values that they had long championed. Instead they began to advocate a form of liberal humanism that challenged many of the values of imperialism, particularly its overt militarism. The same middle class felt that as 'Colonials', they were treated as second-class citizens within the Empire and began to embrace, instead, a new, Kipling-like emphasis on the periphery, a glorification of the 'Colonial Boy' and 'Colonial Girl'. Finally, in what is the most interesting of developments, Krugersdorp's Edwardian middle class began to shake themselves free of the shackles of Victorianism and began to embrace what Jonathon Rose has called a 'Gospel of Fun'<sup>6</sup>, making light of the 'serious' aspects of the imperial agenda.

In time, the nature of schooling was changed to emphasise a more 'Colonial' outlook and an embryonic 'South Africanism' evolved as Union approached, one that middle class, working class, Briton and Boer could embrace. There were, of course, many other factors involved in these changes, but this Chapter will argue that children played the most important role, both directly as actors in their own right and indirectly as the focus of concern of worried adults, in the shaping of education in the first decade of the last century. In the process they helped to change Krugersdorp itself.

### **The Coming of the Children**

The death of Queen Victoria in 1901, and the advent of the Edwardian era coincided with the end of the South African War and the establishment of a new British colonial regime under Lord Milner. It was a new century, a new time of peace under a new king. The transient, rough mining towns on the Rand transformed almost overnight into stable havens, potential homes for the English-speaking working class. As Chapter Two demonstrated, leading elements of the white professional and commercial elite had set an important example by raising families in the early 1890s and by building large stone churches, sumptuous commercial structures and their own, permanent, comfortable

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<sup>6</sup> See Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament*.

homes. By doing so, the local middle class semiotically conveyed 'messages' of commitment and permanency to the working class.

The middle-class elite also improved the town's basic infrastructure to make it more 'liveable', thus 'anchoring' the town. The male miners of the town seem to have finally taken these examples to heart (but only once economic conditions made it feasible), and began to marry and father children. It was springtime in Krugersdorp and a new 'Age of the Children' had opened.

Krugersdorp's municipal population (incorporating the mines and surrounding farms in the large municipality), grew at an astonishing rate from 19 483 in 1904 to 35 000 in 1907, 43 000 in 1909, 44 500 in 1910 and 54 269 in 1911.<sup>7</sup> Most of the increase in Krugersdorp's population occurred on the mines rather than in the town and took the form of an expansion in the numbers of African miners and Chinese indentured labourers. Nonetheless, white adult migration to the town itself also accounted for a substantial percentage of the growth as the new British Administration and the increasingly prosperous mining industry attracted skilled white labour from Britain and its white settler colonies, particularly Australia, to the Witwatersrand.

While many white mineworkers were still accommodated on the mines themselves or in boarding houses on their periphery, more and more began to live in the town and in the Luipaardsvlei Township, which became, to some extent, a working-class suburb. The town itself grew from 3 000 people of all races in 1903 to 7 200 in 1908, 9 800 in 1909, 13 114 in 1911 and 15 236 in 1912, quintupling in less than ten years, an explosive rate of population increase.

An important cause of population growth was the natural increase arising from the decisions of many first-generation urban dwellers to settle down and raise families. The 1904 Census counted 3 224 children of all races under the age of fifteen, divided into 1 804 boys and 1 420 girls in the whole municipality, or about one-sixth of the total

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<sup>7</sup> Krugersdorp Public Library, *Mayor's Minute (Mayor's Minute)*, Mayor's Reports, 1903–4, p. 3, 1904–5, p. 3, 1906–7, p. 3, 1907–8, p. 3, 1908–9, p. 3, 1910–11, p.3 and 1910–2, p. 3.

population.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately no racial breakdown was provided but it seems likely from various later sources that two-thirds of these children would have been white. A 'location' census in 1905 found that there were 316 children and 753 adults in the 'Native Location',<sup>9</sup> while in the 'Indian Location' there were 193 adults and 65 children (defined in this case as those aged between one and twenty years).<sup>10</sup>

**Table Two: Birth Rates and Mortality Rates by Race, in Krugersdorp, Town Population Only, 1905–6 to 1910–11: White Population.**

Period	Number of Births	Number of Deaths	Nett increase in Population
1905-6	293	49	244
1906-7	215	51	164
1907-8	224	47	177
1908-9	243	64	179
1909-10	315	94	221
1910-11	360	103	257
<b>Total</b>	<b>1626</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>1242</b>

Source: Krugersdorp Public Library, *Mayor's Minute*, various reports by the Chief Sanitary Inspector and Medical Officer of Health, 1905–12, various pages.

**Table Three: Birth Rates and Mortality Rates by Race, in Krugersdorp, Town Population Only, 1905–6 to 1910–11: Black (African, Coloured and Indian) Population.**

Period	Number of Births	Number of Deaths	Nett increase in Population
1905-6	176	44	132
1906-7	70	52	18
1907-8	46	47	-1
1908-9	83	60	23
1909-10	96	63	33
1910-11	110	83	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>232</b>

Source: Krugersdorp Public Library, *Mayor's Minute*, various reports by the Chief Sanitary Inspector and Medical Officer of Health, 1905–12, various pages.

<sup>8</sup> *Mayor's Minute*, 1904–5, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Mayor's Minute*, 1905–6, Report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector (CSI), p. 36. Such statistics should be treated as rough estimates as they fluctuate alarmingly from official to official.

<sup>10</sup> Chief Sanitary Inspector's Report, 1907, in *Mayor's Minute*, 1906–7, p. 51.

The number of white children born in the town itself was generally double the number born on the mines each year.<sup>11</sup> The following tables illustrate the rate of natural increase in the town proper, excluding the mines. Unfortunately the municipal authorities have grouped together the African, Coloured and Indian residents into a single category.

These tables suggest that natural increase accounted for about a quarter of the total growth in the town's white population or 1 242 out of the approximately 5 000 additional white residents that were recorded between 1904–5 and 1910–11. Natural increase in the black population was less significant, accounting for 232 of the additional approximately 1 500 black residents who resided in Krugersdorp over the period 1904–5 to 1910–11.

Rapid population increase significantly altered the built environment. The local building contractors Robson and Holton built over a hundred buildings between 1895 and 1906, most of them after the South African War.<sup>12</sup> The Town Council drew up plans to build a new Market building in the Market Square and obtained a loan of 100 000 pounds to cover the costs of expanding roads, sewerage and waterworks.<sup>13</sup> It was not just the growing population that had an impact upon the built environment but also a change in the composition of this population as it shifted from an overwhelmingly adult to a more balanced demography with considerable numbers of children.

It is not hard to find evidence of the impact of these demographic changes. Children were a potential gold mine for local retailers who were quick to capitalise on this new constituency. Major industrial brands like Van Houten's Cocoa and Sunlight Soap (**see Figure 4.1**) frequently used the images of children to promote their products. Local

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Mayor's Minute*, 1908–9, p. 73

<sup>12</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 24 February 1906, untitled. The company employed twenty-five white and thirty black men and provided work for a 'considerable number of transport riders, sub-contractors for plastering, painting, etc.'. The building boom also led to a flourishing local brick-making industry among indigent whites in Burghershoop and the 'Monument Brickfields' and the formation of the Victorian Brick Manufacturing Co. Ltd. which could produce 50 000 bricks a week.

<sup>13</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 April 1905, 'The £100 000 loan'.

merchants began to stock toys,<sup>14</sup> children's clothing and children's shoes,<sup>15</sup> stationery supplies for young schoolgoers<sup>16</sup> and medicines for infants.<sup>17</sup> Entertainments no longer took the nearly exclusive form of 'gambling, drinking and whoring' so characteristic of mining towns, but increasingly began to include family picnics,<sup>18</sup> circuses,<sup>19</sup> school concerts<sup>20</sup> and children's cricket games, an orientation that was enhanced, by the end of this period, through a focus on outdoor pursuits and the embracing of nature.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 4.1: Advertisements Using Children to Promote Products in a Local Newspaper in Krugersdorp c. Early 1900s**



Source: *The Standard Krugersdorp*, 13 June 1908, 'Van Houten's Cocoa, You Cannot Beat the Best' and *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 May 1905, 'Sunlight Soap'

The presence of children can be detected in a myriad of contexts often with unusual and unexpected effects on urban practices and structures. For example, the august

<sup>14</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 December 1909, 'Xmas 1909, Ready for the Gay and Festive Season: Christmas Toys for Girls and Boys'.

<sup>15</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 May 1905, 'Harvey Greenacre, Ockerse Street'.

<sup>16</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 18 January 1908, 'Standard Stationery Store in Human Street, For School Requisites of Every Description - Slates, exercise books, sealing wax, drawing paper'.

<sup>17</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 April 1903, 'Baby's Cough'.

<sup>18</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 November 1908, 'King's Birthday'.

<sup>19</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 November 1903, 'The Children at the Circus'.

<sup>20</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 December 1903, 'Town School Concert'.

<sup>21</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 November 1902, 'School Cricket'.



councillors deliberated at length on whether to allow a fruit tree nursery in the Coronation Park as an income generating project, but had ultimately to scrap these plans because of the bad experiences reported by other municipalities of 'juvenile thefts' of fruit.<sup>22</sup> Plans to convert the new concrete dam in the park into a swimming bath had to be altered as it was 'too deep' for children.<sup>23</sup>

Everywhere the Council turned, it faced objections from parents concerned about their children. For example, Council permission to allow nuns to bury their dead on the property at the Ursuline Convent<sup>24</sup> had to be rescinded later because of fears of the impact that this would have on the tender feelings of pupils attending the school of the same property.<sup>25</sup> The Council built a bridge across the *spruit* separating the District and Stand Townships to accommodate pupils wishing to cross the river to attend school.<sup>26</sup>

It was the building of schools, however, that most markedly altered Krugersdorp's built environment. There had, of course, been children in Krugersdorp during the 1890s and a number of schools had been built. These included a 'Calico' Anglican school in 1887 (see Chapter One) and a permanent version in 1888, next to the church,<sup>27</sup> a Dutch Reformed Church school in 1891 on Joubert Street<sup>28</sup> and some of the mines appeared to have provided schools for the children of the minority of married white miners at

<sup>22</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 6 May 1905, 'No Apples in the Park'.

<sup>23</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 12 August 1905, 'A New Swimming Bath'.

<sup>24</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 July 1905, 'The Convent Cemetery'.

