

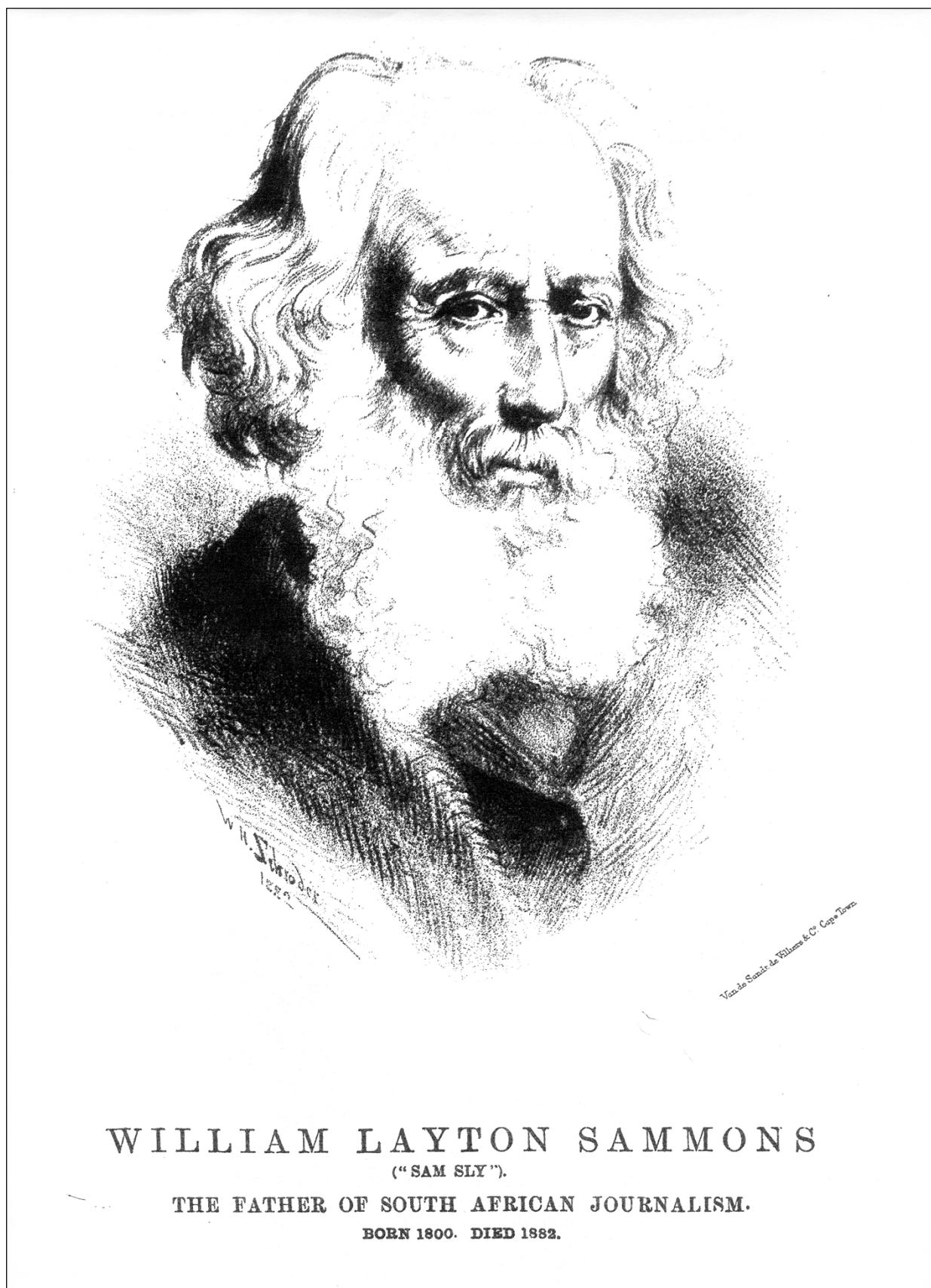
***Sam Sly's African Journal* and the  
Role of Satire in Colonial British  
Identity at the Cape of Good Hope,  
c. 1840-1850**

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*Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the  
MA by dissertation (Historical Studies)*

*Faculty of Humanities  
University of Cape Town  
September 2010*





**Figure 1**, William Layton Sammons, editor of *Sam Sly's African Journal*, drawing by W.H. Schröder, in *Lantern*, 9 September 1882

‘There is no slander in an allow’d fool’

- William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

‘when any ludicrous excrescences, funguses, or diseases, appear on the face of society, it is the business of an honest and charitable humourist, to clip them off, with as little suffering as possible to the afflicted, and without leaving a scar behind.’

- William Sammons, *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, 23 November 1843

‘Wit is educated insolence’

- Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*

‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy’

- *English proverb*

‘When a man leaves England the first time for the Cape, he sails with a load of prejudices and recollections in his pate. He forms the most extravagant opinions, and surcharges himself with a host of brilliant expectations and anticipations, derived from reputation, and the flaming and florid accounts of the poetical Pringle and others.’

- William Sammons, *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, 26 October 1843

## Abstract

In 1843, William Sammons founded the peculiarly named *Sam Sly's African Journal* (1843–1851) in Cape Town. Claiming to be a 'register of facts, fiction, news, literature, commerce and amusement', the *African Journal* was a hybrid newspaper and literary and satirical periodical aimed at an Anglophone immigrant readership in the period between the abolition of slavery and the granting of representative government to the Cape Colony. Through a close discursive analysis of Sammons's *Journal*, this thesis contends that satire played an important role in forging white middle class hegemony and British cultural affinity in the colony.

It firstly contextualises the way colonial readers envisioned their position globally within the British Empire, expressing their anxieties of cultural distance from Britain and Europe, and in turn their efforts to forge a favourable and respectable image of the Cape as a place of cultural improvement and desirability for prospective emigrants. Within this context, it then argues that *Sam Sly's African Journal* drew on satire to encourage and preserve the conservative social boundaries of propriety and family values espoused by white colonists. This differed from the more widely studied position of satire as subversive challenge to the established order, with Sammons avoiding sexually explicit, scandalous humour or overt attacks on personal character.

Satire in the *Journal* was emphasised as an important component in the cultural, reading and leisure lives of middle class colonists, and as a cultural manifestation of British identity's candour. Used as means to police the boundaries of middle class propriety, the *Journal's* satire ridiculed those who wandered from the script of gender roles and behaviours considered appropriate, whilst delegitimising the civilising project of humanitarians and missionaries towards the Khoikhoi, ex-slave and Xhosa population. It further ridiculed black colonists as irredeemably backward and averse to the respectable ideals of domesticity, education and lawfulness, entrenching racial stereotypes. As such, satire reflected and bolstered the increasingly racialised outlook of white colonists in the 1840s Cape Colony. Satire in *Sam Sly's African Journal* thus functioned ideologically to extend British cultural dominance and affinities, preserve and instil middle class moral codes, as well as to advance the reach of white hegemony.

## Acknowledgments

The arduous and enjoyable task of completing a thesis incurs its own debts to those who have aided and supported its development, or put in words of encouragement along the way. First and foremost, I thank Nigel Penn for his good humour, patience and encouragement over the course of not just this dissertation, but also prior supervision over honours and undergraduate research projects. From him I have learned the value of a story well told. Peter Anderson as co-supervisor has helped balance empiricism with abstraction in my outlook, always ready with a witty and stimulating observation.

For helpful comment, Kirsten McKenzie deserves mention for her friendly readiness in offering advice and continued interest in my scholarly development; Andrew Bank for reminding me to rethink the argument of the thesis beyond humour for humour's sake toward interrogating its more complex social uses in a colonial context. Among those who have voiced a word of interest or offered suggestions, and thus are deserving of gratitude, include Gerald Groenewald, Neil Parsons, John Tosh, David Johnson, Helen Binckes, Helen Ludlow, Lance van Sittert, Michael Godby, Zerene Haddad, Nic Botha, Jared McDonald and Saarah Jappie. Without such responses, the lone project of research would lack the welcome measure of collegiality.

For helping me locate necessary research, I am grateful to the librarians of the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town; British Library, London; and Oppenheimer Library, University of Cape Town, with especial thanks to Sandy Rowold Shell of the UCT African Studies Library.

Lastly, I owe tremendous gratitude to the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, whose scholarship has provided not only financial support for the completion of this thesis, but also a development-focussed community of like-minded young scholars.

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## Introduction

Newspapers are more than material objects that entertain or inform readers. They form an integral part of the reading material that shapes public identities. As Benedict Anderson has argued, it is reading that binds together and *imagines* communities into being.<sup>1</sup> The colonists of the Cape of Good Hope in the nineteenth century relied on the printed word to be informed of occurrences in European and other colonies, to share and debate ideas, as well as entertain themselves. It was newspaper's ephemeral nature, its ability to reflect recent news and comment, unlike the static older information of books, which gave it a wide appeal. Newspapers were dialogic in ways that books were not: colonists expressed their contemporaneous concerns in letters to the editor and received replies, the contents of the newspaper evoking the reality of local concerns and a sense of ready connectedness to the goings on of the wider world. They were also cheaper to use and portable: those who subscribed passed their copy on to neighbours, whilst newspapers were also perused in reading rooms and the library.<sup>2</sup>

It is the power of the printed word then, in advocating and contesting the discourses of colonialism, that make it an important component of the cultural archive. Newspaper editors were aware of their influence in shaping readers' opinions and in appealing to their sense of community or national self. As Jean Chalaby has argued, colonial editors are more correctly described as 'publicists' than 'journalists', since they made explicit interventions in colonial debates in the name of freedom of the press.<sup>3</sup> Studies of newspapers in the Cape Colony take their cue from the premise of the polemicist nature of newspapers in shaping reading communities of opinion. Kirsten McKenzie and Robert McKend, for example, have argued that the *South African Commercial Advertiser* and *Graham's Town Journal* respectively shaped the community concerns of white male colonists in Cape Town and Graham's Town.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> James Wald, 'Periodicals and Periodicity', in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, eds, *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), pp. 421-432.

<sup>3</sup> Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 9-31.

<sup>4</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, 'The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993); Robert McKend, "'A Journal among Them": Colonial Discourse and the Creation of an Imaginary Community in the *Graham's Town Journal*, 1831-36' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1997). The argument of the former is summed up well

As McKenzie contends, John Fairbairn's *Advertiser* presented itself as representative of the interests of 'rational men' opposed to the old system of aristocratic patronage where status, and not debate, shaped political outcomes. Drawing on the model of the bourgeois public sphere developed by Jurgen Habermas,<sup>5</sup> McKenzie points out the use of the *Advertiser* to advance the rights of 'freeborn Englishmen' demanded by the middle class in granting a free press and extending British laws and institutions (achieved in the late 1820s), passing the humanitarian ideals of slave abolitionism (the 1830s), as well as the granting of representative elective institutions to the Cape Colony (early 1850s).

This shift toward understanding the colonial press as forming competing public spheres of opinion has facilitated a more sophisticated discussion of the role of the press in South Africa. This built on the existing historiography of the colonial press, which had been characterised on the one hand by the liberal tradition's celebratory focus on the freedom of the press and the striving for representative institutions as an embodiment of progressive and improving Anglicisation, whilst their radical and Marxist counterparts shifted the focus towards the 'economic and political self-interest' of the bourgeoisie mercantile lobby, however divergent their humanitarian and settler attitudes might have been.<sup>6</sup> The latter is a notable feature of the early Cape press with the mercantile interests of the bourgeoisie lobby using the press to advocate measures for the control of reliable agrarian labour. Initially there were tensions in Fairbairn's humanitarian advocacy of freedom of labour in opposing vagrancy ordinances and championing slave abolition, with the greatest opposition from the Dutch-language *De Zuid Afrikaan*; Fairbairn's favouring of more conciliatory measures towards the Xhosa on the frontier also found opposition in the *Graham's Town Journal*, under Robert Godlonton, which called for a pro-settler stance to note the uncooperativeness and aggression of the Xhosa and the futility of humanitarian ideals to 'civilise' the native. From the 1840s, however, humanitarian feeling was in decline, with Fairbairn's utilitarian

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in Kirsten McKenzie, "'Franklins of the Cape": The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Creation of a Colonial Public Sphere, 1824–1854', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 25 (1998/9), 88–102.

<sup>5</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger with F. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: Polity, 1989) [original German edition, 1962].

<sup>6</sup> Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science Sensibility and White South Africa, 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 27-8. See, for example, H.C. Botha, *John Fairbairn in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1984); Lalou Meltzer, 'Emancipation, Commerce & the Role of John Fairbairn's *Advertiser*', in N. Worden and C. Crais, eds, *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony* (Johannesburg: Witwaterand University Press, 1994); J. M. MacKenzie, "'To Enlighten South Africa": The Creation of a Free Press at the Cape in the Early Nineteenth Century', in C. Kaul, ed, *Media and the British Empire* (Basingstoke, UK, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

desire to advance the most favourable conditions for mercantile capital, combined with his increased scepticism of the success of humanitarian projects, resulting in greater willingness to support more coercive policies toward black labour.<sup>7</sup>

Alan Lester has expanded the focus of discursive debates locally by drawing attention to the global scope of humanitarian and settler discourses. He has shown how, particularly in the context of the Aboriginal Select Committee convened in Britain in the late 1830s, settler newspapers in the Cape and Australia found unity of cause in opposing the humanitarian lobby's denouncing of settler violence toward the indigenous peoples in conflict and their concomitant calls for native protectionist policies. Newspapers were used as the mouthpiece of settler interests, with material in *The Graham's Town Journal* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, for example, aimed at influencing metropolitan opinion in Britain away from the perceived idealism of humanitarian influence, with excerpts from these colonial journals quoted in newspapers such as the *London Times*.<sup>8</sup> Newspapers thus provided a dialogical space for a sense of cohesive community interests, and further provided the scope for discursive debates that were not only local, but also global, in scale.