<sup>25</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 19 August 1905, 'St. Ursula's College'.

<sup>26</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 29 April 1905, 'Bridging the Spruit'.

<sup>27</sup> St. Peter's Church, Krugersdorp, Diamond Jubilee booklet, *'Forward', A History of the Anglican Church in*

*the Parish of Krugersdorp*, 1965, Church of the Province of South Africa Archives (CPSA), University of the Witwatersrand, p. 4. See also *Eastern Star*, 12 March 1888, untitled.

<sup>28</sup> The Roman Catholic choir in Krugersdorp gave a performance in a such a school, see *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Krugersdorp Centenary, 1891–1991*, Krugersdorp Catholic Church Centenary Brochure, property of the abovementioned church, Krugersdorp, n.d., p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Archives of the Department of Education of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (OD), OR 9125/96, file title:

'school Champ d'Or, 25-30 ouers.'

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, 3736/99, S. I. J. van Wyk, Randfontein, Krugersdorp Distrikt, 'Engelschen Assistant', 1899.

Champ d'Or mine in 1896<sup>29</sup> and at Randfontein Estates mine in 1899.<sup>30</sup>

After the South African War, this trickle of modest schools became a flood of large, well-built structures, scattered all around the town. The growth in working-class children required new schools at both the French Rand<sup>31</sup> and Luipaardsvlei mines.<sup>32</sup> The Roman Catholic community established the Ursuline Convent as a private, fee-paying secondary school, shortly after the war<sup>33</sup> and was soon joined by another secondary school, catering for children up to 'ex-Std VII', called the Krugersdorp Grammar School.<sup>34</sup>

The main school for the town's children was the Krugersdorp Government Town School which was established in 1901 while the war was still raging. Its initial structure was a temporary wood and iron building.<sup>35</sup> The Government School that was eventually built was an enormous structure of brick, ornately designed according to the stipulations that govern such buildings in typical British, Edwardian style. It cost 12 000 pounds and was described in 1905 as a 'commodious mansion' 'a model of neatness and usefulness'<sup>36</sup> and as 'one of the noblest piles in the town'.<sup>37</sup> This and other schools were quickly filled by English-speaking children once residents returned after the War and raised families, leading to serious overcrowding in these schools all over the Rand.<sup>38</sup>

Nearly 26 928 white children were being taught in Transvaal schools by 1903. With hostilities now at an end, the British authorities under Lord Alfred Milner began to pay attention to the 'Reconstruction' of the Transvaal. This included the building of schools based on the British model as a centrepiece of Milner's 'Anglicisation' policy. The mining

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<sup>31</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 23 May 1908, 'School Committee to be elected'.

<sup>32</sup> Archives of the Colonial Secretary (CS), 916, 18127, Medical Inspection of School Children, Krugersdorp, 1909.

<sup>33</sup> *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary*, p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 18 July 1903, 'Education Department, Krugersdorp Grammar School'.

<sup>35</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 October 1902 'Government School'.

<sup>36</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 March 1905, 'The New Town School'.

<sup>37</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 18 March 1905, 'An Educational Epoch'.

<sup>38</sup> F. R. Miller, 'The History of a Johannesburg Primary School, 1902–1937' ('The History of a Johannesburg Primary School'), M. Ed thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989, p. 26. See also *The Star*, 19 February 1902, untitled.

industry took an active interest in the education system through its involvement in the Witwatersrand Council of Education, which it dominated together with professional and financial interests. According to Cross, the mining industry influenced Milner's approach to education.<sup>39</sup>

From this perspective, the purpose of schooling was to prepare working-class white children for 'an urban, industrial life'. This can be seen in the importance attached to subjects that involved manual training, especially woodwork, for boys and both needlework and cooking for girls.<sup>40</sup> However, this focus also took place in the context of a system of racial capitalism that secured a dominant position for whites in a colony, particularly for the middle class.

This education system was also supposed to promote a British identity for English-speaking children. Milner, for example, wanted all the secondary schools in the provinces to be modelled after the British public school system,<sup>41</sup> a premise which contained a class dimension. In these schools, the middle and upper classes were prepared for 'responsible leadership which was an imperial requirement', particularly for the Officer's Training Corps, the judiciary and colonial administration.<sup>42</sup>

To achieve the reproduction of capitalist relations of production, the Milnerian schooling system, like its late Victorian counterpart in Britain and other British colonies, was meant to 'articulate' lower-class culture with the 'values' of the dominant culture. This meant the inculcation of a specific conception of the social meaning of time that arose out of industrialisation that aimed to instil in their pupils a respect for punctuality and regularity in attendance.<sup>43</sup> Silence would be enforced in the classroom and there is much evidence in the log book of the Krugersdorp Town School of pupils being punished for

<sup>39</sup> M. Cross, 'The Foundations of a Segregated Schooling System in the Transvaal, 1900–1924', *History of Education*, 16, 4, 1987, p. 262.

<sup>40</sup> Miller, 'The History of a Johannesburg Primary School', p. 192.

<sup>41</sup> Milner apparently stated that Johannesburg Boys' High School, later known as King Edward VII School, should become 'another Winchester College' in emulation of the famous English public school. See P. Randall, *Little England on the Veld: the English private school system in South Africa*, (*Little England on the Veld*), Ravan, 1982, p. 43.

<sup>42</sup> Randall, *Little England on the Veld*, p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> See E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-discipline and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38, 1967.

'persistent talking and inattention'.<sup>44</sup> Pupils who arrived late were kept in at recess<sup>45</sup> and male teachers prowled the playgrounds keeping a firm hand on the activities of the pupils even during their break time.<sup>46</sup>

Miller reports that 'there was a conviction that the learning process was inextricably involved with quiet, compliant pupils...teachers were expected be firm and obeyed'.<sup>47</sup> By bringing young bodies into subjection, young minds could readily be moulded, or as Hurt put it, 'the disciplining of their bodies was reinforced by the disciplining of their minds'.<sup>48</sup>

School inspectors and truant officers attempted to ensure that attendance was regular. Teachers were instructed to impart to their charges the Victorian values that were deemed so important in the reproduction of a pliant working class. For example, the Transvaal Education Department reported in 1906 that schooling should teach children to:

... be clean, punctual and orderly; to be frank, keen and courageous and self-reliant; to be courteous, thoughtful and self-sacrificing – these are the moral ends which a good school can, and should secure.<sup>49</sup>

On the colonial periphery, white working-class pupils were subjected to additional 'hidden' curricula, notably the inculcation of racism in an environment where it was feared that they might mingle with and identify with children from black working-class and *lumpenproletarian* backgrounds that were collectively perceived as the 'dangerous classes'. In the past, about 60% of colonial children had left school with the equivalent of a standard two education so there was a real basis for middle-class concern about loss of control over these children.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Transvaal Provincial Government Log Book, Government School Krugersdorp, 27 October 1905.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, 31 October 1906.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Miller, 'The History of a Johannesburg Primary School', p. 130.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>49</sup> Transvaal Education Department, Annual Report, June 1906, p. 10; quoted in Miller, 'The History of a Johannesburg Primary School', p. 102.

<sup>50</sup> TAD, ZAR Education Department, Annual Report for the Year Ending 1898, quoted in L. Chisolm, 'Reformatories and Industrial Schools in South Africa: a Study in Class, Colour and Gender, 1882–1939', ('Reformatories'), PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989, p. 66.

While many ex-pupils joined the labour force to become messengers, 'office boys' and newspaper vendors,<sup>51</sup> at least some also joined the criminal underclass. For example, in 1907, 159 white children were in the Transvaal's prisons, convicted of selling liquor illicitly to blacks or for theft.<sup>52</sup> The Transvaal Indigency Commission also expressed concern about prostitution among white girls.<sup>53</sup> While no examples of this are available for Krugersdorp, one case involved a young girl in nearby Vrededorp, Johannesburg, who had contracted syphilis and who was accused of soliciting five 'small lads'.<sup>54</sup>

Such moral degradation appalled the white middle class and the 'respectable' white working class in the Transvaal. In a racially stratified society where the future of the 'White Man's Country' was anything but secure, such moral degradation carried with it serious overtones of racial degeneration. This would remove – in the language of the eugenicists and Social Darwinists – any moral claim of a right to rule over the 'inferior' black race.

The Transvaal Indigency Commission reported that on the Rand white boys of eight to fourteen years of age 'went along in gangs', playing truant and carrying on 'some sort of wild life'.<sup>55</sup> What most concerned the Commissioners was that these gangs often cut across the colour bar where 'small native boys in the town are fraternising with European youngsters and looking upon themselves as youthful Dick Turpins and doing all sorts of horrible things'.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *The Star*, 6 May 1891, untitled.

<sup>52</sup> Chisolm, 'Reformatories', p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Transvaal Indigency Commission, 1908, p. 340, quoted in Chisolm, 'Reformatories', p. 72.

By making schools both free and compulsory (but only for white children), the Milner Administration's education authorities could both separate white from black youth and give these white children the resources to 'elevate' themselves economically, socially and ideologically above black children. In the process they would preserve the racial order and nip in the bud a nascent alliance between white working-class children and youthful elements of the black 'dangerous classes', which would pose a serious threat to racial capitalism. As Chisolm and Cross put it,

Through education, white workers and youth were to be politically and ideologically incorporated into a white state to absorb and mute rising social and cultural conflicts.<sup>57</sup>

Chisolm's study on reformatories and industrial schools stresses the importance of studying peripheral groups like white juvenile delinquents for they exemplify in stark terms the principles and policies of the education system that are often muted and disguised when addressed to mainstream education. Chisolm draws on Foucault's concept of power which is 'productive of subjectivities'<sup>58</sup> and which is 'exercised rather than possessed' and blends it skilfully with a materialist conception of the state based on Marks and Trapido's analysis of the Milnerian state and racial capitalism at the turn of the century.<sup>59</sup> She makes the observation that,

criminalised whites...were categorised in ways which displaced and symbolically classed them alongside blacks, thus contradictorily locating them inside, but on the margins of white society. ...These institutions produced a population which is isolated, examined, classified, segregated and excluded. This knowledge provides the power for intervening in the name of programmes of reform in wider civil society. It also constitutes subjects as 'delinquents'...the process of 'stigmatization' [as] an intrinsic

<sup>57</sup> M. Cross and L. Chisolm, 'The Roots of Segregated Schooling in Twentieth-Century South Africa', in M. Nkomo (ed.), *Pedagogy of Domination*, Africa World Press, New Jersey, 1990, p. 47.