This thesis examines an important newspaper in the nineteenth-century Cape Colony that has not received extensive scholarly attention, *Sam Sly's African Journal* (1843-51).<sup>9</sup> Its editor, William Layton Sammons (1801-1882) used the eccentric pen name of 'Sam Sly' and was well aware of the global stage upon which identities were enacted. He was the first English editor of an independent Cape Town newspaper with a sustained run of publication, all previous Cape Town newspaper editors having been either of Scottish or Dutch descent.<sup>10</sup> Whilst John Fairbairn, editor of the popular *South African Commercial Advertiser*, modelled his newspaper on *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Edinburgh Review* and was influenced by

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<sup>7</sup> Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996), pp. 99-100; Andrew Bank, 'Losing Faith in the Civilising Mission: The Premature Decline of Humanitarian Liberalism at the Cape, 1840-1850', in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern, *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 364-383.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Lester, 'British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire', *History Workshop Journal*, 54, 1 (2002), pp. 24-48.

<sup>9</sup> Published from July 1849 as *The African Journal*. Sammons previously edited the short-lived *South African Advocate and Cape Town Spectator* for the first few weeks of 1843. No extant copy of this publication seems to remain.

<sup>10</sup> For a biography of Sammons, see Alan Hattersley, 'Friend of George Cruikshank: William Layton Sammons ("Sam Sly")' in his *Oliver the Spy and the Others: A Little Gallery of South African Portraits* (Cape Town, 1959); Alan Hattersley, 'Sammons, William Layton', *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 1 (Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg, 1968), pp. 684-5.

humanitarian liberalism and the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment, Sammons's background was somewhat different. Born in Bedford, and having resided in the spa town of Bath for several years as a member of the minor gentry, Sammons counted amongst his friends the eminent caricaturist George Cruikshank, and made acquaintance with prominent figures such as Charles Dickens. Having contributed satire and commentary to the Bath press, including acting as a theatrical critic for *Keenes' Bath Journal*, Sammons was familiar with the growing trend towards a diversity of entertaining and more serious material. It was in the light of his exposure to the vibrant print culture in England that the *Journal's* subtitle proclaimed it a 'register of facts, fiction, news, literature, commerce and amusement'. Sammons used this diverse spread of material contributed by local colonists and borrowed from the overseas press to circulate ideas of colonial British identity within the colony and abroad. His shock of long white hair and eccentric Dickensian wit was balanced by an acute awareness of the popular tastes of his largely British colonial readership, as he addressed their sense of cultural distance and anxieties as colonial Britons poised on the empire's periphery. Central to Sammons's editorial vision was satire. This was an important tool in contesting the boundaries of social status, as will be discussed later.

This thesis builds upon the existing historiography on colonial newspapers by taking seriously the cultural politics of national feeling amongst self-identifying British colonists at the Cape (drawing into the fold both those with links of ethnicity, but also those who identified as British subjects). The focus on British identity in the colony has until recently received little regard largely because, as Robert Ross has convincingly argued, it was the 'the prime nationalism of South Africa, against which all the subsequent ones, whether Afrikaner or African, reacted.... [whilst] it has scarcely been studied because the English have been so successful at imposing it on South African society.'<sup>11</sup> It is important here to note that the term 'British' in the nineteenth century was often elided with that of 'English', with ethnic Scots, Welsh and even Irish finding no conflict in aligning themselves with this marker of national allegiance.<sup>12</sup> Many of the Dutch, largely urban, also found no conflict in calling themselves British subjects whilst still preserving cultural autonomy expressed in the Dutch church and language. Anglicising the colony embodied more than the official imposition of British laws and policies, embodying also the language of British respectability through the adoption of

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging a Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

English dress, architecture, manners and language. This acculturation was negotiated fluidly by social intercourse between the Dutch and English inhabitants. As Vivian Bickford-Smith has put it, a more accurate picture can be garnered through seeing Anglicisation as ‘a process that included nationalist and rationalist, ideological and material, official and... informal components that affected all Cape colonists’.<sup>13</sup>

Interest in ‘Britishness’, as scholars have termed it, need not be an exercise in post-imperial nostalgia. Reluctance to examine the extent to which subjects in the colonies, whether white or indigenous, identified themselves as ‘Britons’ was largely out of a fear that this would deter focus from the repression of British rule, and steer too close to valorising the British colonial enterprise as a Whiggish triumph of bringing progress to previously ‘backward’ corners of the globe. A focus on the ‘British World’, however, allows us to bring into focus how colonial subjects viewed their place in an empire that was tied together on a global scale through networks of trade, migration and administration.<sup>14</sup> Examining the historicity of British colonial identity in the Cape provides insight into the ideological currents that embodied a broad canvas of identifications, from allegiances to the British crown (‘loyalism’), paternalistic belief in Britain as the protector of the ‘rights of freeborn Englishmen’ embodied in justice and equality, as well as cultural affinities (such as penchants for English literature and customs). This focus of course requires examination of black affinities to Britishness, although existing scholarship is still confined mostly to patriotic allegiance in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> Identifying oneself as a British subject was more than simply strategic (and possibly cynical) in the context of British hegemony, for in the mid-nineteenth century it held deep resonances of personal investment for colonists. The ornamentalism of British allegiance at the Cape, expressed in patriotic parades and Royal celebrations, the unfurling of the Union Jack, English place names, monuments, literature and songs, through to its reflection in material culture and clubs and

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<sup>13</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Revisiting Anglicisation in the Nineteenth-century Cape Colony’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31, 2 (2003), pp. 87-88. Bickford-Smith was building upon an earlier attempt by James Sturgis that examined Anglicisation as a formal administrative process of imposing English language, laws, institutions and policies, particularly in the 1820s, in the Cape Colony. Sturgis gave little analysis of the nature of British cultural hegemony at the Cape or of how it was negotiated by the Dutch or black colonists. James Sturgis, ‘Anglicisation at the Cape of Good Hope in the early Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 11, 1 (1982), pp. 5-32.

<sup>14</sup> C. Bridge and K. Fedorowich, eds, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> For example Brian Wilan, *Sol Plaatjie: A Biography, 1876-1932* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1984); Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

institutions were embodiments of strong belief in the values and vision of being British.<sup>16</sup> This was not an essentialist identification, but one that was actively forged (or learnt) even if it was perceived as innate. There was, of course, a tendency to meld together dual identities. This was particularly apparent in southern Africa, where sole reliance on kith-and-kin identity was impossible where, unlike Australia, the majority were not of British descent. This would eventually lead to the fostering of dual British and Cape (and later South African) identifications, mostly as a strategy to align both Dutch and English white interests, but also as a strategy by black (mainly missionary-influenced) Africans.<sup>17</sup> The press acted as an important cultural broker in this regard. However, *Sam Sly's African Journal*, written as it was in the 1840s, still assumed an ethnic origin for British attachment, even though it implicitly drew Dutch settlers into the fold.

The espousing of middle class values, tailored to the regional specificities of colonial experiences, was an important strategy in drawing a hegemonic line of class sophistication in the face of the potentially regressive atmosphere assumed of colonial spaces. Recreating class orders of white privilege and the trappings of bourgeois sensibilities in the colonies differed in the contexts of Cape Town inhabitants in contrast to the 1820 settler population of the eastern Cape. The latter provided rapid upward social mobility for many immigrant artisans and farm workers from Britain, as they abandoned their original stations in the planned agrarian order of the Albany settlement to take their place amongst the emergent bourgeois mercantile elite in the town. The mercantile base for a bourgeois order was more readily in place in Cape Town, where Dutch merchants had forged a new social elite in concert with the British power brokers in the first few decades of the century. Intermarriage between Dutch and British, the creation of a new civic culture, and reading and recreational spaces within Cape Town were testament to the persuasive power of British mercantile resources and the cultural capital promised by adopting and adapting British sensibilities.<sup>18</sup> Having never travelled to the eastern frontiers of the colony, Sammons's observations of the colony were informed by his experience of Cape Town and prior to this in England, which stood in proxy for his evaluation of the cultural sophistication of the colony as a whole.

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<sup>16</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'Writing about Englishness', in G. MacPhee and P. Poddar, eds, *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 64-7.

<sup>17</sup> Saul Dubow, 'How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 37, 1 (2009), pp. 1-27.

<sup>18</sup> McKenzie, 'Gender and Honour in Middle Class Cape Town: the Making of Colonial Identities, 1828-1850', D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford (1997); Ross, *Status and Respectability*, ch. 3.

It is the contention of this thesis that satire was an important rhetorical component in advancing British national feeling and cultural norms within the Cape Colony, whilst also serving to evince a language of social reform that fostered middle class morality. Satire can be broadly defined as the humorous exposure of vice, hypocrisy or abuses to bring about a remedial effect on society. It is in its strictest sense a literary term, but is also embodied in various print media, visual and theatrical forms. Satire is often expressed in broadsides or orally, a language of the street that expressed societal concern to expunge unwanted traits from the body politic.<sup>19</sup> At the heart of the culture wars that bridged the reformist period between the eighteenth century and Victorian era, satire allowed for a laughter of unease that elicited enjoyment whilst ‘exposing repressed illogicalities and prejudices’,<sup>20</sup> the contradictions of society that preached liberty, yet entrenched class and racial stratification. As Sammons purported wryly in his prospectus, *Sam Sly’s African Journal* strove to ‘instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age,’<sup>21</sup> itself a jab at the solemn moralising of the journalist and social reformer John Fairbairn and his *South African Commercial Advertiser*.<sup>22</sup>

Reconfiguring the contours of middle class identity at the Cape needs to entail recognising it both as a rationalising project in creating a bourgeois public sphere, as well as an effort at sustaining folk identity. The collective tittering of colonists in satirical sketches and doggerel, and pronouncements of patriotism in letters to the editor, reveal the cleavages and contradictions within the Cape’s middle class culture. This entailed not only public displays of status and respectable social standing, but also a complex double bind of subscribing to the scripts of rational propriety spearheaded by evangelicals, whilst also holding on to the ribald elements of amusement and leisure that underpinned senses of belonging and cultural attachment.

*Sam Sly’s African Journal* was particularly vocal about its use of satire to appeal to the cultural affinities of self-identified, middle class Britons in the Cape. Colonial tastes, as will

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew Hodgart and Brian Connery, *Satire: Origins and Principles* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> J. A. Wagner-Lawlor, ‘Introduction: New Perspectives on the Victorian Comic Spirit’ in Wagner-Lawlor, ed, *The Victorian Comic Spirit: New Perspectives* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), xvi.

<sup>21</sup> SSAJ, Prospectus, 1 June 1843. This aphorism is attributed to Washington Irving- most famous perhaps for his stories ‘Rip van Winkle’ and ‘The Legend of Sleepy Hollow’- who founded *Salmagundi* in 1807, a literary magazine with a satirical bent that parodied New York society and politicians.

<sup>22</sup> McKenzie, “‘Franklins of the Cape’”, 94.

be shown, were very particular about the need for respectable content within newspapers and other publications. Sammons's *Journal* spoke to the colonial interest in British popular culture, by being entertaining and witty, but also had to maintain a decorum of respectability and transparency. Redolent within its pages were calls to expose inconsistent conduct as a betrayal of British values. 'Cant', or 'humbug', was an important word deployed in satire against such dishonesty. Used as a tool by both radical satirists and evangelical reformers against their critics, it described a rhetoric steeped in hypocrisy, sermonising without conviction and virtue preached in public, but ignored in private. Few words were more shamefully received than an accusation of cant, resulting in its deployment from the pulpit against the drunken beggar and from the pages of satire against politicians, Methodists and zealous reformers. It was in the public debate over middle class respectability that cries of cant were used provocatively by both sides to discredit leisure activities considered too sensuous or degrading, or by reformists quick to criticise the poor or working class but slow to follow the example of their own terse remonstrance. Within the popular press and print culture, to write of cant was to ridicule out and expose the vices of society through the social commentary of satire.<sup>23</sup>

To generalise approaches to satire, literary scholars have noted two main traditions: Neo-Juvenalian satire, which seeks through harsh ridicule to defame the offending official or individual, whether king or clergyman; and neo-Horatian satire, of a more mild and lightly comic variety that sought to expose the corruption and vices of its target, but rather to reform them than destroy their reputations.<sup>24</sup> Radical satire was at its height in Britain from roughly the period between the French Revolution and the advent to the throne of George IV in the early 1820s. As Vic Gatrell has shown in a recent study, visual print satires resorted to grotesque imagery (obesity, nudity, farting and urinating) to expose the vices and extravagancies and destroy the impenetrably 'sacred' perception of government and royalty. Parliamentary reform was an aim of radicals, but such satires had long held favour with the upper and middle orders that enjoyed laughing at the folly of their brethren. It was when such satires were propagated and read by working class radicals to instigate political reform, particularly in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, that their aims were questioned. Thus,

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<sup>23</sup> Cant and satire as reflections of mindsets around social conduct and moral attitudes has only recently received due attention from British social historians. See Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Atlantic, 2006); Ben Wilson, *Decency and Disorder: The Age of Cant, 1789-1837* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

George IV paid off one of the leading satirists, George Cruikshank, in 1820 to stop lampooning him, whilst satirical writers and journalists, such as the radical William Hone, were prosecuted with printing blasphemous or seditious libel. This was not just a reaction by authorities to the unstable political climate of the time, but also a concerted effort to suppress morally grotesque satires that were viewed as inconsistent with the politer manner required for consumption owing to the evangelical influence on more restrained manners.<sup>25</sup>

In the Cape Colony, satire formed part of responses by British colonists against the governorship of the arch-Tory Charles Somerset. However, owing to restrictions on freedom of the press, the doggerel verse and satiric images ridiculing his rule were confined to placards in the streets of Cape Town, and to the whispered renditions of orally-transmitted street poems. So often seen as the liberal triumph by John Fairbairn and his ilk against the suppression by Somerset of the granting of (Anglicised) free and representative institutions at the Cape, it has only been re-evaluated recently that in the 1820s ‘ideas about British liberty were far more fractured than accounts of the press struggle have hitherto realised’.<sup>26</sup> What Somerset denounced as ‘radicals’, were the voices of British colonists aware of global debates about the abuse of aristocratic power and concurrent calls for government that ensured the protection of the ‘rights of freeborn Englishmen’, a dynamic concept that advanced a belief in the impartiality of British law, and the need for equal treatment by a government held accountable by the people. Placards lampooned the perceived corruption of Somerset’s regime, with his private life portrayed as morally dubious, a domestic reflection of the decay of his public office. One placard depicted Somerset sodomising his private surgeon Dr James Barry (himself a sexually ambiguous figure later discovered either to be intersex or a female transvestite), with several other placards ridiculing high officials such as the Fiscal. One placard was described as ‘*The Wonderful Cape Punch*’, with a drawing of ‘an ugly thick man with a long nose’, another as ridiculing Somerset’s love of horse riding. Some of these placards were printed clandestinely from the offices of George Grieg, where Fairbairn’s *Advertiser* was printed, although their authorship was never definitively solved.<sup>27</sup> The political use of satire was thus as a strategy to call into question Somerset’s right to govern, drawing upon Neo-Juvenalian tropes of personally attacking his moral fibre. As

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<sup>25</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*.