<sup>58</sup> Chisolm cites specifically the following sources: M. Foucault, 'The Means of Correct Training' in P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, New York, 1984, p. 195 and P. Dews, 'Power and Subjectivity in Foucault', in *New Left Review*, 144, March–April 1984, p. 93.

<sup>59</sup> See S. Krige, 'Church, Liberals and the State: secularisation and segregation in African education, 1910–1939', MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> S. Marks and S. Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African State' in P. Delius et al (eds.) *Putting a Plough to the Ground: accumulation and dispossession in rural South Africa*, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1986.

and necessary part of the operation of these institutions since it also forms part of the means of policing the wider society.<sup>60</sup>

In Foucauldian terms, the white working-class youth would police themselves, fearing

the physical separation and isolation of reformatories in distant, isolated places like Porter's Reformatory at the Tokai Estate, some miles from Cape Town, surrounded by forest and 'secluded from the common concourse of society'.<sup>61</sup> This kept the mainstream white youth of the 'respectable' working class and middle class in line and helped to facilitate and justify the disciplinary aspects of schooling alluded to earlier.

While the reproduction of a compliant white working class was important, Milner seems to have been more interested in launching an imperialist project through his education policies announcing that 'if ten years hence, there are three men of British race to two of Dutch, the country will be safe and prosperous'.<sup>62</sup> This belief lay behind his policy of encouraging the immigration of British women to the Transvaal, encouraging English-speaking miners to get married and have children, and the 'Anglicising' of Boer children through English-medium education in the Transvaal. As Miller argues, to Milner 'free state education was a vital tool in winning the Anglicisation struggle and he referred to it as 'the whole battle'.<sup>63</sup>

To achieve these aims, the Milner regime introduced non-compulsory, non-denominational subsidised schools and removed local control from schools. Large numbers of teachers were imported from various parts of the British Empire (Scotland in particular), to teach the white children of the Transvaal, including the children of the defeated Boers. English was to be the only medium of instruction and Dutch was taught only at the parents' special request and then only for a maximum of three hours out of a

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<sup>61</sup> Chisolm, 'Reformatories', p. 21

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>63</sup> Memorandum, Milner to Major Williams, 27 December 1900, in C. Headlam (ed.), *The Milner Papers, 1899–1905*, vol. 2, Cassel, London, 1933, p. 242.

<sup>64</sup> E.G. Pells, *300 Years of Education in South Africa*, Juta, Cape Town, 1956, p. 72.

school week of twenty-five hours.<sup>64</sup> Scripture could be taught in Dutch for an additional

two hours a week.<sup>65</sup> Nearly all the teachers were British and not a single Dutch name appeared among the inspectorate.<sup>66</sup>

The new Director of Education, E. B. Sargant, appointed in January 1901, was an imperialist, with a background as an officer in the British Civil Service Commission in Canada. He openly favoured an educational system that promoted the unity of the British Empire.<sup>67</sup> It was not surprising, then, that drilling and sports were emphasised in the Transvaal schools and a high level of militarism prevailed in schools on the Rand.<sup>68</sup> For example, in Johannesburg pupils engaged in 'compulsory drilling exercises' wearing khaki pants, brown jerseys and slouch hats.<sup>69</sup> In 1902, seventeen boys in Krugersdorp Government Town School put down their names for a proposed Volunteer Cadet Corps that was to be officered by teachers.<sup>70</sup> By 1905 the 'Krugersdorp Cadet Corps' had grown to 50 boys. They attended a large parade of the Rand's cadets was held at Johannesburg and were reviewed by the High Commissioner himself.<sup>71</sup>

Apart from the Cadets, efforts were made to promote British patriotic fervour among

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25, see also A. K. Bot, *A Century of Education in the Transvaal, 1836–1936*, (*A Century of Education*), Government Printer, Pretoria, 1936.

<sup>68</sup> J. S. Hurt, 'Drill, Discipline and the Elementary School Ethos', in P. McMann (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century*, Methuen, London, 1977, pp. 170–189.

<sup>69</sup> Miller, 'The History of a Johannesburg School', p. 121.

<sup>70</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 October 1902, untitled.

<sup>71</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 3 March 1905, 'Warriors' Nursery'.

<sup>72</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 20 May 1905, 'Empire Day'.



Krugersdorp's white children through the commemoration of 'Empire Day' on 24 May, each year. Lord Meath appealed, in an advertisement in *The Standard, Krugersdorp*,<sup>72</sup> for flags to be hoisted over all public buildings, schools and places of worship on this auspicious day. The purpose of the initiative was to 'quicken the public sense of national, of civic and private duty'.<sup>73</sup> This initiative was supported by the local branch of the Guild of Loyal Women which also administered 'Milner Scholarships' to assist the less fortunate white scholars (see Chapter Seven). To raise funds it ran an essay writing competition 'for boys' on the subject of the 'Union Jack'. The first prize would be a 'set of Mafeking stamps' presented by the Victoria League.<sup>74</sup> Reading material was also used as a means of inculcating the values of patriotism.

### **The Inculcation of Patriotism in Children through Literature**

While it is difficult to reconstruct what children read in Krugersdorp or what was read to them by teachers and parents, a plausible picture of reading habits can be offered. By combining the analysis of a number of studies of the Victorian and Edwardian 'reading public' with an analysis of the records of books kept Krugersdorp Public Library during this period, one can approximately reproduce the 'reading world' at this time.<sup>75</sup>

Clingman has argued that the 'history of consciousness' can be accessed through fiction because writers of such texts engaged with the complexities of their times as people interested in understanding what they observed and in finding meaning in the changes they experienced.<sup>76</sup> Applying this approach to Krugersdorp, can yield rich

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<sup>74</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 June 1905, 'Guild of Loyal Women'.

<sup>75</sup> The concept of the 'reading world' is explored in E. French, 'The Reading World of Black Workers', MEd dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988.

<sup>76</sup> Clingman cited in French, p. 148. Not all writers agree with this perspective, however, see P. Machery, *A Theory of Literary Production*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978 who opposes the conception of 'homology' between the literary work, 'world-view' of a particular class, and the broader structures of society.

<sup>77</sup> E. Said, 'Jane Austen and Empire', in T. Eagleton (ed.), *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1979, pp. 150–163.

insights into the role that fiction played in the promotion of the imperial project. Edward Said argued that the 'New Imperialism' and militarism was not only found in the more obvious texts like Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade', but can also be detected in writings as apparently 'innocent' as Jane Austen and Lewis Carroll.<sup>77</sup> For the purposes of this Chapter, more obvious or explicit imperial sources include the 'adventure stories'

for boys such as R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883)<sup>78</sup> and Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) which sold 31 000 copies in its first year. G. A. Henty's three famous 'boy's books', *With Clive in India* (1884), *By Sheer Pluck* (1884) and *The Young Colonists* (1885) have been described as offering,

...invigorating therapy... a neo-Arthurian devotion to a course  
(propagating) an ethos of public school, chivalry, army, church,  
colonial service and empire.<sup>79</sup>

'Victorian Adventure fiction' was a form peculiarly suited to the project of advancing imperial interests, particularly through its effect on boys. These books contained a 'fictive mystique' of 'adventure, manliness, courage and sportsmanship' that stood as 'surrogate for expansion'. The 'infinite, unsullied horizon' served as a backdrop for tales of high action for male heroes, an 'ideological geography' which Hofmeyr argued is 'centrist' as it placed white males, like Alan Quartermain, at the centre surrounded by 'savages' on the periphery.<sup>80</sup> These qualities are also found, for example in Rider Haggard's novel, *She*, which was translated into over a hundred languages and prescribed for schools.<sup>81</sup> The effect of such literature on young minds would be to

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>79</sup> M. van Wyk Smith, *Drummer Hodge: The Poetry of the Anglo-Boer War*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978, quoted in I. Hofmeyr, 'Mining, Social Change and Literature with particular reference to the mining novel, 1870–1920' ('Mining'), MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980, p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> Hofmeyr, 'Mining', p. 15.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

reproduce the cultural arrogance of colonial masters, a sure sense of the superiority of British 'civilisation' in contrast to African 'savagery', and a patriarchal world view in relation to women.

At the heart of most adventure stories was a young male hero (often from a public school background) who seeks his fortune in the colonial periphery.<sup>82</sup> The narrative begins typically at the start of an 'imperial enterprise'. The heroes visit *terra incognita* ('new, forgotten, closed off from civilisation, preserved from progress, ripe for change').<sup>83</sup> The heroic task is often sexualised, 'the metaphorical entry is penetration, peaceful if possible, violent if necessary'. The unknown will be subdued, the land will be 'set in order' and the young hero returns 'home' much wealthier than before, admired and celebrated.<sup>84</sup>

Britain forms the constant centre of this literature and all imperial adventure fiction is essentially 'The Island Story'. It begins in the distant Celtic past with Boudicca and proceeds through Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, Richard the Lionheart, Queen Elizabeth I, Admiral Nelson, Duke of Wellington, ending in the present with Queen Victoria.<sup>85</sup> MacDonald calls this 'History as Pageant', where historical figures 'marched together in the grand parade that was itself a confirmation of the triumphant present.' Using Hayden White's plot structure, he argues that the comic happy ending was 'Empire'.<sup>86</sup>

The story is a 'timeless dream' of 'Merrie England' and 'greenwood', producing the imagined national character in 'seductive masculine metonymies of John Bull, roast

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>85</sup> R. H. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880–1918*, (*The Language of Empire*), Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994, p. 51.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49.

beef, and hearts of oak.'<sup>87</sup> In Macdonald's words:

...history now worked both linearly and spatially, diachronically and synchronically, each episode meaningful in itself, each episode meaningful in the context of empire. A reference to one patriotic incident brought the whole of the nation's history to mind.<sup>88</sup>

MacDonald draws on Anderson's concept of the 'imagined community' but takes it to a new, more powerful level that suggests that extreme forms of nationalism could, at times, take the appearance of what Dicey described as a 'secular religion'. To take this argument further, MacDonald argues that General Gordon, who was martyred at Khartoum, was a 'potent symbol of the Victorian Christ, manly, chivalric, devoted to duty, misunderstood, betrayed and sacrificed'.<sup>89</sup> MacDonald also argues that in its attempt to legitimise militarism, imperialism turned to evangelical imagery.