<sup>26</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, ‘The Daemon Behind the Curtain: William Edwards and the Theatre of Liberty’, *South African Historical Journal*, 61, 3 (2009), p. 483.

<sup>27</sup> McKenzie, ‘William Edwards’; Christopher Holdridge, ‘The Escape of William Edwards: Respectability, Intrigue and Invented Identity at the Early British Cape and Australia’, Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 2008, pp. 34-48.

Kirsty Reid has argued, ‘in a society in which households supposedly mirrored state, to depict the households of those in power as disordered was to call the legitimacy of government into doubt’.<sup>28</sup>

This satiric response was employed, as Andrew Bank has shown, to attack the ideological principles of humanitarian liberalism and missionary endeavours. In the 1830s in particular, colonists critical of the ‘civilising project’ of missionaries such as John Philip, or those seen as sympathetic such as the journalist John Fairbairn or colonial administrator Andries Stockenstrom, were caricatured in plays and visual satires. If cant or humbug were crucial terms in the vocabulary around redefining Britishness, its currency was equally profound in the colonies. The term found centre stage in Dutch and English publications at the Cape as an invective against humanitarian sympathy for native inhabitants. Frederick I’Ons, for example, was responsible for several satirical drawings of liberals, one entitled ‘Romance and Reality, or Hottentots as they are said to be and as they really are’, which depicted John Philip and Sir Thomas Buxton watching in admiration as the Khoikhoi learn Greek and Latin, whilst in reality they are involved in drunken brawls and sexual escapades near a canteen.<sup>29</sup> The lampooning of humanitarian idealism is also seen in Etienne Boniface’s play *De Temperantisten* (1832), where the missionary John Philip is labelled ‘Dominee *Humbug Philipumpkin*,’<sup>30</sup> the term discrediting Philip as a bumbling delusional in his civilising mission toward the irreclaimable drunkenness of the ‘Hottentots’. By summoning the insult of ‘humbug’, Boniface utilised one of the most powerful weapons of anti-humanitarian rhetoric usually associated with British satire, but which also found favourable reception from a Dutch audience, considering the use of the term in satirical Dutch plays at the Cape in the 1830s.<sup>31</sup> A journal that requires more in-depth examination is J.S. de Lima’s Dutch-language *De Verzamelaar*, first published in 1826, then continuously from 1834 to 1853.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Kirsty Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia* (Manchester and New York, 2007), p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Bank, ‘Liberals and their Enemies: Racial Ideology at the Cape of Good Hope, 1820 to 1850’, PhD thesis, Cambridge University (1995), p. 298.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Bank, ‘Liberals and their Enemies’, p. 177: my emphasis.

<sup>31</sup> For Dutch theatre at the Cape, see Jill Fletcher, *The Story of Theatre in South Africa: A Guide to its History from 1780-1930* (Cape Town: Vlaeberg, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> Other notable Dutch satirical periodicals for the period, although short lived, include Johannes Jacobus de Wet’s *Iets! Of Verzameling van Vermakelyke Stoffen* (November 1837); and *Fantasticus, Met Zynen Wonderbaren Kyker* (May 1839), the latter edited by Moses Grillenfanger. The former seems to have sought to capitalise on anti-liberal feeling, describing Fairbairn’s editorial style in his *Advertiser* as ‘all like the music of the Scottish bagpipe’ [‘als de muzyk an den Schotschen doedelzak’]. *Iets!*, vol. 1, issue 1, 9 November 1837.

Described by one historian as ‘a sort of Dutch *Punch*’,<sup>33</sup> de Lima used his journal in its early years to stage a public spat with his rival Boniface, who was then editor of *De Zuid Afrikaan*. Boniface hit back by writing a parodic character of de Lima in one of his plays.<sup>34</sup> These seem to have been satiric manifestations of personal rivalries rather than bearing any strong ideological thrust. The sending up of personalities in this context held strong elements of Neo-Juvenalian satire, especially in Boniface’s efforts to attack the rationality of humanitarian figures to discredit them in the eyes of colonists, rather than to reform them to be sympathetic to anti-liberal viewpoints.

Satire was not a uniquely British response. As the work of Robert Darnton has shown, the French publishing underground in the period of the Old Regime and Revolutionary era printed slanderous satires that combined near-pornographic ridicule with political comment.<sup>35</sup> Although not as ribald as these earlier forms, the plays of Boniface reflected more his metropolitan influences (he was French-born) than an allegiance to any clearly-formed Cape Dutch identity. Afrikaner nationalism was only an ideological development in the latter half of the nineteenth-century, with Dutch satires such as Boniface’s targeted not as a nationalist response to British power, but as a critique in concert with British and Dutch colonists uneasy with humanitarian gains such as the abolition of slavery in the 1830s and humanitarian-influenced labour policies.<sup>36</sup>

An early example of Cape satire with a Neo-Horatian tendency, one which avoided clear and direct attacks on individuals, was Frederick Brooks’s serial tract *South African Grins; or the Quizzical Depot of General Humbug* published in Cape Town in 1825 in the watershed period around the struggle for an independent press at the Cape. The author signed himself as ‘that most notorious humbug, Q in the Corner, Esq., Disciple of Momus, &c. &c &c.’ disarmingly equating satire, cant and buffoonery to popular effect. 72 pages in length, it ridiculed Cape Town’s dirty streets and made light of colonial manners.<sup>37</sup> Clearly satire

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<sup>33</sup> L.J. Picton, ‘Nicprint 50, being some account of the history of the printing, packaging and newspaper industry of South Africa...’, MA thesis, University of Cape Town (1969), p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Wessel de Kock, *A Manner of Speaking: The Origins of the Press in South Africa* (Cape Town: Saayman and Webber, 1982), p. 94.

<sup>35</sup> See especially, Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water, or the Art of Slander from Louis the XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: Norton, 1995).

<sup>36</sup> Ross, *Status and Respectability*, ch. 3.

<sup>37</sup> A.M. Lewin Robinson, *None Daring to Make Us Afraid: A Study of the English Periodical Literature of the Cape 1824 to 1835* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1962), pp. 93-98.

played a lively and playfully controversial role in the public realm of the colony. Shortly before Brooks's departure from the Cape, 'A Friendly Adieu to Humbug Q' was published in Alexander Jardine's short-lived *South African Chronicle*: 'by vulgar rhymes and dirty jokes / You fain would quiz the good Cape folks /... 'Tis plain to trace in all your books / The fountain head of filthy BROOKS'.<sup>38</sup> His poems might not have targeted specific individuals with the distinctive candour of the Somerset placards or the later plays of Boniface, yet their broader social denunciations could still cause community insult. As texts with cultural clues as to the comic and literary sensibilities of the Cape colonial middle classes, they demonstrate a lively debate around manners and propriety, humanitarianism and hypocrisy, and suitable expressions of colonial humour and leisure. In the first half of the nineteenth century, newspapers, novels, the theatre and public fairs were all the targets of moral disapproval and legislated reform, but still sought to maintain some semblance of the old rowdy British character without straying from the prescribed script of middle class decorum and respectability.

The **first chapter** of this thesis deals not directly with satire, but with expounding the ways in which *Sam Sly's African Journal* asserted itself as a voice for British cultural sentiments in the Cape Colony. It argues that this was not a purely localised strategy, but one which was aimed at inserting its readers into the audience of the global public that comprised the British Empire. It does this by drawing on recent culturalist strands within imperial history, which address the means by which the empire was bound together by shifting networks of communication- whether the press, official documents, private letters, books or pamphlets- to circulate ideologies and viewpoints around the empire. Although recognising the importance of global communication, however lagging in time sail-driven oceanic passage might have been, it goes beyond seeing the press as a mouthpiece for lobbying settler causes, whether these were for representative government or dealing with settler/indigenous relations. It proposes that the press was also seen as a profoundly global cultural object for forwarding examples of colonial cultural sophistication and worth to a sceptical Britain. In furthering this image, aimed at attracting potential emigrants but also as an assertive retort to condescending discourses toward colonials, anxieties around colonial identities were also expressed. These tended to speak of a longing for Britain as 'home', reflecting the concerns mainly of first-

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<sup>38</sup> *South African Chronicle*, 8 June 1825, quoted in Lewin Robinson, *None Daring to Make Us Afraid*, p. 97.

generation British settlers, but also influenced by Sammons's own nostalgia as a recent emigrant to the Cape.

The **second chapter** deals directly with the cultural politics of satire, employed often as a means to assert British cultural affections, but also to contest the limits of appropriate conduct for its middle class readership. Divided into three sections, this chapter first looks at how the editor William Sammons avoided the dangers of being perceived as libellous to middle class interests. It argues that he avoided personal attacks on individual character, emphasising his satirical approach as supportive of family values rather than scandal. Satire, it argues, was of a more subtle comic variety that sought to ridicule aberrant behaviour that strayed from a middle class script, rather than subvert the social order. It was only when a political crisis threatened the longevity of the stable image of colonial middle class propriety, as a brief discussion of the Anti-Convict Agitation of the late 1840s shows, that satire was employed in a more personal manner to discredit those seen as detrimental to the political and social interests of colonial bourgeois hegemony. The second section looks more broadly at the discourses surrounding leisure and reading, examining the place of comedy and satire alongside views emphasising the educative, godly and/or patriotic role of entertainment. It contends that colonists viewed comedy and satire as vital means for both enjoyment and expressing their identity as British subjects. The last section examines the role of alcohol in the leisure lives of middle class colonists, and satirical responses to debates around its consumption. It notes the extensive scholarship examining white colonists' denunciations of the drunken black and labouring population, seen as compromising desires for a sober and thus tractable labouring class, but extends discussion to ways in which alcohol could be consumed respectably, in establishments that rejected the canteen culture associated with drunkenness, racial mixing, promiscuity and criminality. Satire, it shows, was utilised by both temperance advocates and those sceptical of their humanitarian inflections. A respectable drinking culture was possible and embraced by certain members of the middle class, one that also incorporated satire to celebrate their British identification.

The **third chapter** examines the racialised lens of satire expressed in *Sam Sly's African Journal* through a case study of depictions of the Khoikhoi. It notes their iconography in early modern accounts as ignoble savages and later enlightenment depictions that emphasised their noble innocence. The tropes of Khoi barbarity, bolstered by scientific racism's emphasis on biological difference, in contrast to European civilised advancement were imbued in

popular cultural depictions. The chapter looks at how disparaging accounts of freakish difference in street sideshows, theatrical sketches, travelogues and the like drew upon the exaggerated 'deviance' of the Khoikhoi to evoke a comic response from Europeans uneasy with the security of their 'civilised' status. The trope of a comic savage, it thus argues, was used to express bourgeois unease over female sexuality and class difference, alongside a need to provide, through evoking laughter, a firmer line between white advancement and black backwardness. This, most importantly, was a reflection of the anti-humanitarian impulse of racial comedy prevalent in *Sam Sly's African Journal*, one that was sceptical of the success of the civilising project of missionaries toward the Khoikhoi.

The **fourth chapter** examines the important role satire played in ensuring the gender norms and domestic ideals of bourgeois society were ascribed to in the Cape. A large part of this satire was misogynistic, ridiculing women who transgressed the ideals of separate spheres of work and home, respectively, for men and women. It explores how humour was valued for its educative function for children, as well as the perceived limits of laughter as a response. Satire was valued for its didacticism, but so too were short stories and letters of advice written by colonists. The chapter thus also looks briefly at their joint role in encouraging adherence to the desired script of gendered conduct. The closing discussion returns to misogynistic satire by looking at the gendered dimension of the eastern Cape frontier. It notes the infantilised image of Xhosa and the threat to domestic order emphasised in discourse of the *Journal*. Through examining a series of letters written in the vernacular of a female settler, 'Kitty Veller', it demonstrates how any deviation from a male middle class spokesperson for settler interests were open to ridicule.

## CHAPTER 1

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### **Circulating the *African Journal*: The Colonial Press and Trans-Imperial Britishness**

With possessions spanning the globe, the British Empire was affected profoundly by the vast swathes of ocean separating its colonies from Britain. Oceans created both distance and interconnectedness as ships conveyed people, goods, ideas and documents across the globe. Besides the role of official communications and private letters, newspapers remained the dominant medium for connecting the British diaspora spread throughout the empire. Through the circulation of newspapers, both metropolitan and colonial, colonists were able to shape a global public sphere in which they expressed both self-confidence and ambivalence around their British identity as they sought to transcend the imagined divide between metropole and colony. With this supposition in mind, the ensuing chapter utilises the diverse contents of *Sam Sly's African Journal* to explore its role as a circulated commodity with significant implications for the shaping of colonial identities. It examines the role of the newspaper in projecting an image of colonial respectability and cultural closeness to Britain, the importance of circulating dialogues around colonial statuses and identities reflected in imaginative literature, and the alienating effect of the vast distance between colonies and Britain in forging identities.

Newspapers were actively consumed commodities in the marketplace of colonial identities, creating 'a shared locale for the co-existence of Britain and the colonies in a virtual printed space' where hybrid 'settler' and 'British' identities could be forged.<sup>39</sup> Anglophone newspapers in the colonies acted as 'mobilisers of Englishness',<sup>40</sup> and were powerful tools for coalescing a community of interests amongst self-identified Britons. As a minority

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<sup>39</sup> Julie Codell, 'Introduction: Imperial Co-Histories and the British and Colonial Press', in J. Codell, ed., *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press* (Mississauga, Canada: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2003), p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 46. 'Englishness' is of course not synonymous with the unifying identity of 'Britishness', but was nevertheless the dominant ethnicity with the two terms often conflated. For the strength of Scottish influence in South Africa, see J.M. MacKenzie, with N.R. Dalziel, *The Scots in South Africa: Ethnicity, Identity, Gender and Race, 1772–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

amongst Dutch-speaking whites, ex-slave and Khoi inhabitants, whites of British descent in the Cape Colony clung to cultural markers of ethnicity manifested not only in architecture, dress, manners and the introduction of British institutions and laws, but also in the discursive realm most profoundly embodied in a free press.<sup>41</sup> Identities in the British Empire, as Saul Dubow reminds us, were ‘elective, hyphenated forms of belonging’, involving self-defined affinities rather than inherent properties of Britishness.<sup>42</sup> There were ‘varieties of Englishness’ not exclusively tied to ethnicity and whiteness, as black colonists also pledged loyalty to the crown and adopted British cultural traits.<sup>43</sup> Appealing to ideals of British freedom, the black resistance press in South Africa would only come to the fore with the likes of J.T. Jabavu from the 1880s onwards.<sup>44</sup> Yet, the Anglophone press prior to this remained a discursive mediator of identity driven by white colonial interests. Examining the geographies of identity of white English colonists in the Cape Colony need not be a hagiographic enterprise in settler romanticism, for such a study aids understanding of the nature of British hegemony in the Cape Colony and the textual imaginings of colonial identities, differing as they did within the somewhat regionally-distinct discursive terrains of the eastern and western Cape.

Studies of newspapers such as John Fairbairn’s *South African Commercial Advertiser* in Cape Town and Robert Godlonton’s *Graham’s Town Journal* on the eastern Cape frontier have examined how the press acted as discursive agent in formulating the local concerns of dominant white merchant classes in the colony,<sup>45</sup> and have drawn on Jürgen Habermas’s concept of the bourgeois public sphere, where print culture facilitated ‘rational critical

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<sup>41</sup> See Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Revisiting Anglicisation in the Nineteenth-century Cape Colony’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31, 2 (2003), pp. 82–95. For an earlier more rigid account of Anglicisation as a process of imposing English laws and institutions, see James Sturgis, ‘Anglicisation at the Cape of Good Hope in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 11 (1982), pp. 5–32.

<sup>42</sup> Saul Dubow, ‘How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 37, 1 (2009), pp. 2–3, 19. See also Chris Saunders, ‘Britishness in South Africa: Some Reflections’, *Humanities Research*, 8, 1 (2006), pp. 61–69; Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Writing about Englishness’, in G. MacPhee and P. Poddar, eds, *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Bickford-Smith, ‘Writing About Englishness’, p. 67.

<sup>44</sup> See Les Switzer, ed., *South Africa’s Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880s–1960s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>45</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, ‘The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town’ (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993); Robert McKend, ‘“A Journal among Them”: Colonial Discourse and the Creation of an Imaginary Community in the *Graham’s Town Journal*, 1831–36’ (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1997). The argument of the former is summed up well in Kirsten McKenzie, ‘“Franklins of the Cape”: The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Creation of a Colonial Public Sphere, 1824–1854’, *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 25 (1998/9), pp. 88–102.

debate' in the shaping of middle class identities.<sup>46</sup> The emphasis on localism has been invaluable for comprehending the role of the press in constructing regionally distinct colonial identities, but remains too geographically bounded in its focus. The readership and circulation of such newspapers knowingly extended to the rest of the colony and even globally. Communities rarely exist in isolation, and for self-identified Britons in the colonies who relied on affirmation and support from Britain and elsewhere, the importance of global circulation was particularly felt.

Before delving into a close examination of Sammons's *African Journal*, circulation of the colonial press needs to be scrutinised in the context of developments within scholarship on colonial identity. The recent focus of imperial historians on the fluidity of geographies of identity and networks of trade, discourse and cultural exchange in empire has awakened a growing interest in trans-global connections that blur previously unquestioned boundaries and assumptions around colonial spaces and identities.<sup>47</sup> Earlier historians of empire centred their analyses on singular colonial projects driven by the metropole in a one-way stream toward the colonies, whether this was the official resolving of colonial crises, the work of missionary societies, or the growth of gentlemanly capitalism.<sup>48</sup> Prior to the transnational turn in the discipline, approaches to the history of colonial identities also tended to focus on confined geographies – the Cape Colony, India, Canada – and thus sundered such identities from their global context within transoceanic empires. This stemmed in part from the concerted effort by former colonies and dominions from the 1960s onwards to reconfigure their history

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<sup>46</sup> Craig Calhoun, 'Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere', in C. Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 1; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger with F. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: Polity, 1989) [original German edition, 1962].

<sup>47</sup> For the British Empire see, amongst others, Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001); Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002). Of particular relevance for placing Dutch South Africa in a global context is Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> A useful appraisal of the developments in imperial historiography towards spatially conceptualising empire is David Lambert and Alan Lester, 'Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects', in D. Lambert and A. Lester, eds, *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: publisher, 2006). For further exploration of the theory and historiography, see Catherine Hall, 'Introduction: Thinking the Postcolonial, Thinking the Empire', in C. Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Anne Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', in F. Cooper and A.L. Stoler, eds, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

independently from the imperial perspective of Britain towards a nationalist historiography that viewed the nation as a bounded geographical entity and the main locus for identity formation.<sup>49</sup> Recent scholarship has challenged such assumptions and encouraged analysis that ‘recasts the relationship between metropolitan centre and colonial periphery into a more contested, unstable and mutually constitutive frame’.<sup>50</sup> This has seen a greater emphasis on webbed networks of exchange that held the empire together and allows for renewed inspection of how identities were conceived of in an empire-wide context.<sup>51</sup> As an extension of the debate within British history around the impact of empire on the British nation,<sup>52</sup> current scholarship in imperial history has sought to understand the meanings of ‘Britishness’ within the empire.<sup>53</sup>

These multifaceted meanings can be well explored through the press. A recent surge of interest in Victorian periodicals by cultural studies scholars has highlighted the press as a ‘carnival of everyday life’ where in the early years the line between newspaper and literary journal was often blurred.<sup>54</sup> Prior to the emergence of the New Journalism towards the end of the nineteenth century, newspapers lacked the conventions of headlines and clear adherence to genre, yet many of the traits of modern consumerist publications were present: sensationalism, advertisements and leading articles.<sup>55</sup> Early British and colonial newspapers were miscellanies that reflected the complex market for ideas and entertainment of the time, and a glance at most Cape colonial newspapers will reveal poetry alongside news and

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<sup>49</sup> For the analytical advantages and challenges faced by viewing history in both transnational and national frameworks, see Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820–1850* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Although such a focus gained ground in the 1980s – a notable example being C.A. Bayly’s *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780–1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1989) – more theoretically rigorous scholarship that interrogates more fully the fluidities of transnational exchange and identities is a somewhat recent phenomenon.

<sup>52</sup> See Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, eds, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back: The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2005).

<sup>53</sup> Most notably the ‘British World’ series of conferences and books. See C. Bridge and K. Fedorowich, eds, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); P. Buckner and R.D. Francis, eds, *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005); K.D. Smith, P. Grimshaw and S. Macintyre, eds, *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> L. Brake, B. Bell and D. Finkelstein, eds, *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> For an appraisal of the literature on the New Journalism, see Mark Hampton, ‘Newspapers in Victorian Britain’, *History Compass*, 2 (2004), pp. 1–8.

editorial matter.<sup>56</sup> Each newspaper, nevertheless, had its own distinctive focus largely influenced by the editor, with *Sam Sly's African Journal* expressing its polyglot content through the lens of leisure and entertainment. If we look at the opening page of its first issue [see **Figure 2**], even literature permeates the expected boundaries of commercial advertisements. A cheerful acrostic extolling the merits of wine is placed above an advertisement for 'the Genuine African Grape', whilst marriage banns sit incongruously alongside comments on a drawing by the Cape Town artist Thomas Bowler and various notices announcing sales and services.<sup>57</sup>

Nineteenth-century newspapers were patchworks of diverse content contributed by local readers and gleaned from the foreign, colonial and British press. News and literary items were gathered from journals subscribed to by the editor, received as part of an exchange agreement with editors in other colonies or gratuitously supplied by readers or visitors to the colony.<sup>58</sup> Consignments of newspapers and periodicals arrived in ships alongside long-awaited letters. 'Through Captain W. Darke and the *Mary Ann*, from Portsmouth 16<sup>th</sup> Feb., to Madras and this port', the editor Sammons wrote in 1848, 'we have literally been "news-cramm'd" since Monday last. And scarcely know how to wade through the immense mass of type, so as to select and preserve the most interesting for the *Cape Market*.'<sup>59</sup> As a people driven by commerce, Britons couched not only commercial interests but also news and literature in the language of commodities. As goods are consumed by the purchaser, so were the contents of the press metaphorically consumed for the shaping of readers' identities and place within the world.

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<sup>56</sup> For the colonial press in South Africa, see *A List of South African Newspapers 1800–1982* (State Library, Pretoria, 1983); Brian Cheadle, 'Southern Africa', in J. Vann and R. Van Arsdell, eds, *Periodicals of Queen Victoria's Empire: An Exploration* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 June 1843.

<sup>58</sup> Networks of newspaper exchange can be seen in numerous examples. Writing from Adelaide, one of Sammons's friends, who had also emigrated from Bath, sent him a personal letter along with copies of the *Adelaide Observer* and comments on colonial life. It seems that exchanges of newspapers between the two persisted. *SSAJ*, 13 Nov. 1845. *The Mauricien* of 14 Feb. 1849, comments on receiving a gratuitous copy of the new but short-lived newspaper *The Cape of Good Hope Observer*. *SSAJ*, 29 March 1849. Correspondents visiting from overseas contributed accounts such as a social commentary by 'Americanus' on the ladies of New York, and personal reflections by a returning New Zealand settler in Cape Town on the massacre of colonists by Maoris. *SSAJ*, 18 April 1844 and 11, 18 Jan. 1844. Emphasising the unreliable state of circulation, one account claimed that 'intelligence of considerable importance' for Cape Town merchants was accidentally discovered in a newspaper 'which had served during the voyage from England as an envelope for the captain's boots'. James Long Fitzpatrick, 'Introductory Address' in *Cape of Good Hope Literary Magazine*, 1847, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> *SSAJ*, 4 May 1848, emphasis added.



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[No. 1.

### To Advertisers.

THE following SCALE is respectfully submitted to the attention of those who may be desirous of favoring the Proprietor with their placards and Notices in this African Journal. It will be found lower than the ordinary rates, and it is hoped, a sufficient inducement—in connection with the interest they may feel in the spread and style of the Publication—to throw all the weight they can into it. Those who are too much engaged, or incapable of framing their Advertisement to please themselves, or the requirements of the times, can have them suitably arranged, in any shape—by way of Acrostic or otherwise, to catch the eye, and seize the judgment, at a trifling advance, not later than 4 o'clock on WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, previous to the day of Publishing at Messrs. RICKERT, PIKE, & Co.'s Printing Office, 59, St. George's-street, Cape Town.

From 1 to 6 lines . . . . .	2s. 6d.
" 6 to 9 " . . . . .	3s. 6d.
" 9 to 12 " . . . . .	4s. 6d.

And so on to 24 lines; after these 24d. per line.—For each subsequent insertion there will be a reduction of 25 per cent. Journal Office, June 1, 1843.

### To Carpenters, Builders, & Others.

THE Undersigned having made great improvements in his Saw Mill, will cut, for the Trade, TONGS for Floors, Laths for Verandahs, or Trellis Work, Facades and Ellsads, also Sash Stuff, &c., &c., which will be a saving, at least, of 40 per cent.

LATHS and TONGS, 1 inch and under, per 100 feet, 9d. Gentlemen can have their Flower-Gardens ornamented with Lattice Work, to match, Bowers, Facades, &c., &c., so as to hide any obnoxious view, on the Shortest Notice. R. GENTERY, 20, Boom-street.

31st May, 1843. N.B. Work sent to be cut will be returned to any part of Cape Town when finished.