The Church played a crucial, if ambiguous role in the promotion of 'imperial adventure fiction' because it wished to wean working-class children, especially boys, off of the 'penny dreadfuls' popular among the working class with titles like *The Bad Boy's Paper* and *The Wild Boys of London* which glamorised violence and crime (see Figure 4.2). Similarly, middle-class children had to be drawn away from Gothic horror stories, full of gore and what were considered to be macabre and essentially evil forces.<sup>90</sup> The Religious Tract Society tried to 'divert' the appeal of violence and aggression 'into more acceptable channels'.<sup>91</sup> The result was the *Boy's Own Paper* (1879–1967) aimed at middle-class schoolboys which was a 'spectacular success' and quickly attracted imitators like *Union Jack* (1880–3) drawing upon R. L. Stevenson, Conan Doyle and Jules Verne as contributors; *Chums* (1892–1934) and *The Captain* (1899–1924). For the working-class boys, publishers provided *The Halfpenny Marvel* (1893–1922), *Pluck* (1894–1916) and *The Boy's Friend* (1895–1927).

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<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>90</sup> C.C. Eldridge, *The Imperial Experience: From Carlyle to Forster*, (*The Imperial Experience*), MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1996, pp. 55–9.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>92</sup> MacDonald, *Language of Empire*, p. 68.

These stories would have had a special resonance for South African boys because many of the authors were 'men of action' with a South African connection: Haggard served as an official in Natal, Arthur Conan Doyle served as a physician in the South African War, Edgar Wallace was Reuters' South African correspondent while John Buchan served in Milner's Administration. That these books were very widely read both in Britain and the Empire, including South Africa, cannot be doubted. G. A. Henty's eighty adventure stories together amounted to 25 million copies sold.<sup>92</sup> Studies on British public library returns show that by the 1880s three-quarters of the books taken out of municipal libraries in Britain were the 'sun-drenched, blood-stained prose' of imperial adventure writers.<sup>93</sup> Colonial libraries are also likely to have possessed these books on their shelves.

The impact of such fiction must have been considerable. Even less overtly imperialist books could have also influenced young minds in ways that would have promoted the imperial project. The literature of Jules Verne's adventure stories like *Around the World in Eighty Days*, for example, conveyed, in Barthes' words, the idea that

nothing can escape man, that the world even at its most distant part, is like an object in his hand, and that all property is but a dialectical moment in the general enslavement of Nature.<sup>94</sup>

By shrinking the world into a known and enclosed space, he makes it 'easily accessible to man'.<sup>95</sup> Even the less obvious sections of *Boy's Own Paper*, such as its 'Things To Make and Do' served to reassure that there was 'nothing that could not be known, described and hence owned'.<sup>96</sup>

The message of Empire was not only conveyed through the literature that children read at school or at home in the form of novels or poems, but also in the very process of

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<sup>93</sup> *The British Empire*, p. 170.

<sup>94</sup> MacDonald, *Language of Empire*, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> Hofmeyr, 'The Mining Novel', p. 166.

<sup>96</sup> MacDonald, *Language of Empire*, p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56

learning to read, to understand English grammar and to write elegantly. Textbooks such as 'Readers' – for which the Education Act of 1870 created a huge demand – were full of the metaphors and tropes of Empire. Well-known imperial works read by adults could be recycled into Readers, just as Edgar's *Heroes of England* (1858) and Napier's England's *Battles and Sieges*, were reprinted in the form of Blackie's *School Text* (1905).<sup>97</sup>

**Figure 4.2. A Selection of Covers of Boy's Literature at the Turn of the Century**



Source: D. Morris and B. Gardner, 'The Story of a Nation's Heritage', *The British Empire*, BBC TV and Time-Life Books, Time-Life International (Nederland) N.V., 1972, p. 825.

While there is little explicit evidence about exactly what fiction Krugersdorp youth read in the aftermath of the South African War, it is almost certain that many of the books mentioned above achieved a wide circulation. Precisely who read what, however, is unclear. Inferential data, and youth responses to drilling, the cadet movement and so on, suggest a graduated response to this literature. Middle-class, English-speaking children were most susceptible to the imperial project and imperial propaganda.

Yet it is possible to detect a mounting resistance among middle-class youth as well.

They were less in need of a vicarious experience of the 'wild': they were in it already. In addition, they also adopted a more hedonist and liberal humanist approach characteristic of the Edwardian era. Finally, and most importantly, they began to identify themselves as colonial and not imperial. From this point of view, Krugersdorp represented a microcosm of South Africa.

### **Working Class Resistance to the Imperial Project**

For literature to impart values such as admiration for the British Empire, children had to actually read these books or have these read to them by parents and teachers. There is some evidence that such cultural transmission was partial and ineffective because children were often resistant to it. Krugersdorp's school log books make it clear that children were remarkably resistant to adult attempts to get them to attend school, let alone focus on lessons and read from prescribed texts.

The 'imperialism' conveyed by these texts is often so subtle that it probably was missed by most of the children. Moreover, the literate 'reading public' consisted almost entirely of the white middle-class residents and some elements of the 'respectable' white working class. This meant that not all working-class children were exposed to imperial literature or books that extolled middle-class values and imperialism.

Far more influential surely, were their parents' views and certainly most working-class men and women took little interest in the fate of the British empire, but focused rather on how to get food onto the table and pay the rent. A strike would have a much greater impact upon a young working-class child's world-view than countless Rider Haggard texts. Many working-class children just wanted to get out of school and start earning money to help their families, and to enjoy the independence that earning their own income represented. If they had a view on the Empire, it was just as likely to be negative.

Working-class children frequently stayed away from school, sometimes with their parents' permission, at times, even at their behest, as they would be used to run

errands and to contribute towards the collective family income. In Britain, Inspectors and Truant Officers from the London School Board clashed with working-class parents on a number of occasions. A number of parents even ended up in Magistrates' Courts and had to pay fines for breaking rules on compulsory education.<sup>98</sup> While evidence in this regard is absent in Krugersdorp, absenteeism was certainly very common and as many as half of the children in the local Government school would be absent on days of particularly bad weather, according to the school log.<sup>99</sup> While no settler journals exist for Krugersdorp, those for other towns in nineteenth-century South Africa suggest that even middle-class colonial parents were not particularly worried when their children missed school. For example, Alice Rawls recalled her mother telling her tutor:

Mr. Nel, it is such a lovely day. The children won't be attending school. A day in the sunshine will be far more beneficial than a morning in our fireless schoolroom...they are not running any education race.<sup>100</sup>

In both Britain and colonial South Africa it was common for working-class children to be removed from school as soon as they reached the statutory age of fourteen years in order to work. Boys found work as office boys, messengers and delivery boys, while girls helped their mothers at home or worked in coffee shops as waitresses.<sup>101</sup> Frequent absenteeism and early removal from the schooling system altogether, must have undermined the efficacy of schooling as a mechanism for transmitting the dominant culture of imperialism and other values intertwined with it, such as, gender roles and respect for property.

Working-class children sometimes simply roamed the streets, getting into trouble for their delinquent behaviour. Sometimes this even led to clashes with the police and other symbols of authority. Cohen's study of working class attitudes described such behaviour

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<sup>98</sup> See S. Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working Class Children and Youth, 1889–1939*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1981.

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Transvaal Government Log Book, Government School Krugersdorp, 31 October 1906.

<sup>100</sup> A. Rawls and R. Gordon, *Daughters of Yesteryear: A Pioneer Child Looks Back at Early Johannesburg*, Howard Timmins, Cape Town, 1975, pp. 28–9.



as 'larking about', a concept that included 'calculated' and 'hostile' behaviour to teachers, policeman and other symbols of authority which was rooted in the 'aggressive, insulting and coarse traditions of working-class humour'.<sup>102</sup> Such behaviour would undermine the imperial project and the inculcation of middle-class values.

There is some evidence of such juvenile delinquency in Krugersdorp. For example, in 1909 four white boys threw firecrackers into a motor car that struck the motorist on the chest and glanced off into the road.<sup>103</sup> Being one of the earliest motor vehicles on the Rand, there was 'always a certain overflow of petrol' and the fumes were 'highly flammable', so the act was considered more than a mere prank and a dangerous and stupid criminal action. Police attempted to arrest the boys but 'they cleared off'.<sup>104</sup>

In another incident, this time in Burghershoop, white youngsters were reported as causing 'a great disturbance' to storekeepers.<sup>105</sup> Apparently a gang of no less than twenty boys, all on bicycles, ruled the streets. They would ride their bicycles in the middle of the road practising 'all kinds of wicked tricks, and no one could pass without being molested [for]... a policeman in Burghershoop is rarely seen'.<sup>106</sup>

At times delinquency crossed the line into criminal behaviour. For example, in 1905 a young 'Dutch lad' named Pete Boucher was arrested for stealing two wooden flower pots from a house in District Township. He was just fifteen years old and already had

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<sup>101</sup> Chisolm, 'Reformatories', p. 83.

<sup>102</sup> See P. Cohen, 'Policing the Working Class City', in B. Fine et al (ed.), *Capitalism and the Rule of Law: From Deviancy Theory to Marxism*, Hutchinson, London, 1979, p. 123.

<sup>103</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 30 October 1909, untitled.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 20 February 1904, untitled.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 1 April 1905, untitled.

three convictions for stock theft, housebreaking and theft of a jacket. His background was fairly typical of such juvenile offenders. His father was away fighting with the Germans in Damaraland, while his mother was in Kimberley. He stayed with his uncle and he had 'not been to school for a long time and he did no work'.<sup>107</sup>

The middle class in Krugersdorp was appalled by such behaviour from working-class children and the local newspaper campaigned for a reformatory, pointing out that no provision had been made for such a local house of correction for the 'few extremely bad boys who figure in the criminal annals'.<sup>108</sup> A concern was expressed that prison was entirely unsuitable for such children. Within a few years industrial schools had been set up. These were little different to the reformatories such as Emmasdale in Heidelberg.<sup>109</sup> It seems unlikely that such children would have been subsumed within the parameters of imperialism but rather that they would have developed their own subcultures, independent of it as an 'alternative' ideology.