### WINE! MIGHTY WINE!

(AN ACROSTIC BY W. L. S.)  
I n what new region shall the mind explore,  
O n what fresh subject shall our fancy soar,  
H ow touch a theme so rich, and full of spirit,  
N or rob the maker of his worth and merit.  
B rike up, my muse! dippe! all gloom and cant,  
F echant with Wine, and sing the name Leibbrandt  
L ead loud the trumpet, let the name be spread,  
A nd may its spirit waken up the dead.  
S ome seek the Hop, the Ginger, and the Spruce,  
T o ornament their drink without the aid of Juice,  
I n flame their blood with Brandy, Aie, and Beer,  
A nd puff and swell like hogheads in a year.  
N o man is troubled when he sips good Wine,  
L et caution guide him when he tastes the vine.  
E nslaved beyond, and without judgment blest,  
I t better were to leave a friend to test,  
B uy then of Leibbrandt,—here you can't be wrong,  
B ecause you'll have it pure, and rich, and strong,  
H ey, and sweet, and what is old, and clear,  
A nd—what is better—cheap throughout the year!  
N ow, don't believe me,—take a glass and try.  
D rink it, and smack your lips,—and then you'll buy;  
T here is "a-sit it good"—if you think I'd tell a—b?

### THE GENUINE African Grape.

THE Undersigned, having ascertained from many years' experience, that the CAPE WINES, manufactured by fermenting the natural juice without the husks, &c., are the most approved, has always endeavoured to obtain Wines of that peculiar quality, for which the grower not only received the preference, but also a higher price; he therefore takes the liberty of acquainting Captains of Ships, and his Customers in this Colony as well as abroad, that he has always on Sale a choice Stock of old Cape Wines of superior quality; consisting of Madeira, Sherry, Hock, Aromatic Hock, Pontac, equal, and in many respects preferable, to the Port Wine generally imported into this Colony; Sweet Wines of very excellent quality, and fine flavour, to wit: Pontac, Frontignac, Muscadell, &c., not to be equalled, and which have already undergone that perfecting progress by which they are not liable to that change to which all exported goods are more or less subject, whereby the stranger is in many instances disappointed, and the Article disapproved of.

He trusts, by steady perseverance and attention to the wants of all his acquaintances, and of those with whom he may yet become acquainted, to secure a continuance of their patronage and support.

Orders for any of the above Wines are received at his Store, adjoining his Residence, No. 31, Leuwe-street, near Keerom-street and Long-street. J. S. LEIBBRANDT.

### INSIDE SALE. ON MONDAY MORNING NEXT, THE 5TH INSTANT.

THE Undersigned will sell, to close Shipments, the whole of his FINE GOODS, including Silks, Satins, Sateenets, Orientals, Ribbons, Millinery, Dressable Bonnets, Stays, Hosiery, Shirting, Flannels, Cambrics, Muslins, Jaconets, Flowers, Collars, Brides, Handkerchiefs, &c. &c. &c. C. W. ADAMS.

THE Undersigned are now adding to their former supplies of PORT, SHERRY (Brown and Palo), CLARETS, CHAMPAGNE, MADEIRA, PORTER, and ALE.—Also, HAMS, CHEESE, SPERM OIL, SPERM CANDLES, SAVANNAH and MANILLA CIGARS; a few Cases, large size, of REIMS' best GENEVA for Sale, each Case warranted 15 full Flasks. DEANE & JOHNSON.

ON SALE, AT THE STORES OF THE UNDERSIGNED, 100 Barrels of Pickled Pork. B. NORDEN, Castle-street.

### "Perseverance" Post Cart, Will ply every alternate Day betwixt CAPE TOWN and SIMON'S TOWN (Sundays excepted).

The above Conveyance leaves the "VICTORIA HOTEL," Plain-street, Cape Town, every TUESDAY and THURSDAY MORNING at 9—and SATURDAY, at 9 in the AFTERNOON. And leaves SIMON'S TOWN, from the Undersigned's Stables, MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY, at 9 IN THE MORNING. FARE—7s. 6d. EACH WAY. G. KETTLEY, Proprietor. Simon's Town, 15th May, 1843.

To Let, on moderate Terms, THAT commodiously situated and well known Cellar, beneath the Dwelling-House of the Undersigned, No. 3, St. George's-street. Possession may be had by the end of the Month, or sooner if required.—Apply at the Office of G. W. SILBERBAUER, Broker.

### SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE.

Arrived in Table Bay. May 31.—Hortensia, brig, W. Storey, from Algoa Bay 24th May, to this Port. Cargo colonial produce.—Passengers, Mr and Mrs. Eggar, Mrs. Murray, and 6 in the steerage. Thomson & Co., Agents. 26th May, in lat. 35 30 S., long. 24 0 E., spoke the French ship L'Union, Demander, from Mauritius to Havre, out 40 days, with loss of boats, and considerable other damage, and had to throw overboard a portion of cargo. June 1.—Eliza Scott, schooner, J. C. Ahier, from Algoa Bay 21st May, Dyer's Island 30th May, to this port. Cargo sundries and oil.—Passengers, 18 Con-victs from Algoa Bay; and the Fishing Party from Dyer's Island. F. Collison & Co. Agents.

### MARRIAGE.

[By Special Licence.] In St. George's Church, on Saturday, the 27th May, by the Rev. GEORGE HODGKIN, M.A. William Meale Cahell, Esq., of the Madras Civil Service, to Miss Agnes Geekie Williamson.

### CHRISTENINGS.

In St. George's Church, on Monday, the 29th May, by the Rev. GEORGE HODGKIN, M.A. A daughter of Mr. Allen Taylor, baptized Elizabeth Ellen Isabel. A son of Mr. John Metcalf, baptized David. A son of Mr. John Bethridge Topp, baptized John Bethridge. A daughter of Mr. Richard Bechus, baptized Sophia Ellen. A daughter of Mr. Francis Prince, baptized Isabella. A son of Mr. William Fish, baptized Robert Andrew.

### DEATHS.

May 25th. John Thomas, son of Mr. John Jearry, aged 10 months, and 25 days. 26th. Richard Rico, aged 74 years. 26th. Alexander Jordan, aged 32 years.

### Literature and the Fine Arts.

"The Comic Album. A Book for every Table." This work may be considered as an "Annual" to last for many years, and a handsome present for all parties. "Got up" in the first style of the art, as it regards embellishment and typography, and containing subjects far superior to the general run of works of that class, it will indeed form a most acceptable appendage for "Every Table!"—whether it be mahogany, rosewood, oak, or cedar. We recommend strongly that "it be laid there," and not forgotten to be opened, when the lamp throws a halo around, and cheerful faces meet in a phalanx, to be amused and edified. In our present number we have given a sample of its opening speech, from that shrewd observer and now popular writer, Laman Blanchard; and a higher proof of its merits could not have been selected.

The work, although comic on its surface, has a fine under current of good advice, which will tend to eradicate and destroy the vices and excesses, which tend to disfigure the features of society. Besides, it is adorned by series of wood-cuts from the first artists, that are made to dove-tail, as it were, with the subjects, and without which our extract loses much of its beauty. We believe it may be purchased at the Bookellers of Cape Town.

A VIEW OF H.M.S. "SOUTHAMPTON." This interesting drawing, by Mr. T. W. Bowler, of Cape Town, and lithographed by those celebrated publishers to the Queen, Day & Haghe, comes under our notice at a late hour. We are unable to do justice to its merits.

It represents the ship at that particular crisis whilst "covering the landing of part of the 25th and 27th Regiments at Port Natal, on Sunday, 26th June, 1842, to relieve the detachment under Capt. Smith, of the 27th Regt., besieged by the insurgent Boers. The *Conch*, schooner, Wm. Bell, master, under the bluff, has the troops on board and in tow. The Boers are firing upon them from the land.

It will be a reflection to every Capt. and Merchant in the Cape who has not this picture hanging up in his parlour or cabin. The production of a resident artist—one who appears highly competent to the subject, and who has done it every justice by drawing it on the spot.

The hypercritical may object to the balls being seen, since they are rarely visible at an engagement.—but, perhaps, it was requisite to render them thus tangible, to show the direction of the enemy, and not leave all to the imagination and conjecture of the inspector; since, amidst the fire and smoke, it is difficult to tell Peter from Paul.

### EFFECTS OF SALT UPON SHEEP.

Salt has been frequently given to sheep on turnips, but with what advantage I have never satisfactorily learned. I have given them it, and the eagerness with which they followed the shepherd when he came at the stated hour to lay down small quantities here and there over the break, upon flat stones, and the relish with which they enjoyed it, was very remarkable; yet the desire for it continued but for a short time, and then every day they took so little that it appeared as if they were trifling with it; and hence I could perceive no benefit they derived from its use. Perhaps the cultivator who paid the greatest attention to the use of salt by animals was the late Mr. Curwen, of Workington Hall, Cumberland, who used to give two or four ounces per week to sheep, if fed on dry pasture; but if feeding on turnips or rape, they were supplied without stint. "It is a fact indisputably proved," says Mr. Cuthbert W. Johnson, "that if sheep are allowed free access to salt, they will never be subject to the disease called the rot." Is not this a most well worthy of the farmer's earliest, most zealous, attention? Some recent experiments also led me even to hope that I shall one day or other be able to prove a cure for this devastating disease. I have room but for one fact; Mr. Husher, of Stanley, in Gloucestershire, in the autumn of 1838, purchased for a mere trifle, twenty sheep, decidedly rotten, and gave each of them, for some weeks, one ounce of salt every morning; two only died during the winter, the surviving eighteen were cured, and have now, says the informant, "lambd by their side."—*Book of the Farm.*

Figure 2, Front Page of First Issue, Sam Sly's African Journal, 1 June 1843

What are we to make of this transcontinental wealth of material in the light of recent transnational and culturalist developments in scholarship? The first step is to be critical of the tendency of more traditional histories of colonialism to treat source material reductively, without giving enough credence to the materiality of texts. This in itself requires a departure from strict empiricism since ‘texts are not deposited in objects ... that contain them like receptacles’, nor is meaning ‘inscribed in readers as in soft wax’, but should be viewed in the context of ‘their particular discursive and formal mechanisms’.<sup>60</sup> It is how texts circulated, the manner in which they were conceived of and read, that holds vital clues as to the substance of colonial identities. Isabel Hofmeyr’s recent work on viewing books and newspapers as transnational cultural objects is of particular relevance here.<sup>61</sup> She has been critical of the national focus of histories of the book, and has called for a reassessment of texts within their global context. This requires examining the ‘globe in the text’, not only how readers viewed the world through the texts they read, but also the significance of the intended and actual worldwide *circulation* of texts.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, as Hofmeyr states, it is easy to say ‘that texts circulate’ but harder to explain ‘what forms of reading and reception are required for such texts to be consumed in a consciously transnational way’.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Dilemma of ‘Home’: Towards Hybrid Identities**

Transnational modes of reading were taken for granted by colonial readers, yet South African historians and literary scholars have been slow to interrogate the instability of the category ‘South African’ in the history of the book.<sup>64</sup> Nationhood is itself an intractable entity, prone to fluidities of meaning and vulnerable to contestation. For many British settlers in the nineteenth-century Cape, their colony was part of a British world encompassing both empire and metropolitan homeland. This definition sought to draw Anglicised Dutch colonists into

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<sup>60</sup> Roger Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. L.G. Cochrane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 12; see also Roger Chartier, ‘Texts, Printings, Readings’, in L. Hunt, ed, *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

<sup>61</sup> See Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrims’ Progress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Isabel Hofmeyr, ‘Indian Ocean Lives and Letters’, *English in Africa*, 35, 1 (2008), pp. 11–25; Isabel Hofmeyr, ‘Gandhi’s Printing Press: Indian Ocean Print Cultures and Cosmopolitanisms’ (Paper presented at the international workshop ‘Written Culture in a Colonial Context’, University of Cape Town, 2–3 December 2008).

<sup>62</sup> Isabel Hofmeyr, ‘The Globe in the Text: Towards a Transnational History of the Book’, *African Studies*, 64, 1 (2005), pp. 87–103. Hofmeyr borrows the phrase ‘the globe in the text’ from E. Apter, ‘Global *Translatio*: The “Invention” of Comparative Literature, Istanbul, 1933’, *Critical Inquiry*, 29, 2 (2003), pp. 253–281.

<sup>63</sup> Hofmeyr, ‘The Globe in the Text’, p. 88.

<sup>64</sup> Andrew van der Vlies, *South African Textual Cultures: White, Black, Read All Over* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007).

the fold, and blithely relegated black colonial subjects to the role of loyal dependents.<sup>65</sup> Anglophone colonial newspapers and books looked to Britain as a cultural homeland, a trait seen in subsequent definitions of ‘South African literature’ that excluded rising Dutch/Afrikaner and black African voices.<sup>66</sup> Upon reading the *African Journal* quoted in the *Lincolnshire Advertiser*, the editor Sammons suggested the following transnational moment of reading:

Supposing you to be an Africander of the right metal, and having the organ of *locality* and the love of place strongly developed; and, supposing, also, that you were in England, and in that part of it called London, and you were to tumble in, by chance, into one of those numerous Coffee Houses and Rooms with which Cornhill abounds, and the waiters were to present you with a morning paper with your coffee ... and the first paragraph that caught your eye should be ‘*Table Mountain,*’ ‘*Constantia,*’ or the ‘*Wynberg Omnibus Company,*’ what kind of emotions do you fancy would arise? Would not the well-known sound and sight in *that* district – although they might have affected you but little ‘*at home*’ – make you forget even the *Bank of England*, the *Mansion House*, the *Royal Exchange*, or the passing crowd, and agreeably abstract and transport you to the neighbourhood of “*The Cape Flats*” and “*The Government Gardens*”? Would not your heart leap, and your pulse beat, with strong emotions, for “*auld lang syne*” and the “*auld house at home*”?<sup>67</sup>

Sammons may have given allowance for colonial affinities, yet such affinities are still expressed from the vantage point of the metropole. With the rhetorical aid of ‘the organ of *locality* and love of place’, readers ‘abstract and transport’ their minds to their cherished and distant ‘home’. For newly arrived British immigrants, ‘home’ was clearly to the north, but for many a growing colonial attachment resulted in the paradox of having two homes for rooting identity. Nostalgia for the Cape could take over longing for Britain if one ventured to the latter, where reading a newspaper could heighten the sense of dislocated identity.<sup>68</sup>

The juxtaposition of seemingly disparate places and events in the columns of the press creates a discursive space for the outside world to be imagined by the reader. The reader might be aware of the entirely arbitrary connections between articles on Cape Town, London, Calcutta or Sydney, but it is through the reassurance ‘that the imagined world is visibly rooted in

<sup>65</sup> See Dubow, ‘How British Was the British World’.

<sup>66</sup> See Van der Vlies, *South African Textual Cultures*; Laura Chrisman, *Rereading the Imperial Romance: British Imperialism and South African Resistance in Haggard, Schreiner and Plaatzje* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>67</sup> SSAJ, 20 July 1848. Sammons had read *The Lincolnshire Advertiser*, 22 April 1848.

<sup>68</sup> On Sammons’s sense of alienation upon first arriving at the Cape, see SSAJ, 26 October 1843, 8 February 1844; A.M. Lewin Robinson, ed., *Selected Articles from the Cape Monthly Magazine (New Series, 1870–76)* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1978), pp. 261–275.

everyday life' that readers began to conceive of and negotiate their identity in the world.<sup>69</sup> During the imaginative moment of reading newspapers, physical geography and time could be displaced in the mind of the reader. According to Julie Codell, the press 'vanquished distance between "centers" and "peripheries" and juxtaposed differences through images as well as texts'. In so doing, news 'was both geographically located and dislocated from place into print virtuality to produce new identities not definable as "British" or "native", two categories themselves not monolithic, homogenous, or stable'.<sup>70</sup> Through the discursive possibilities of the printed word, readers forged an integrated spatial imagination for their identity.

Benedict Anderson has argued that during the act of reading the 'national imagination' is often conceptualised as a 'socoscape', a familiar landscape with referents intimately tied to the fictive assumptions of community space.<sup>71</sup> If we adapt such an idea from a national to a global scale, such intimacy was manifested in transferring tropes of the 'home' landscape of Britain to that of its wider empire. Fondness for metaphors of the home country was articulated in the Anglicised landscape, building and place names, but also found rhetorical expression in the press. As Ian Baucom states, 'Englishness has been *generally* understood to reside within some type of imaginary, abstract or actual locale, and to mark itself upon that locale's familiars'. It was in the rhetoric of Englishness, as the dominant expression of 'Britishness', that 'struggles to control, possess, order, and disorder the nation's and empire's spaces' were located.<sup>72</sup> This chimes with recent work on the links between intimacy and trans-imperial space, where the geographies of empire are argued not to be static but to possess dynamic fissures and discontinuities that change over time in their relation to coloniser and colonised. Colonial spaces changed the moving subjects and colonists of empire as much as people sought to change the colonial spaces upon which they roamed.<sup>73</sup> For the editor Sammons, the alien surrounds of the colony could be alleviated by thinking of Table Mountain being to Cape Town as St Paul's Cathedral was to London, a sublime and

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<sup>69</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 39–40.

<sup>70</sup> Codell, 'Introduction: Imperial Co-Histories', pp. 16–17.

<sup>71</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 28–36.

<sup>72</sup> Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds, *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

familiar dominance over the skyline of the town.<sup>74</sup> Yet within the ‘incommensurabilities of empire’, home could never be home, and the Cape could never be a ‘little England’ with its different climate, people and environment.<sup>75</sup> Such ambivalence was expressed most affectingly in the journal in letters to the editor by homesick immigrants or in sentimental poems contributed by Scotsmen longing after their ‘happy Highland home’.<sup>76</sup>

Many colonists felt a growing or already established sense of colonial identity, such as colonial-born British or Dutch colonists, but the ways to express such identity in literature and prose still posed its problems. As a recent emigrant to whom such a dilemma was personally manifest, Sammons wrote in an editorial that

[t]he language has not been coined, nor have the ideas been invented that can convey, a clear conception or truthful picture of either Australia or the Cape, unless they be perceived with the bodily eye, or felt by actual presence. We may write of their capabilities, their extent, their heat, their wealth, their sunny skies, their produce, their imports and exports, and still not give the shadow of an idea, as to the manner in which they affect us.<sup>77</sup>

To reconcile metropolitan visions of the colony with everyday realities as a colonist was part of the process of forming colonial identities. Sammons was aware not only of his own dilemma of expressing a sense of place at the Cape, but also of those of his fellow Britons in Australia. The circulation of newspapers between colonies, with the inclusion of extracts from the Australian or Indian press, are material evidence that despite a sense that Britain remained a cultural home in many ways, fellow colonies also contributed to the forging of an imagined and ever-shifting network of global British identity.

Faced with the predominance of the Dutch amongst the white population, the press could act as a safety valve for a sense of cultural alienation amongst Cape colonists of British origin. Making light of the name of the *Heerengracht*, the main street in Cape Town, an article lampooned the familiar scene of a Cockney arriving at the Cape whose pronunciation makes

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<sup>74</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 October 1846. Similar imagery of St Paul’s and Table Mountain can be seen in the journals *South Africa* (established 1889) and *The South African Book Buyer* (1906): Van der Vlies, *South African Textual Cultures*, pp. 1–3.

<sup>75</sup> Catherine Hall, ‘What Did a British World Mean to the British? Reflections on the Nineteenth Century’, in Buckner and Francis, eds, *Rediscovering the British World*, p. 23.

<sup>76</sup> See poem entitled ‘Home Sweet Home’, in *SSAJ*, 22 August 1844.

<sup>77</sup> *SSAJ*, 5 February 1846.

it ‘rhyme with scratch’.<sup>78</sup> In such light moments in the Anglophone press there is both a sense amongst the contributors and readers of familiarity, that one has experienced similar moments of cultural bafflement, but also an increased sense of hybridised being, that the multi-cultural presence of the Cape has shaped a sense of unique Cape colonial Britishness that one can now laugh at the emigrant new to the colonial experience.

Negotiating Britishness was not solely the preserve of British immigrants, as many Dutch colonists avowed loyalty to the Crown whilst remaining protective of their distinctive linguistic and religious independence.<sup>79</sup> For the majority of readers of *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, the reconciling of attachments to Britain as ‘home’ whilst forging a sense of Cape colonial attachment was dominant, but for others such as Dutch and black colonists, varying expressions of Britishness could serve as a cultural strategy for handling British dominance. Alongside expressions of Britishness, the Cape press would increasingly take on the role of representing and facilitating a uniquely Cape identity. This was well embodied in the *Cape Monthly Magazine*, which between the 1850s and 1870s played a dual role in circulating colonial scientific and literary ideas within the colony and abroad, acting as an ‘intermediary between colony and metropole’ and thus helping forge a colonial intelligentsia.<sup>80</sup>

### **Impressing the Metropole: Respectability and Idealised Visions**

If colonists of British descent viewed the press as an important means for connecting themselves with the metropole, the significance of maintaining this link is demonstrated in advertisements for the British emigration press targeting prospective emigrants to buy printing presses and equipment,<sup>81</sup> and in vociferous calls in the 1820s for a free press in the colonies unencumbered by government censorship.<sup>82</sup> The printed word was becoming a central means for maintaining a sense of local and national identity, and in encouraging a

<sup>78</sup> *SSAJ*, 7 September 1843.

<sup>79</sup> Ross, *Status and Respectability*, pp. 40–69.

<sup>80</sup> See Saul Dubow, “‘Of Special Colonial Interest’: The *Cape Monthly Magazine* and the Circulation of Ideas”, in Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility and White South Africa* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 71–120.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, an advertisement for the *Emigration Gazette and Colonial Advocate* in *SSAJ*, 4 April 1844 that appeared in several British and colonial newspapers.

<sup>82</sup> For the free press in the Cape Colony, see H.C. Botha, *John Fairbairn in South Africa* (Cape Town: Historical Publications Society, 1984); McKenzie, ‘Franklins of the Cape’; J. MacKenzie, “‘To Enlighten South Africa’: The Creation of a Free Press at the Cape in the Early Nineteenth Century”, in C. Kaul, ed, *Media and the British Empire* (Basingstoke, UK, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); K. McKenzie, ‘The Daemon behind the Curtain: William Edwards and the Theatre of Liberty’, *South African Historical Journal*, 61, 3 (2009), pp. 482–504.

code of bourgeois respectability tied intrinsically to Anglicisation and publicly forged scripts of behaviour.<sup>83</sup>

The first few decades of the nineteenth century in Britain saw the advent of a mass reading public that arose from increasing literacy and the growing affordability of books and periodicals brought about by cheaper mechanised processes such as steam presses and machine-manufactured paper. Hundreds of thousands of newspapers and periodicals were published and bought, ushering in a new market place for the discussion of ideas and identities amongst varying classes.<sup>84</sup> In Britain, the tensions between working-class and middle-class publications and the circulation of competing social and political ideals was noticeable. At the Cape, however, the dominance of the merchant class and the relative lack of a mass working class (the pre-industrial agrarian economy of the Cape had a predominantly black rural labouring population, with some artisans in the towns) resulted in a particularly strong bourgeois public sphere, expressed ably by John Fairbairn's *Advertiser*. The democratisation of the print market in Britain had a distinct effect upon white colonists' perceptions of their colonial identities. The following exuberant and exaggerated account of newspaper distribution in colonial Simon's Town, submitted by 'Jolly Tar' to the editor of *Sam Sly's African Journal*, is particularly vocal in its references to a mass readership transcending class divides:

The Mail was literally *filled* with Extra Sam Sly's. Boys running in all directions, lustily singing out for copies of Sam Sly – one vying with the other who should first reach the Sale Depot ... It is currently reported, even wheel barrows were used to convey the needful commodity, while others boldly avow, perhaps with equal truth, the *President's* jolly boat was thrice almost *swamped* in taking off a suitable supply of Extra Wares from "The Sly Corner," to meet this most unprecedented demand. You gentleman there with that shocking bad hat, how many copies do *you* require? Stand back Gentlemen, if you please, and give the boy time to sarve you. Eight pence each. Ma'am, no tick allowed, so down with the dust, quite impossible Gentlemen, to meet *all* your wishes at once. Well! Well! this certainly *does* remind one of a benefit night in dear Old England. Pray, Ma'am, did you ever witness a crush at the pit door of Covent Garden, or Drury Lane? No, sire! Never was witness in my life, never wish to be, that's more... Now then, Thomas, look alive, that's a Briton. Let's have two or

<sup>83</sup> For a definition of respectability in the Cape Colony, see Ross, *Status and Respectability*, pp. 1–8.

<sup>84</sup> J.R. Topham, 'The *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* and Cheap Miscellanies in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in G. Cantor *et al*, eds, *Science in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical: Reading the Magazine of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

three hundred more, who'd have thought it, won't these here extras find their way into the Hampshire Telegraph! Won't they show 'em at home, how we can do it abroad!<sup>85</sup>

This lively scene of sailors, Cockney salesmen and boys, gentlemen and ladies all jostling for dozens of copies of *Sam Sly's African Journal* is undoubtedly a figment of imagination. The scene is shorn of the diversity of the Cape population, for there are no references to black or Dutch colonists. In this de-historicised fantasy space, 'Jolly Tar' wishes for a replication of London's lively print culture and street life in the Cape, even if this ignores colonial realities. His is a vision of a white-only, class-based colony with a large print market. In reality, Cape newspaper rarely sold more than around 200 to 300 copies each a week.<sup>86</sup> Colonial reading patterns and the higher cost of publication militated against large sales of periodicals and newspapers, which were read in reading rooms and coffeehouses in Cape Town and were often shared amongst neighbours. Many readers chose to subscribe to such rooms or share subscriptions rather than subscribe to newspapers individually. Consequently, the number of publications sold did not correlate to the size of a journal's readership.<sup>87</sup> Despite the low sales, those who read the *African Journal*, from Cape Town through to the new colony of Natal and in towns such as Port Elizabeth, Mossel Bay and Graham's Town, read it with avidity.<sup>88</sup> The description above was testament to the enthusiasm the publication received. It was important for white British colonists, with their monopoly over the small English-language print market, to demonstrate to the metropole how they 'could do it abroad'.

We can see a similar attitude in a seemingly insignificant journal published at the Cape in 1841. This was *The Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet*, a penny weekly uncovered by Sammons whilst perusing the many periodicals and books in the Public Library housed within the Commercial Exchange in Cape Town.<sup>89</sup> This paper ran for only a single issue, which was not

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<sup>85</sup> *SSAJ*, 7 December 1848.

<sup>86</sup> In its eight years of publication, *Sam Sly's African Journal* made £1 500 and sold for about 8d each. Total circulation figures are not available. A. Essex, W. Rabone and H. Rabone, *Records of a Pioneer Family*, ed. A. Rabone (Cape Town: Struik, 1966), 89; *SSAJ*, Publishing Notice, 1 June 1843.