There were indications that even those elements of Krugersdorp's white working-class youth that did remain in the schooling system, resisted institutions that tried to promote the British imperial project. For example, the officers in the local cadets appear to have been limited to children from the middle class, (see Appendix Two) for example, 'Captain' George Harper was the son of one of the partners in a local men's outfitters 'Harper and Tanner' and president of the local Chamber of Commerce and Town Councillor. 'Captain' S. Stuart and 'Sergeant' K. Stuart were the sons of the principal of the Government Town School. 'Captain' W. R. Stewart was the son of Dr Percy Stewart, a local doctor while Cadet S. H. Puth was the son of one of the local mine managers.

The Krugersdorp Rifle Association, an important local middle-class institution, took the cadets under their wing by holding a shooting competition where they awarded medals

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Chisolm, 'Reformatories', pp. 87–88.

<sup>110</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 29 September 1906, 'Cadet Shooting Competition'.

<sup>111</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 January 1903, 'School Concert'.

to reward the marksmanship of the young boys.<sup>110</sup> The local newspaper reported that at a School Concert at the Government School two young girls sang 'Soldiers in the Park' while boys paraded in forage caps 'at the regulation angle' and 'entered deliriously into the spirit of the noisy chorus'.<sup>111</sup> In each case, drilling and the militarisation of school activities seems to have been largely limited to the middle class and so played little role in inculcating values in working-class children in Krugersdorp.

### **Resistance by Middle-class White Children**

Over time, even the middle class began to lose interest in the imperial project and focused instead on reconciliation with their Boer neighbours, as Chapter Three has demonstrated. This coincided with a dilution in overt patriotism and militarisation associated with civic ceremonies linked to the visits of prominent figures to the town. Lord Selborne, Milner's successor, who arrived in Krugersdorp in October 1905, was much less interested in the imperial project than his predecessor and this, too, may have contributed to its dilution. While the Town Council declared a general holiday and Selborne addressed 'quite several hundred youngsters', there was nothing like the explicit tub-thumping jingoism that accompanied Milner's visit to the town just a few years earlier.

The Boy's Cadets may have been present but they were far outnumbered by ordinary pupils. While Selborne urged the youngsters to 'Fear God and Honour the King' and a garden party followed in the Coronation Park,<sup>112</sup> the newspaper report on Selborne's visit made no reference to Union Jacks, bunting or to gilded crowns. Any semiotic message of imperialism was likely to be considerably muted.

After 1905, the History syllabus seems also to reflect a less chauvinistic form of imperialism but one that still stressed the centrality of Britain and the British Empire. The 'ex-Std VII' classes in the Krugersdorp government town school studied 'a brief history

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<sup>112</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 17 October 1905, 'His Excellency, Visit to Krugersdorp, Talk to the Children'.

of England before 1399,<sup>113</sup> while geography classes studied New Zealand, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales.<sup>114</sup> A list of books in the school in 1909 included '5 Ransome's History of England' and '56 Black's Geography' and while these may have promoted an Anglo-centric view of the world,<sup>115</sup> this literature did not necessarily constitute overt imperialist chauvinism. In any case, books on travel and 'other wholesome literature suitable for children' were donated to the school to encourage 'a love of reading amongst the scholars' and this may have diluted a British imperialist project.<sup>116</sup>

### **Resistance offered by the 'Colonial Girl'**

Girls could also be subversive but often their resistance took a less overt and aggressive form and targeted gender roles rather than authority itself. However, this too would have undermined the imperial project. This is illustrated in the way that local girls approached needlework which was taught in all the local schools. St. Ursula's Convent opened a Day School where, among a wide variety of subjects, it offered '[E]very kind of needlework, cutting out and fitting' and also advertised a 'course of domestic economy and cookery' for 'elder students'.<sup>117</sup> Randfontein Public School even issued prizes for sewing as an incentive.<sup>118</sup> Yet colonial girls resisted learning these skills, perhaps because they could not see how activities associated with household drudgery could figure in their future, at least while there were plenty of black 'houseboys' and increasingly black women to carry out such menial tasks.

Settler girls around the world were notorious for their poor needlework and this suggests that a process of deliberate neglect even 'sabotage' was at work. In 1909 an Inspector of the Krugersdorp Government Town School blamed the teachers for poor needlework in their classes, but it was just as likely that the girls simply refused to be 'taught':

<sup>113</sup> Transvaal Government Log Book, Government School Krugersdorp, 31 October 1906.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 'Schemes of Work', 28 February 1908.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, 'list of books sent to the Secondary School', 25 January 1909.

<sup>116</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 October 1902, 'School Library'.

<sup>117</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 14 January 1905, 'St. Ursula's Day School'.

The needlework in this school is in an unsatisfactory state, the girls have been carelessly taught....the girls have not been taught to fix the corners of their patches, ... nor how to stroke their gathers, etc. ...The teachers have to remember that girls should take pride in their needlework and that clean and well arranged books are good training for the girls.<sup>119</sup>

When Selborne visited Krugersdorp again in 1907, he noted the following:

I go from farm to farm, and the one cry is no labour. But when I come to the Rand, I find Zulu warriors acting as your nursemaids and your cooks. There is no other place in the world where such a condition is found. There is a great field of labour here for white women, and I am told that white women regard household service as degrading [but]... what is honest work in England and Holland is honest enough for white women on the Rand.<sup>120</sup>

These concerns were shared by a prominent local female activist Mrs A. James, (President of the local Women's Christian Temperance Union and supporter of Women's Suffrage),<sup>121</sup> who regretted that the local school was failing in its mission in preparing white girls

...for domestic life or for wifehood or motherhood, for this I take it, should be the aim of a girl's training, otherwise when a girl leaves school they look with disdain at women's work at home and prefer to go as shorthand writers or typists.<sup>122</sup>

Mrs James blamed this failure on the policy of co-education where boys and girls were placed in the same classrooms in local schools and pointed out that 'many parents feel very strongly against the mixed system of training, especially among older children'.<sup>123</sup> Mrs James's concern was targeted at the 'adolescent female' which was a new sociological category that arose as a result of extended formal schooling for middle-

<sup>118</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 26 September 1908, 'Randfontein Public School'.

<sup>119</sup> Krugersdorp Government Town School Log Book, 1903–1909, Inspector's Report, Witwatersrand West School Board, 27th–29th September 1909.

<sup>120</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 May 1907, 'Visit of His Excellency, the Governor'.

<sup>121</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 24 April 1909.

<sup>122</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 12 January 1907, 'Correspondence'.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

class girls.

Stanley Hall's theories on the female adolescent, which were very influential at this time, argued that female adolescence was a 'time of instability' and a 'dangerous phase' when young females needed special protection from society. Hall went further to suggest that the adolescent female never outgrew this phase and, unlike boys, failed to acquire 'self-knowledge' but instead were identified by their 'clothes-consciousness, whimsicality, unconscious flirtatiousness, fads, fickleness, weepiness, giggling,

coquetry, passion for secrecy and, above all, by their strong distaste for study'.<sup>124</sup> Hall blamed this on the energy expended during menstruation which left young girls too weak for 'brainwork'.<sup>125</sup>

It appears that at least some of the 'Colonial Girls' in Krugersdorp did not share these ideas and so notorious did Krugersdorp's 'Colonial Girl' become that a series of newspaper articles attempted to define her. It began with a letter in the local newspaper from 'a Bachelor of 30' who felt that after spending five years in the Transvaal after arriving from England, that the local girls had a 'superficial brightness' about them but 'little depth of character'.<sup>126</sup> The writer thought that local women demonstrated little concern for the 'things that interest a man' and preferred to read low-brow literature in the form of the novels of Marie Cornell and Mrs Henry Wood rather than 'solid works of poetry and drama'.<sup>127</sup>

This letter inspired a letter which was headlined as 'The Colonial Girl – A Lady's View', derided the 'Bachelor' as one of those 'gentlemen' who resort to newspapers with notices like: 'gentleman of social standing ... would like to meet a lady ... a little income essential'.<sup>128</sup> While the writer felt that the Colonial Girl lacked the advantages of her English sisters such as university education, she, nonetheless, 'exceeds her in various

<sup>124</sup> S. Hall, *Youth: Its Regimen and Hygiene* (1906), quoted in C. Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, (*Girls Growing Up*), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981. pp. 122–4.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *The Standard Krugersdorp*, 27 January 1906, 'The Colonial Girl'.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

accomplishments' and made one of the 'most able and economical housekeepers', was affable, and made a 'good wife and mother'.<sup>129</sup>

The 'Colonial Girl' was apparently practical, unencumbered by useless university education, capable, self-reliant and a 'pal' to her husband; sentiments that were somewhat similar to the ideal that Olive Baden-Powell aspired for her charges, the Girl Guides.<sup>130</sup> The message was that colonial girls had greater 'character', were more outgoing, rough and ready, even 'tomboyish' (**See Figure 4.3**).

**Figure 4.3: Advertisement Depicting a 'Colonial Girl'.**



Source: *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 5 January 1905, advertisement for Sunlight Soap.

Krugersdorp's girls and young women seem to have been made of 'sterner stuff' than their 'Home' counterparts. A number of young women got together to form a local

<sup>128</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 February 1906, 'The Colonial Girl'.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> See R.H. MacDonald, *Sons of Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1993.

<sup>131</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 20 April 1904, untitled. All the members were unmarried.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

women's cricket team,<sup>131</sup> that quintessentially public school boy's game and girls even played cricket at the Government Town School.<sup>132</sup> There were plans to build tennis courts for the girls at this school and many of the girls took part in hockey and were coached by the male teachers.<sup>133</sup>

Some of Krugersdorp's girls may well have read books kept in the local library that extolled the virtues of such itinerant 'adventuresses' as Mrs Maturin's *Petticoat Pilgrims on Trek*, Mary Kingsley's *Travels Through Africa* and P. Oppenheim's *Anna the*

*Adventuress* as well as Olive Schreiner's works.<sup>134</sup> Local girls at the Ursuline Convent took part in the 'Amazon March' in a school concert<sup>135</sup> and one local girl, Alice D. James, won a University Prize for her poem 'The Spirit of the Veldt'.<sup>136</sup> Increasingly young white women joined activist groups that campaigned for the franchise, temperance, raising the age of consent and other public causes that confronted the entrenched patriarchy of the town (see Chapter Seven). As young girls and women increasingly embraced the public sphere and challenged stereotypical gender roles, so the imperial project was steadily undermined.