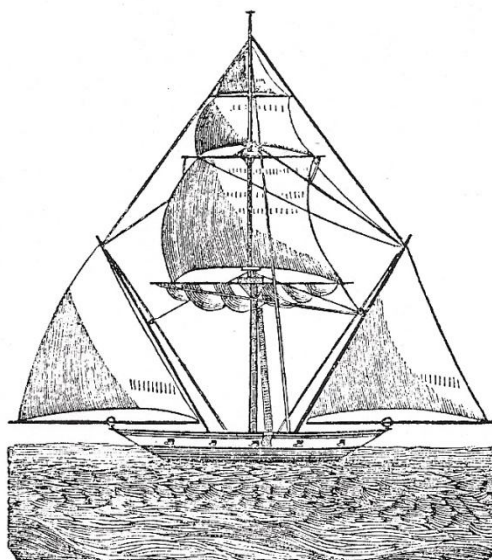
<sup>87</sup> <sup>87</sup> For an exploration of Cape reading patterns and its implication for the public sphere see McKenzie, 'Public Sphere'. For colonial reading patterns after 1850 and into the 1870s see Robert Turrell, 'A Cape Periodical: the Cape Monthly Magazine, 1870-75', BA (Hons) thesis, University of Cape Town (1974). Little examined are reading patterns in rural areas. An interesting insight into these is a letter addressed by a group of seven inhabitants of Mossel Bay to the stationer Mr. Frushard in Cape Town. In the letter they request newspapers for the setting up of a reading room for the nearby country districts, listing the *Grahamstown Journal*, *Sam Sly's African Journal*, the *Cape Town Mail*, the *Natalier* and *Eastern Province Herald*, amongst others. *SSAJ*, 30 April 1846.

<sup>88</sup> *SSAJ*, 30 March 1848; *SSAJ*, 30 April 1846; *SSAJ*, 2 July 1846.

<sup>89</sup> *The Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet* (hereafter *CGHP*), 1841 (no month or date), is quoted in *SSAJ*, 11 and 18 September 1845.

unusual, since colonial periodicals and newspapers struggled to stay afloat owing to the low number of sales and small reading public.<sup>90</sup> The *Pamphlet* was edited by Henry Dempster, an adventurous Scot with the curious history of having served as an able-bodied seaman with the East India Company, commanded a ship belonging to the King of Siam and been jailed for smuggling opium from Canton.<sup>91</sup>

“ACTION AND RE-ACTION ARE EQUAL.”



**THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE PAMPHLET.**

**PRICE, ONE PENNY.**

CAPE TOWN, 1841

THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The Publication which you are now reading, as I am given to understand, being the first of its sort that ever has been attempted in this our British Colony in the South of Africa, and as it is the first attempt of mine, (and indeed an idea of a very recent date,) that ever I should publicly conduct such a Work, I hope that you will make every allowance for the awkwardness which strangers generally introduce themselves.

As by making any other apology than I have already done, for whatever my demerits may be, would only appear as soliciting your patronage for its continuance in a cringing sort of manner. At present I will refrain from doing so, because I am well aware that should the matter, which is embodied in this number, not be of

sufficient purity to terminate in a hopeful issue, the consequences will be lameness of its members, and suddenly end its career by a premature death. But, on the contrary, should this my maiden Pamphlet prove healthy and fruitful, I doubt not but

Like an increasing population,  
From a rising generation,  
Or important emigration  
So will *this* publication  
Have a wide circulation.

That such a work as this (if properly conducted), is for the poorer classes of society a most desirable one, there are very few ready to deny. It is therefore devoutly to be wished, that the rich will liberally encourage it for the benefit of the poor.

We have only got to take a glance at Europe to con-

**Figure 3, *The Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet*, 1841**

<sup>90</sup> Of the 31 periodicals that commenced publication in southern Africa between the years 1838 and 1853 mentioned by Cheadle, only eight survived longer than two years. Six of these were religious or missionary magazines. Cheadle, 'Southern Africa' in Vann and VanArsdel, eds, *Periodicals of Queen Victoria's Empire*, 262-265. Of the 61 newspapers mentioned in the same period by the *List of South African Newspapers 1800-1982*, the number lasting longer than two years was 38.

<sup>91</sup> D.H. Varley, 'Henry Dempster and *The Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet*', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, 11, 2 (1956), 58-59.

Dempster saw his imagined readership through the lens of the growing reading public back in Britain, where penny publications had emerged in the 1820s and were read widely amongst the literate working class. Jon Klancher sees in these publications a subversive reaction to the radical press. He argues they emerged to curtail the fostering of a rhetorical space for working-class agitation, and substituted working-class rhetoric with the encouragement of bourgeois values. In such a way, the intention was for class tensions to be diminished by promoting the reading public as ‘a metonymy for personal and national togetherness’.<sup>92</sup> Dempster clearly saw his readership as taking on a similarly unifying dimension for the mutual improvement of society, where ‘the rich will liberally encourage it for the benefit of the poor’.<sup>93</sup> In Britain there was a large Anglophone working-class readership, but at the Cape failed efforts to extend membership of the public library to the poorer classes and the minimal presence of mechanics’ institutes owed itself to a vastly different demography.<sup>94</sup> The *Pamphlet* provided a census of the Colony adapted from *Van De Sandt’s Cape Almanac* as proof of his potential readership, listing a population of 162 000 emancipated slaves, ‘Hottentots’ and British and Dutch settlers.<sup>95</sup> The dilemma faced in the diffusion of knowledge at the Cape, with the ‘great subordinate mass’<sup>96</sup> of the population being neither English-speaking nor white, had evidently eluded Dempster. That he aimed at a circulation of 100 000 copies was cause for wry comment in *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, where the first and only issue of the *Pamphlet* was quoted extensively. Dempster claimed that the Cape Colony is

so completely central that vessels from East, West, North and South, are continually calling in to have a look at us, refresh themselves, and tell us the news, leaving at the same time the various journals of the countries they last left, books, and all that is entertaining; I therefore consider that at Cape Town the first-rate selections for to garnish any work can be obtained more extensively than at any other part of the

<sup>92</sup> John Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

<sup>93</sup> *CGHP*, 1841, quoted in *SSAJ*, 11 September 1845.

<sup>94</sup> Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, pp. 47–52.

<sup>95</sup> The census for 1840 read:

Whites of Dutch, French, and Swedish descent.....	50,000
Whites of British descent.....	12,000
Emancipated slaves of 1834.....	35,000
Free colored people before 1834.....	10,000
Hottentots and Bushmen.....	40,000
Colored strangers from the interior.....	15,000
	162,000

<sup>96</sup> John Herschel, commenting in 1835 on the establishment of Alexander Jardine’s popular library, quoted in D.H. Varley, ‘The Nineteenth Century and the “Common Reader”’, *South African Libraries*, 19, 4 (1952), p. 105.

world; it therefore becomes very evident, that a Penny Publication printed here may be rendered far superior to any other sort that can be printed in Europe; and I don't see what could prevent them from being exported to all parts of the globe for sale. ... One Penny is not a great deal of money, so that wherever they were sent they must be very poor indeed that could not afford to purchase at so cheap a rate the Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet. In it the beauties, resources, and advantages of the country could ... be shown forth in a true light ... [and] many thousand who may be desirous of emigrating from Great Britain with their property and families will prefer this Colony to any other.<sup>97</sup>

Evidently, Dempster viewed his *Pamphlet* in global terms and not merely as the voice for a local community and the improvement of the poorer classes. Immediately one is made aware of the people and ships visiting the Cape en route to other climes as well as the circulation of journals and books brought from overseas. His claim that the *Pamphlet* 'may be rendered far superior to any other ... in Europe' is clearly a show of bombast and an effort at self-promotion, but reveals a desire even amongst sojourners such as Dempster to publicise colonies as civilised nodal points within the networks of imperial knowledge, as 'moving metropolises'<sup>98</sup> equal to Europe's capability in originating and spreading intellectual development. There is also the usual emphasis on the attractions of the Cape to urge immigration, the ideal immigrants possessing both 'property and families', and being by implication the aspiring middle class, free of moral taint and desirous of populating the colony.

The Cape middle class was almost exclusively comprised of merchants and their families, who were the dominant consumers of colonial publications. Knowing their role in deciding the success or failure of a new journal, the *African Journal's* editor described an imagined scene where the merchants, 'assembled in groups in the Exchange Rooms', gazed at the *Pamphlet* and cast judgement on its merits. Finding it 'indigestible', they all 'turned tail ... and let it sink'.<sup>99</sup> The merchants in this scene, as the male guardians of propriety, are portrayed as fastidious not only because they desired a publication that reflected bourgeois tastes, but because of their keen awareness that colonial publications such as the press, almanacs, and lithographic images remained a crucial means of presenting 'an appropriate

<sup>97</sup> *CGHP*, 1841, quoted in *SSAJ*, 11 September 1845.

<sup>98</sup> Robert Macleod, 'On Visiting the "Moving Metropolis": Reflections on the Architecture of Imperial Science', in N. Reingold and M. Rothenburg, eds, *Scientific Colonialism: A Cross-Structural Comparison* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987). Macleod draws on and develops an idea of Keith Hancock. See also Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, pp. 10–17.

<sup>99</sup> *SSAJ*, 11 September 1845.

image' of rational urban space to visitors and readers outside the colony.<sup>100</sup> Portraying orderly clean streets was more a projection of desired respectable urban space than the reality. Such sanitised impressions reflected back in the metropolitan press. The *African Journal*, ever one for the eccentric, printed a weekly fictional instalment from a London newspaper where 'The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe' describes to Britannia the value of her colonies. In the extract the Cape Colony is portrayed as 'the most salubrious of your possessions' where 'so clear is the atmosphere that you may read by moonlight with perfect ease', whilst Cape Town 'consists of wide, handsome and well-cleansed streets'.<sup>101</sup>

These perceptions of the Cape were in some way visually reinforced through the works of Thomas Bowler, who projected bourgeois tastes for the picturesque, clean open streets and orderly industrious colonists in his watercolours and lithographs.<sup>102</sup> Prints of his and others' work not only reached the metropolitan press; they were also purchased by colonists from shops such as Robertson's booksellers in Cape Town and sent to friends and relatives abroad. The editor of the *African Journal* was well aware of this when he suggested to readers that Bowler's prints 'placed on a sheet of letter paper ... form a pleasing memento, and will assist negligent writers, in conveying to their correspondents some idea of the style and character ... of Africa'.<sup>103</sup> This circulated image of the Cape could still be prone to an unintentional gaffe, such as when the *Illustrated London News* published a view of Cape Town and Table Bay claiming it depicted the new colony of Natal. Noting this mistake with much indignation, the *African Journal* made it clear that one of its purposes was to publicise correctly to the outside world the manner and appearance of the Cape in the light of such misinformation.<sup>104</sup>

Ever under the scrutiny from lawmakers in London, colonists used newspapers not only to publicise their competing viewpoint on settler relations with indigenous peoples, but also to satirise lightly the scrutiny they were held under by the metropole. In a witty dialogue contributed anonymously to the *African Journal*, the editor Sam Sly stands before the Select Committee of the House of Commons giving evidence on the economic state and moral tenor

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<sup>100</sup> McKenzie, 'Franklins of the Cape', 101; K. McKenzie, 'Dogs and the Public Sphere: The Ordering of Social Space in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town', *South African Historical Journal*, 48 (2003), pp. 235–251.

<sup>101</sup> *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 16 September 1848, extract included in *SSAJ*, 14 December 1848.

<sup>102</sup> Martin Hall, 'Fish and the Fisherman, Archaeology and Art: Cape Town seen by Bowler, D'Oyly and De Meillon', *South African Journal of Art and Architectural History*, 2, 3 and 4 (1991), pp. 78–88.

<sup>103</sup> *SSAJ*, 25 July 1844.

<sup>104</sup> *SSAJ*, 4 July 1844, 27 February 1845. The illustration appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, 2 February 1843.

of the colony. Touching on the shortage of labour, Cape salmon and ‘bad Cape wine’, the serious mood of the committee is regularly undermined by humorous replies from Sam Sly who in turn distracts its members from more serious probing.<sup>105</sup> This satire was a direct response to the power of such committees to hold colonists under extreme scrutiny and censure.

In the late 1830s, Australian colonists with their convict population had experienced firsthand the moral opprobrium that could be cast by such committees, whilst the Select Committee on Aborigines had condemned Cape and Australian settlers alike for their treatment of indigenous inhabitants.<sup>106</sup> Through humanitarian and official condemnation of settler conduct, there was an acute threat that British colonists might be viewed as lesser Britons not deserving of protection and metropolitan support.<sup>107</sup> Alan Lester has shown that the colonial press was a mouthpiece for settler interests where claims about native barbarity and irreclaimability, particularly from frontier newspapers such as Robert Godlonton’s *Graham’s Town Journal*, informed metropolitan views and were also quoted and supported in Australian and New Zealand newspapers such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Nelson Examiner*. The circulation of such views was aimed at challenging humanitarian and official sympathy towards indigenous colonial populations, impulses from the metropole seen as neglectful of settler interests.<sup>108</sup> Using newspapers as a primary means of lobbying for metropolitan commiseration, colonists appealed to an imagined global community of ‘trans-imperial British identity’ that traversed the colonial and metropolitan divide. Britishness needed to be negotiated as ‘a globalizing phenomenon, rather than a metropolitan monopoly’ for ‘settlers at any one site of colonization [to] assert their continued claim to material and moral support from the metropolitan centre’.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 February 1844.

<sup>106</sup> See Alan Lester, ‘British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire’, *History Workshop Journal*, 54 (2002), 24-48; Elizabeth Elbourne, ‘The Sin of the Settler: the 1835–36 Select Committee on Aborigines and Debates over Virtue and Conquest in the Early Nineteenth-Century British White Settler Empire’, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4, 3 (2003); Zoe Laidlaw, ‘“Aunt Anna’s Report”: The Buxton Women and the Aborigines Select Committee, 1835–7’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 32, 2 (2004), pp. 1–28.