### **Resistance Inspired by Youthful Hedonism**

Finally, a major factor in the dilution of the imperial project was the simple hedonism of youth. Even the middle-class youth could be assertive occasionally towards authority figures although often in a less dramatically anti-establishment ways, in pursuit of pleasure. For example, over a hundred adolescent couples attended the dance at the Freemason's Hall organised by a number of teenagers, identifiable as the sons and

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<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 3 April 1909, 'Public Library'. See also *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 1 May 1909 'Public Library, New Additions'.

<sup>135</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 January 1905, untitled.

<sup>136</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp* 25 May 1907, untitled.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*



daughters of some eminent local middle-class notables.<sup>137</sup> Although the music was provided by the Krugersdorp Amateur Orchestral Society and the dance only lasted until midnight, such dances were strongly indicative of what Krugersdorp's youth wanted, and it was not the 'Lad's Brigades', Boy's Clubs and Cadets! Imperialism and militarism simply failed to ignite the colonial youth's interest.

The fundamental weakness of such groupings was that they were for boys only and Krugersdorp's adolescent boys wanted to mix with members of the opposite sex in their free time. This pressurised the local middle class to build the Krugersdorp Gymnasium

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a sports facility that pointedly catered for 'both sexes'.<sup>138</sup> The sponsors went out of their way to retain boys' interests by stressing that they were going to especially recruit 'young ladies'.<sup>139</sup> Sport was not enough, and in 1907 the local authorities had to permit a dance to help fund the Gymnasium. The local churches realised that if it wanted to reach Krugersdorp's youth, then it had to give them what they wanted and so began to organise a number of dance entertainments including Fancy Dress balls. These were organised by the local Presbyterian<sup>140</sup> and Catholic churches.<sup>141</sup>

Many English-speaking parents in Krugersdorp became increasingly indulgent of their children, further diluting the imperial project. This was apparently an empire-wide phenomenon that Rose called the 'Gospel of Fun' that was embraced by Edwardians after half a century of dour Victorianism.<sup>142</sup> By the turn of the century, a 'menagerie of philosopher-comedians' appeared in entertainment circles including Max Beerbohm, H.

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<sup>138</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 26 June 1909, untitled.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 26 June 1909, untitled.

<sup>141</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 August 1903, untitled.

<sup>142</sup> Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament*, Chapter Five, 'The Gospel of Fun'.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*, p. 164.

G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Maurice Barring, Saki, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lytton Strachey and James Joyce<sup>143</sup> who were determined to be light-hearted and whose writings helped to spread this new philosophy around the English-speaking world.

The recreation and leisure industries had undergone a revolution at around the time that the fun-loving son of the dour Queen Victoria was being crowned and the two developments happily converged into the Edwardian era. The first British screening of a motion picture took place in 1896 and spread so quickly that Krugersdorp acquired a cinema early in the new century. Fads that began in the metropole quickly spread to the colonial periphery. For example, a cycling craze developed in Britain in 1895 and rapidly spread to the colonies and dominions of the British Empire.

The Edwardians in Britain embraced the circus with enthusiasm, as did their colonial counterparts. For example, Fillis's Circus became a regular and major local event for Krugersdorp. To illustrate the power of this 'Gospel of Fun', the attendance at this circus on single Tuesday afternoon was no less than twelve hundred children.<sup>144</sup> They attended in their best holiday clothes to be taken through the 'magic mazes of fairy land'.<sup>145</sup> In the most purple of prose, the local newspaper reported the children's delight in a way in which adults in Britain and the colonies had now begun to write and think about children, that is, in an extremely cloying and sentimental way:

Alice's adventures in wonderland with her mock turtle, the March hare, the mad hatter and the Cheshire cat never came anywhere near that joyous medley of cobras and clowns, baboons and bull fights, dogs that played football, ... delirious joy .... The merry voices of the children as they chortled with the clown was a veritable tonic to the grown-ups, and their innocent laughter was as sweet as the grandest anthem that ever rolled up from the 'dim religious light' of some solemn cathedral.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 November, 1903, 'The Children at the Circus'.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

The combination of lightheartedness and a wish to indulge their children, meant that Edwardian parents looked askance at, or, at least, did not take as seriously, the drills, the rallying, the flag-waving and drum-beating of jingoism. At the same time, an overt and explicit concern for child welfare suddenly flourished – this was the more serious side to the ‘Gospel of Fun’. A raft of laws that aimed to improve children’s health were passed in Britain and then extended to South Africa. Regular school medical inspections were introduced in the Transvaal schools. Many of the parents in Krugersdorp wanted a good education for their children in a friendly, positive atmosphere and were becoming increasingly concerned about the conditions in Krugersdorp’s schools.

### **The middle-class Campaign to Improve the Quality of Schools in Krugersdorp**

Middle-class parents, teachers and broader public grew hostile towards the authorities over what they considered to be the unacceptable neglect of school buildings by the Education Department. This may have weakened support for the imperial project and diluted patriotism. In 1905 the Government School was described as an ‘insanitary school’, where the floors of the conveniences were faulty in construction and led to a ‘serious nuisance’.<sup>147</sup> Later the school was described as ‘deplorable in many respects’.<sup>148</sup>

The main cause of this deterioration was the overcrowding that occurred as a result of the rapid growth in Krugersdorp’s population. The original plans for Government Town School had been altered several times to accommodate rapidly growing numbers of white children in the town. In 1902 plans were in place to build a large government school in Krugersdorp catering for 600 pupils.<sup>149</sup> In 1905, when the brick building was finally built, this figure had to be revised to 700 and a large main hall was designed to accommodate 500 pupils at any given time.<sup>150</sup> In 1907 the Transvaal Legislature declared that all white children had to attend school up to the

<sup>147</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 14 April 1905, untitled.

<sup>148</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 13 May 1905, untitled.

<sup>149</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 October 1902, ‘Government School’.

<sup>150</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 13 May 1905, untitled.

age of fourteen. This meant that many working-class white children, who under other circumstances would have been taken out of school and put to work to contribute to the family income, were now retained in the school system, further exacerbating overcrowding.

Another reason for the overcrowding was the Education Department's policy of paying teachers' salaries on a scale that worked out to five pounds per annum for each child attending class. This meant that there had to be at least seventeen to eighteen pupils per class to meet the costs of a salary.<sup>151</sup> The upper standards had too few pupils to break even so the lower standards had to bear the brunt of overcrowding as a form of cross-subsidisation.<sup>152</sup>

An early hint that some English-speaking parents may have grown unhappy about the quality of their children's education was an advertisement placed in the local newspaper by Miss Martin, the erstwhile Principal of the local Grammar School who had started a 'London School' for 'West Rand People who may desire an English training for their children'.<sup>153</sup> This suggests that English-speaking parents may have thought that the education that their children received was not as good as it might be, and this led to attacks on their own administration that they were getting 'second best'. In this way, the English-speaking white middle-class parents, teachers and journalists demonstrated that they were no sycophants, and made it clear that it expected the same quality in the colonies as was the case back 'Home'. It also opened up an important area of common ground between English-speakers and Dutch/Afrikaans-speakers as will be discussed at the end of this Chapter.

### **Anti-imperial Ideology**

Edwardian children's literature, which was widely read and enjoyed by adults, hardly mentioned school at all – witness Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* (1894), J. M. Barrie's

<sup>151</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 18 February 1905, untitled.

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*

*Peter Pan* (1904) and Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1907). Rose has pointed out 'no other generation English history produced so many children's classics as the Edwardians',<sup>154</sup> but what he failed to point out that most of it was set not in school, nor even in towns but often in nature, on imaginary islands of 'Lost Boys' or at Toad Hall. Most of these works were already lodged in the Krugersdorp Public Library by 1907,<sup>155</sup> and there is no reason to doubt their popularity with middle-class English-speaking adults and children alike. It is possible that such books were read in preference to the explicitly 'imperialist' adventure yarns of Haggard, Henty and company.

A case can be made that these works, like Jules Verne's classics were not 'innocent' celebrations of children's fun but were infused with imperialist metaphors and concepts. For example, an argument has been put forward that *Winnie the Pooh*'s Christopher Robin represents the colonialist who 'rules' over his hundred-acre wood, a precise colonial measurement over space that evokes imperialist order and hegemony.<sup>155</sup> But it seems likely that such books undermined imperialist order by rejecting militarism, schooling, drills, authoritarian figures and in embracing a free, hedonistic spirit. Any imperialist message conveyed by the imposition of control over space and nature was probably too subtle to have any influence to counter the dominant message of child-like fun.

Another factor that undermined the imperial project was that some of Krugersdorp's English-speaking adults increasingly began to embrace a 'counter-culture' of Liberal Humanism during the Edwardian period. In late-Victorian and early-Edwardian Britain, writers could and did present texts that challenged imperial hegemony in subtle ways. MacDonald argues that this should be considered as an 'important presence, a noise in the background not always drowned out'.<sup>156</sup> Imperialism was not monolithic and 'even within its own vision was subject to continual negotiation and revision'. For example, a

<sup>153</sup> *The Standard*, Krugersdorp, 16 December 1905, 'A London School'.

<sup>154</sup> Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament*, p. 181.

<sup>155</sup> Eldridge, *The Imperial Experience*, p. 208.

<sup>156</sup> MacDonald, *The Language of Empire*, p. 6.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 25–6.

powerful, if inconsistent, critic was the *Punch* magazine, which 'mocked military doublespeak' and 'flag waving at Board School'<sup>157</sup> even while it also poked fun at England's enemies.

In Britain, a loose alliance of the Low Church, Quaker millionaires, missionary societies, independent and radical MPs constituted a small but significant group that attacked the excesses of Victorian imperialism, even at the height of the South African War. Even the notorious *Boy's Own Paper*, published by the Religious Tract Society, and *Young England*, produced by the Sunday School Union, preferred the adventure stories of highwaymen and pirates to explicitly imperial stories involving heroic battles against 'native peoples' by British lads. The former publication even lost readers during the South African War due to their refusal to run military stories.<sup>158</sup>

Jonathon Rose, in his important study of the 'Edwardian Temperament' has argued that while it was difficult to reduce the attitudes of an entire generation to a single aphorism, a dominating theme of Edwardian thinking was E. M. Forster's commandment, 'Only Connect'. Such a belief corresponded to a broad series of 'secular religions' that burst forth in Britain during the late-nineteenth century, a product of the uncertainty created by the teachings of Charles Lyell's geology, Darwin's evolutionary theory and the comparative anthropology of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890).

This desire for connection was reinforced by the Edwardians' inclination to replace adherence to organised religion with 'substitute religions' which found some release in Social Fabianism, spiritualism and a broad belief in the possibility of reconciling faith and reason by seeking constantly after the 'cardinal virtues' of 'unity, oneness, wholeness, bonds, synthesis ... connection'.<sup>159</sup> E. M. Forster's *Passage to India*, written after the First World War when disillusionment with Empire was at its peak, captured the essence of this sentiment that already had its supporters among liberal humanists, like Emily Hobhouse and Jan Smuts, at the turn of the century.

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<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Rose, *Edwardian Temperament*, p. 83.

This desire for 'connection' was already influential at the start of the Edwardian era and may have inclined English-speaking middle class white residents in Krugersdorp to seek reconciliation, particularly between Boer and Briton, thus diluting the imperial project. There is some evidence that liberal humanism was embraced by some leading members of Krugersdorp's white middle class which led them away from a crass imperialism and towards a *rapprochement* with their Boer neighbours after the war, particularly over the issue of the Anglicisation of Boer children.

At first the two white groups were seriously polarised over Milner's controversial policy. An article in the local newspaper quoted approvingly a paper by J. S. Corbett called 'The Veldsman at School', which argued that Milner's Anglicisation policy in the schools produced

as good Dutchmen and women as ever, but with the narrow outlook immensely widened, with a new appreciation of the English character...and citizenship in a mighty empire.<sup>160</sup>

This led some elements of the Dutch-speaking middle class in Krugersdorp to complain bitterly about the process of Anglicisation. Dutch-speaking families in Krugersdorp were given access to an oppositional ideology in the form of an embryonic Afrikaner Nationalist literature that was intrinsically anti-imperialist in focus. These included newspapers and magazines like *Ons Klyntjie* (1896), and *Jong Zuid-Afrika* (1893–1961) and bodies like the *Afrikaner Bond* and *Die Afrikaanse Genootskap*, and political movements such as Het Volk.

Selborne, Milner's successor, did introduce modifications to the education system after 1906, allowing for advisory school committees that could suspend but not dismiss or appoint teachers, compulsory education at a primary level and the payment of local

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<sup>160</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 2 September 1905, 'The Veldsman at School'.

<sup>161</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 November 1905, 'Elementary Education'.

<sup>162</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 30 December 1905, untitled.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*

contributions. The newly formed 'Het Volk' organs were reported as lending their qualified approval to the plan.<sup>161</sup> Dutch would be used as a medium of instruction in lower standards. English was nonetheless of 'utmost importance' and teachers had to be 'loyal subjects' of the King.

Later that year, Het Volk passed a resolution at their Congress to continue their alternative schools and demanded funds from the Administration.<sup>162</sup> The local newspaper wrote that the feeling amongst 'our Dutch friends' was that the resolution was a 'serious blunder' and this bespeaks of closer relations between at least some elements of Boer and Briton in Krugersdorp.<sup>163</sup> When Het Volk secured control over the Transvaal, the new Minister of Education, Jan Smuts, introduced reforms that gave a greater degree of equality to Dutch and English as media of instruction. In 1908 the local newspaper wrote that if teachers wanted promotion, they had to 'adapt themselves to the requirements of South Africa' which meant, among other things, to be bi-lingual.<sup>164</sup>

Under this new legislation, the Government Town School began to take in Dutch-speaking children and by the end of the year about 30 per cent of the pupils of the Government Town School were Dutch-speaking (**see Table Four**).<sup>165</sup> In 1907, German was dropped as a subject in the Government Town school and replaced with Dutch.<sup>166</sup> The large numbers of Dutch-speaking pupils studying side-by-side with their English-speaking counterparts, spoke eloquently of the strides made by both groups to reach out to one another through 'South Africanism' as Table Four illustrates.

**Table Four: Percentage of Dutch-speaking Children to Total Roll, Government Town School Krugersdorp, 1908, in Various Standards and Grades**

Standards	Roll	Number of Dutch Children	Percentage of Dutch Children
Ex-VII	16	1	6%

<sup>164</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 February 1908, 'Schools and the Language Question'.

<sup>165</sup> Transvaal Government Log Book, Government Town School, Krugersdorp, vol. One, 17 September 1907.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, 9 October 1907.



VII	20	8	40%
VI	40	7	17%
V	45	16	34%
IV	81	20	24%
III	69	16	23%
II	66	17	25%
I	58	17	29%
GRADES			
iii	58	11	19%
ii	31	6	19%
i	62	8	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>23%</b>

Source: *Transvaal Government Log Book*, Government Town School, Krugersdorp, 28 February 1908, various pages.

In 1909, these changes were reflected in the Government Town School's syllabus. For example, Std IV pupils studied South African geography in the second term and the study of the physical and political geography of the British Isles in the third term was

combined with the study of the geography of Africa, diluting its Anglo-centrism.<sup>167</sup> In the fourth term pupils had to study the trade routes between South Africa and Europe, the position of British colonies and the principal countries of the world and important towns.<sup>168</sup> In the History class, the second term dealt with colonial development of the British Empire up to the seventeenth century, while the fourth term continued this theme from 1700–1750.<sup>169</sup> The overall effect may have been the growth of 'South Africanism' at the expense of overt and narrow Anglo-centrism and jingoistic British imperialism.

One of the earliest exponents of liberal humanism and an emergent South Africanism was Olive Schreiner, a middle-class nineteenth-century colonial woman who, according to Hofmeyr, was 'neither isolated nor aberrational [because] her views on South Africa bore the stamp of orthodox South African liberalism'.<sup>170</sup> Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* was widely read and accepted into the canon of great literature. Like other

<sup>167</sup> *Transvaal Government Log Book*, Government Town School, Krugersdorp, 'Std IV alterations in Syllabus according to new code', 1 September 1909.

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Hofmeyr, 'Mining Novel', p. 178.

<sup>171</sup> *ibid.* See also Eldridge, *The Imperial Experience*, p. 94.

liberals, Schreiner believed that she could convert the 'unenlightened' through her ideas projected through her novels such as *Trooper Peter Halkett of Mashonaland*, for example, where she attacked the 'upas tree of imperialism' which like the mythical tree spreads out its roots destroying other cultures so that it creates a barren world with no flowers in its shade.<sup>171</sup> Since her books were widely available to the reading public in Krugersdorp, it is likely that her ideas would have had at least some influence on Krugersdorp's English-speaking middle class and their children.

This growing enlightenment extended to Coloured school children. The Principal of the Government Town School noted that in the Junior Department, three 'half caste' pupils had been enrolled 'for a considerable time'. No reference had been made about this before in the Log Book and no comment was made about the appropriateness or otherwise of the presence by either the Headmaster or the Inspector. The matter was only recorded because 'three other parents refused to send their children to school on

account of the presence of these scholars' suggesting that most other parents did not notice or care about the presence of these Coloured children.<sup>172</sup> The Department was notified and asked for its advice but neither it, nor the local School inspector seemed to be unduly concerned.<sup>173</sup> Indeed, the issue only arises again in 1909, when it became clear that the Education Department was reluctant to define the term 'coloured children' and left it to the school's discretion.

While the local newspaper remarked that it was unsatisfactory to merely offer 'silence on the point', it presented no other objections.<sup>174</sup> As in many other matters, Coloureds managed to gain some advantages by the ambiguities and silences on this issue. A growing enlightenment, at least in regards to Coloured residents was likely to dilute the

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<sup>172</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 February 1905, 'The Krugersdorp Schools'.

<sup>173</sup> *Transvaal Government Log Book*, Government Town School, Krugersdorp, 1 February 1907.

<sup>174</sup> A. Nutting, *Scramble for Africa*, New York, 1971, p. 276, quoted in MacDonald, *Language and Empire*, p. 42.

<sup>175</sup> MacDonald, *Language and Empire*, p. 42.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

imperial project.

Another factor in the growing reconciliation between Boer and Briton in Krugersdorp is the development of the concept of the 'pioneer'<sup>175</sup> which could be applied as much to the early English-speaking miner as to the Boer 'Voortrekker'. The 'pioneer' is a creation of a culture that 'tells stories' to get past double binds, so that the virile frontiersman may 'borrow energy from the primitive'.<sup>176</sup> Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts Movement, played a fundamental role in the development of this hybrid concept of the 'frontiersman'. During the siege of Mafeking and in his earlier adventures in Mashonaland, Baden-Powell had developed profound respect for colonial forces symbolised by the 'frontiersman', drawing on the 'martial virility' of 'primitive races': the pioneers and trappers of North-West Canada, the explorers and hunters of Africa, the 'bushmen' of Australia. More precisely he admired institutionalised colonial forces: the Canadian Mounted Police and the South African Constabulary. They were the model on which his Boy Scout movement would be based, and which would 'save the country'. His book *Scouting for Boys* (1906),

expressed the middle-class values of the public school code and the Protestant work ethic. Its ideology was conservative and defensive, seeking to find in patriotism and imperialism the cure for an apparently disintegrating society. Its orientation was aggressively masculine, its mission to save boys from the sapping habits of domestic and urban life.<sup>177</sup>

To achieve this, the scout movement based itself on the 'frontiersmen' who were 'models of virility' who could 'live rough', they were 'hardy, self-sufficient, and practical'.<sup>178</sup> MacDonald argues that in its inception and early years, the Boy Scouts were militaristic and patriotic.<sup>179</sup> At its first rally at Crystal Palace, 1909, King Edward VII proclaimed that he knew that their training would prepare them to assist the Empire should it ever be in danger.

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<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*

Nonetheless, scouts had many 'secular' aspects that were non-militaristic. They did not drill or march at their rallies but gave the public demonstrations of life-saving skills and 'woodcraft': making fires, tracking, building bridges to cross rivers and tying knots. Learning the lessons of overtly militaristic Boy's Brigade and the Cadet movement whose discipline and constant drilling put off working class and lower middle class boys; scouts also drew from Seton's non-militaristic and 'internationalist' 'Woodcraft' movement in Canada which promoted social harmony and understanding.<sup>180</sup> Cowboys, Kit Carson, Daniel Boone, the 'mateship' of the Australian and New Zealander 'bushmen', the writings of Jack London – all contributed a sense of adventure in wilderness that directed boy's energies in new directions.

But too much wildness was also a 'danger'. The frontiersman was a good soldier but imperial officers were often uncomfortable with the notion of an independent soldier and 'B-P', as he preferred to be called, needed a balance and he found it in Kipling's concept of the 'Law of the Jungle':

Now these are the Laws of the Jungle, and many and mighty are they;  
But the head and hoof of the law, and the hump and the haunch is – Obey!<sup>181</sup>

This was the secret of the Boy Scout Movement: it was both 'fun' and 'disciplined'; it promoted 'adventure' but also 'order'. It appealed to the Edwardians' 'Gospel of Fun', a desire to spoil their children and indulge in fantasies captured in Peter Pan's 'Never Never Land'. At the same time it spoke to middle-class Edwardian fears of 'decadence' and hedonism symbolised by the *fin d' siècle* of Oscar Wilde, fears of the 'mob' and concerns about degeneracy that came to the war through teachings on eugenics, the famous studies by Booth and Rowntree of inner city British slums and the South African war. For the 'boy' it gave a chance to 'join a gang', to feel that he belonged to something bigger, grander than himself; while to the adult it promoted instructions in 'good behaviour' symbolised so evocatively in the 'Good Deed', especially 'helping old

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<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> quoted in *ibid.*, p. 149.

Mrs Britannia across the road'.<sup>182</sup>

Ironically, the paternalism, the emphasis on cleanliness, the cost of the uniform and its 'middle-class values of order and patriotism',<sup>183</sup> put off the working-class youth, precisely the target that 'B-P' saw as most in need of 'saving'. Statistical evidence is lacking, but in Britain it seemed that scouting succeeded best in the more prosperous Home Counties and attracted the middle class, lower middle class and some elements of the 'respectable' upper layer of the working class.

Scouting seems to have retained this class profile in the Transvaal. In the Register of Boy Scout Officers, the groups were located in overwhelmingly middle- and upper-class areas: there were no Doornfontein and Vrededorp troops in Johannesburg, for example, and none in Burghershoop or West Krugersdorp. The scoutmasters appointed for Krugersdorp troops were generally well-known members of the middle class: for example, C. G. Andreka (butcher), J. G. Gammie (hardware merchant), J. von Blommenstein (law agent) and C. O. Harvey (shopkeeper) (see Appendix Two).<sup>184</sup>

So, as far as acting as a 'unifying' agency in the Edwardian spirit of 'connectedness', scouting had only limited success, reaching out no further than the middle class. In this regard it followed the same trajectory as the Cadet movement although its militarism was heavily diluted. Its numbers, as far as can be told, seem to have been no greater than the Cadets. The 'Pioneer' might have worked as a symbol of reconciliation for the middle-class Boer and British elites, but it seemed to have little appeal for the 'Colonial Boy', just as Girl Guides seem to attract little interest from the 'Colonial Girl' when it was introduced later.

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<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*, p. 153. This is the image made so powerful by *Punch* magazine, September, 1909, entitled 'Our Youngest Line of Defence'. The caption read: 'Boy Scout of Mrs. Britannia: "Fear not, Gran'ma, No danger can befall you now, remember I am with you."'.

<sup>183</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 155–6.

<sup>184</sup> Transvaal Scouts Headquarters, Braamfontein, Scouts Archives: Register of Boy Scout Officers, 1908–

1923, records: Krugersdorp Boy Scouts, 1909, no pages.

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 37, 48 and 56.

<sup>186</sup> Extract from H. L. Hall, *I Have Reaped My Mealies*, Watson and Viney, London, 1935, cited in G. Butler (ed.), *When Boys Were Men*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1969 p. 232.

Part of the problem was that working-class areas in the Transvaal South African English-speaking children, whether middle or working class, were different to the children who grew up in Britain – and they knew it. Firstly they did not need the scouts or the girl guides to experience the outdoors – they lived it on a daily basis as part of everyday life. Even when Alice Rawls' family moved to Johannesburg, she found, that she was able to visit pioneer wagons, hold picnics and visit 'dirty little tramp diggers' without 'any occasion for fear'.<sup>185</sup> Similar tales of adventure were told by H. Hall<sup>186</sup> and this must have been the broad experience of settler boys and girls growing up in Krugersdorp. The construction of the 'pioneer' was echoed in the development of the concept of the 'Colonial Boy'.

A spate of newspaper articles appeared in 1905 to discuss the virtues of the 'Colonial Boy', like the 'Colonial Girl' discussed earlier, in response to a letter apparently sent by a local teacher who declared that,

straightforward, manly fellows are what we want and what we don't get in the Colony...the colonial boy is 'shoddy', ... an unmitigated liar. ...Decades of kafir environment have done their work. The boy's skin is white but his heart is blackened.<sup>187</sup>

This letter provoked a number of outraged replies as many English-speaking settler parents rushed to defend their boys. One letter from William Johnson called the previous correspondent's letter 'inane rot', representing a 'class of individual' who 'came out here' with half a lung and a 'tenner' in his pocket who is 'inclined to jaundice' instead of appreciating the many 'good things' to be found in 'sunny South Africa', and the 'many pleasant colonial men and women'.<sup>188</sup> The writer speculated that such a teacher, riddled with consumption, would not earn the respect of colonial boys who

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<sup>187</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 16 December 1905, 'The Pessimist Extraordinary'.

<sup>188</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 13 January 1906 'The Colonial Boy'.

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 January 1906, 'The Colonial Character'.

...had not much time to waste on a man who could not take part in the sports in the school in which he was supposed to have taught.<sup>189</sup>

He heartily recommended that such a man should go back to London as he is 'not the kind of man who is wanted in the colonies'. Another correspondent shared these sentiments but argued that the 'colonial character' was by no means fully developed but already it contained 'numerous qualities' in contrast to the

warped, contorted ... character which, unfortunately for the stability of the British race, is only too general in England.<sup>190</sup>

Among the virtues of the colonist was that he was 'as versatile as he is self-reliant, and his character is composed of the incongruous elements of sentiments and practicalness'. The 'Colonial Boy' also had 'courage', not only 'physical courage' but 'moral courage', and he was both loyal and inspired loyalty. Self-reliance had enabled the colonist to build up the colonies in Australia, Canada and South Africa into 'miniature nations' and the acquisition of 'manly traits and independence' was prized far above the 'elegance and effeminacy of his English brothers'.<sup>191</sup>

The correspondent went on to express all the familiar ideas that England was in a state of decadence and that the manliness and chivalry that had characterised its early history was dissipating. The 'Mother' was weak and it was up to the 'children who are strong' to rescue her for the colonial character was, '...patriotic, self-reliant, courageous, full of individuality, assertiveness and chivalry tends not to disintegration but consolidation.' He admitted to 'blemishes' but argues that they were not deep: the 'aggressiveness and braggadocio' of the Australians, the 'mercenary trait' so noticeable in the South African colonial and the 'sensuality' of the Canadian, were all superficial traits that were 'fast disappearing'.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 30 June 1906, 'Teachers in Session'.

This was a remarkable and positive assertion of the 'Colonial Boy' and the 'Colonial Character'. While it was still linked to the Empire in a typically Edwardian effort to 'Connect', it had moved from a British-centred imperialism to one centred on the colonies. The Colonial was seen as 'superior' to the 'home-born' in virtually every way but the link to the 'Old Country' was still acknowledged. This was a 'South African-centric imperialism', indeed it seemed to go further to assert South Africa as a 'miniature nation', ready to grow into maturity. There was a sense of a 'coming of age' here, a desire to break the umbilical cord and assert independence with the constant refrain of 'self-reliance' that quintessential Victorian word now turned to apply to a whole people and to assert the right to self-determination.

This embryonic South Africanism conveyed in the 'Colonial Boy', was echoed in the feelings of Krugersdorp's English-speaking teachers who hosted a meeting of the Transvaal Teachers Association in 1906 which was chaired by Mr Stuart, the principal of the Government Town School.<sup>193</sup> The History Syllabus evoked 'much discussion', and it was proposed by one of the delegates that,

South African History and British History be substituted in the place of the present syllabus ... children should be acquainted with the history of their own land and the history of the Empire of which they form an unit.<sup>194</sup>

One delegate could not see the relevance of Roman and Greek Mythology while Mr. Stuart wanted to leave out entirely the section on the British Empire.<sup>195</sup> This remarkable exchange came from the very guardians of Empire, the cultural repositories and transmitters of imperial ideology: the headmasters and teachers of English-language schools in colonial towns. More than anything else, their words powerfully conveyed how in Krugersdorp cultural identity had shifted from slavish propagation of a 'jingo' British chauvinism to a challenging new form of embryonic South Africanism that challenged simplistic British imperialism and offered a conciliatory and complex ideology

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<sup>194</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> *Transvaal Government Log Book*, Government Town School, Krugersdorp, 1, 25 January 1909.



that asserted the autonomy of the periphery within the Empire.

## **Conclusion**

In this Chapter I have tried to illustrate how schooling in Krugersdorp evolved, over the period 1902 to 1910, from a vehicle for transmitting an undiluted pro-imperial ideology into an institution that promoted the British Empire in a more ambiguous, localised way, but no less powerfully, through the prism of 'South Africanism'. The reasons for these changes were located in numerous 'obstacles', many of them local in origin, based on 'resistance' from Afrikaans- or Dutch-speaking whites, working-class whites, the youth and even middle-class British immigrants tired of being treated as second-class citizens. 'South Africanism' restored pride in such middle-class elements, acted as a 'bridging' ideology to unite 'Boer' and 'Briton' and took cognisance of the colonial youth's alienation from the overtly pro-British agenda.

While much has been written about this process leading up to Union at the higher political levels and the growth of a nascent 'South African' manufacturing and commercial capitalist class; this Chapter offers a contribution at a 'lower' but no less important level of what was happening on the 'ground' in Rand towns like Krugersdorp, among ordinary residents and in the schools. These schools which became such important new structures in Krugersdorp after the South African War as symbols of the 'coming of the children', the 'rising generation', became contested sites of ideological struggle.

These schools were large, imposing and solid buildings that dominated the town's horizons, and they were designed using a distinctive Edwardian 'school architecture' that was to convey the hegemony of the British imperialism over the Transvaal Republic. Supported by mining capital for their value in inculcating industrial work rhythms and discipline, these schools became in reality far more ambiguous structures and were often sites of youthful subversion. While an anchored structure in the built environment, these schools were contested, shifting sites in the ideological plane.