<sup>107</sup> Lester, ‘British Settler Discourse’, 30.

<sup>108</sup> Lester, ‘British Settler Discourse’; Lester, *Imperial Networks*.

<sup>109</sup> The term ‘trans-imperial Britishness’ is from Lester, ‘British Settler Discourse’, 31.

Giving voice to as many views as possible, and staying true to the *African Journal's* epigraph 'to assist the enquiring, animate the struggling, and sympathise with all',<sup>110</sup> Sammons published varying expressions of British identity, from the unabashedly patriotic to angry vitriol. The latter was particularly noticeable around the time of the Seventh Frontier War (1846–1847) on the eastern frontier. 'Peter Grievous', a frequent contributor, wrote of his disenchantment with metropolitan judgement:

[w]e are not to be sent as a sample to the British Parliament, of haters of black flesh – imposters – over-reachers – Jews – usurers – and cheats. We demand our birthright!! Britons!! When that is denied, we will cast off our allegiance; and we know, we, our children, and our children's children, have sufficient animal and mental power to defend ourselves and establish our name as a *nation*.<sup>111</sup>

Such extreme separatist expressions were rare, yet consistent conflict with the Xhosa caused a heightened reliance on white skins in defining Britishness in the eastern Cape,<sup>112</sup> where elsewhere loyalty to the crown, Protestantism and British cultural markers were often of equal importance. Although there was a rhetorical split in the Cape press between the humanitarian voice of John Fairbairn's *South African Commercial Advertiser* in Cape Town against Godlonton's advocacy of settler rights in the *Graham's Town Journal*, there was not a clean divide in opinion between the eastern and western Cape, or between that of colony and metropole.<sup>113</sup> This is evidenced in descriptions of black atrocities on the frontier in the Cape Town-based *African Journal*, with anti-humanitarian rhetoric close to that of the *Graham's Town Journal* and *De Zuid Afrikaan*. A letter sent to the *African Journal* from Natal on the 'treacherous and barbarous' Zulu killing of British colonists including women and children, was reprinted in at least two Australian newspapers,<sup>114</sup> whilst Sammons printed personal reflections sent to him by a returning New Zealand settler in Cape Town on the 'massacre' of colonists by Maoris.<sup>115</sup> By circulating accounts of frontier violence against settlers between colonies and through to the metropole in the 1830s and 1840s, the settler press propagated the view of irredeemable racial differences that would later predominate over humanitarian

<sup>110</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 June 1843. The epigraph is attributed to the English writer and journalist Leigh Hunt.

<sup>111</sup> *SSAJ*, 23 July 1846.

<sup>112</sup> Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>113</sup> See Lester, *Imperial Networks*; Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996).

<sup>114</sup> *SSAJ*, 30 November 1848; *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 20 March 1849; *The Maitland Mercury*, 17 March 1849.

<sup>115</sup> *SSAJ*, 18 January 1844.

sympathy towards indigenous inhabitants in frontier policy.<sup>116</sup> The press would also be utilised in lobbying networks to support the granting of representative government to the Cape Colony, a demand that rose in tenor during the organised protest by colonists against plans to send ticket-of-leave convicts to the Cape in the late 1840s (a subject explored briefly in chapter 2).

### **Circulating Imagination in the Empire**

Sammons had long used the *African Journal* to lightly mock his contemporaries, complaining of the ‘sleepy, ponderous and political style’ of the weeklies such as John Fairbairn’s *Advertiser* and the Dutch-language *De Zuid Afrikaan*.<sup>117</sup> The former he derided as overly concerned with ‘Morals and Mammon’, whilst the latter was declared a dreary ‘chronicler of small beer and sheep’s tail fat’.<sup>118</sup> Sammons sought to enliven ‘the dull and work-a-day world’ of the Cape by encouraging literary contributions and expressions of mirth from the Cape’s inhabitants.<sup>119</sup> If, as Saul Dubow contends, ‘colonists and settlers were more than mere ciphers in the arithmetic of imperialism’, great importance was placed on fostering a colonial-born intellectual and literary tradition to dispel ‘metropolitan condescension’.<sup>120</sup> For Sammons, such an enterprise was predicated on promoting a unified sense of British identity amongst the foreign surrounds of the Cape. His vision of the press as a civilising and Anglicising influence is reflected best in Sammons’s endorsement of the Scottish novelist and journalist Leitch Ritchie’s remark that ‘the world is to be civilised by *Literature and Tea*, and not by Wars and Commerce’. ‘The territories of imagination and sentiment’, in Sammons’s words, were a more laudable expression of British agency and better suited topics for publication than ‘facts, figures and feathers’.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Lester, ‘British Settler Discourse’.

<sup>117</sup> SSAJ, 13 July 1843.

<sup>118</sup> SSAJ, 7 March 1844; *The African Journal*, 13 February 1850.

<sup>119</sup> SSAJ, Publishing Notice, June 1843.

<sup>120</sup> Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 14–15.

<sup>121</sup> SSAJ, 15 June 1848.



A woodcut illustration of a winged figure, possibly an angel or a personification of knowledge, emerging from a dark, textured mound. The figure is depicted in profile, facing left, with large, feathered wings extending to the right. He has a beard and is wearing a simple, draped garment. He holds a long staff or scepter in his right hand, which rests on the mound. In his left hand, he holds a book or a scroll, which is open and appears to be the source of light or information. The mound he is emerging from is dark and textured, suggesting a place of concealment or a 'shaded' area. The overall style is characteristic of 19th-century woodcut printing.

**NOW READY,**  
***Sam Sly's African Journal,***  
VOLS. I., II., AND III.,  
Price—£1, £1 15, and £2 10.

**Figure 4,** 'emerging from the shades', Woodcut Advertisement, *Sam Sly's African Journal*, 8  
October 1846

Entertainment was a paramount aim, and such content needed to be circulated not only within the colony, but also globally to extend the network of published expressions of British colonial jollity and advancement. Advertising bound volumes of *Sam Sly's African Journal* for sale, an accompanying woodcut [see **Figure 4**] made explicit this trans-global intent. The woodcut depicted the editor of the *Journal* 'emerging from the shades, and forcing and breaking his way through the surface of South Africa' to place his newspaper in the hands of Saturn, the Roman god of time with wings and scythe, 'who alone can scatter and work wonders, and render even trifles important'.<sup>122</sup> What is immediately noticeable about the woodcut and its accompanying description is the desire to penetrate beyond the bounds of South Africa by circulating the publication globally. By implication, the seemingly insignificant 'trifles' of the colonial press have the potential not only to entertain, but also enlighten the outside world as to the civilised and desirous state of the colony.

Selections from the *Journal* found their way into the colonial press in India, Australia and elsewhere, as was inevitable owing to the tradition of editors borrowing material from other publications. 'Bombay appears to be a little dull as the present moment', the editor wrote in 1848, 'and were it not for the occasional visit of *Sam Sly*, there is no telling to what depths of gloom and wretchedness it might fall'.<sup>123</sup> Overseas content initially appeared in a haphazard fashion, but the introduction of steam ships resulted in the regular appearance of serialised literature from the 1860s onwards.<sup>124</sup> If fiction, travel accounts and entertaining items circulated around the world and appeared in the colonial and metropolitan press, this poses exciting prospects for examining how readers might consume such material in the light of the global negotiation of their identity.

Within the first few months of the *Journal*, Sammons included instalments of 'The Story of a Feather' from the popular London magazine *Punch*.<sup>125</sup> The narrative employed the familiar trope of an observant outsider, the narrator an ostrich feather purchased at the Cape from a

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<sup>122</sup> *SSAJ*, 8 October 1846.

<sup>123</sup> *SSAJ*, 6 January 1848.

<sup>124</sup> See Toni Johnson-Woods, 'The Virtual Reading Communities of the *London Journal*, the *New York Ledger* and the *Australian Journal*', in Brake, Bell and Finkelstein, eds, *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp – pp.

<sup>125</sup> *SSAJ*, 24 August, 7, 21 and 28 September 1843. The first instalment of 'The Story of a Feather' appeared in volume four of *Punch* in 1842, the magazine having been founded in 1841. . Note: the illustrations included in *Punch* (see figure 4) did not appear alongside the excerpts in *Sam Sly's African Journal*. There were few illustrations in Cape newspapers at the time owing to the cost, almost all of which were woodcuts. *Punch* magazine, alongside other metropolitan publications, would have been available for perusal in Cape Town reading rooms.

‘Hottentot’ for a ‘twist of pigtail’. The ostrich feather delights in satirising the English and on his voyage to London aboard the *Jupiter* he describes finding his new master, the third mate of the ship,

rejoicing himself exceedingly at the cultivated intellect of which enabled him to trick the savage. He never, I am certain, felt so much of an Englishman, as when he had fobbed the Hottentot. Jack Lipscomb, for so was my master called, combined in his nature – at least so he thought – all the courage and daring of a sailor, with the prudence and foresight of the experienced merchant. With this belief, he had the deepest contempt for every man of every nation, save England. He believed that the blessings of arithmetic were wholly confined to his own beloved country and her darling sons; hence, in his small traffic with Chinese, Malay and Hottentot, he would insist that two and two made seven, five and seven fifteen or twenty, as he might feel convenient to arrange the figures. In a word, he considered every foreigner to be produced for this one purpose – to bestow profit and pleasure on a freeborn Briton.<sup>126</sup>

From the ironic distance of satire, the ostrich feather introduces readers to the caprice and hypocrisy of British types. The depiction of a sailor’s ignorance and blinding nationalism would have been as familiar to readers in London as at the Cape, for to laugh at one’s countrymen was to revel in the very paradoxes and ambiguities of what it meant to be ‘a freeborn Briton’. The irony is redolent through the ostrich feather’s gaze: the usual construct of enlightened coloniser and ignorant ‘savage’ is turned on its head through the uneducated arrogance of Jack Lipscomb the sailor, and the ostrich feather (representing the colonised) assuming the position of colonial travel writer. Under scrutiny, the faults of British character are laid bare. Whilst Jack Lipscomb exemplifies the liminal figure of the sailor naively traversing the seas in pursuit of British trade, the ostrich feather reserves some of its most biting criticism for metropolitan Britons by crudely sketching Shadrack Jacobs, an overly-thrifty Jewish shopkeeper with a Yiddish lisp (himself an outsider in Protestant Britain), and a conceited Duke, the ‘plumed and jewelled peer’ Lord de Bowelless, who delights in donning fashionable ostrich feathers. Whilst *Punch*’s metropolitan readers may have been more taken by the satire of class and anti-Semitism, Cape readers would have been equally amused at the mock-reversal of the conventional travelogue. Cape colonists were well aware how travel accounts informed metropolitan readers about colonial lands and customs, for it was particularly gruelling for colonial sensibilities when such accounts were uncomplimentary.

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<sup>126</sup> *SSAJ*, 7 September 1843.

## THE STORY OF A FEATHER.

### INTRODUCTION.

I AM a native of Africa ; but my parent Ostrich having been hunted down for the property he carried about with him, I was, many years ago, shipped at the Cape of Good Hope for London ; in which magnificent city I have lived a life of many changes. On my arrival, I was



preferred to the house of a duke ; there, I waved, and fluttered, and tossed my head among the noblest of the land ; and now—

But I will narrate my adventures in the order they befell me.

My duty to my parent demands that I should champion him against the supercilious sneers of the world—that I should vindicate his memory from the ignorant slander of mankind.

Figure 5, [Author Unknown], 'The Story of a Feather', *Punch* (London), vol. 4 (1842), p. 13.

Britons spread throughout the British world were acutely aware of the ‘grammars of difference’ operating across the metropolitan and colonial divide.<sup>127</sup> Such differences – whether of race, class, gender or ethnicity – were reflected in British periodical literature as readers grappled with constructing their identities in the face of shifts in the metropolitan social milieu, and the knowledge or experience of racial others in the colonies. ‘The Story of a Feather’ was only one of several stories that catered for readers’ fascination with status, and it is no coincidence that the major novel of the period to deal with this theme satirically, William Thackeray’s celebrated *Vanity Fair*, appeared monthly in *Punch* four years later.<sup>128</sup> Even if the empire was not the immediate setting for Thackeray’s opus, its presence was still felt in the material culture of fashionable Kashmir shawls and exotic cuisine, as well as in the black servants and returned missionaries and soldiers from far-flung colonies.<sup>129</sup> ‘The Story of a Feather’ with its ostrich-feather narrator further reveals how colonies were often represented in the metropole as commodities or stereotypes. Whether in the form of Cape ostrich feathers, Ceylon tea or an Australian convict, such symbols reveal not only the integral part empire played in the British financial and symbolic economy, but also served to silence colonial agency by privileging the metropolitan predilection for fantastical tropes over exacting realism.<sup>130</sup> It is thus evident that texts were not harmless commodities, for their circulation could also serve to perpetuate colonial stereotypes.

Travelogues did not always question colonial respectability through a metropolitan gaze and readership, as evidenced in the occasional travelogue written specifically for Cape colonists. In one such travel account, having taken free passage aboard a ship to Mauritius, the artist George Duff described the capital Port Louis as the moral counterpoint to Cape propriety, where the French colonists ‘rarely have the look of a gentlemen’ and have ‘a d—— sight too

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<sup>127</sup> Stoler and Cooper, ‘Between Metropole and Colony’; Catherine Hall, ‘Culture and Identity in Imperial Britain’, in S. Stockwell, ed, *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 203–205.

<sup>128</sup> The first instalment of *Vanity Fair* appeared in the January 1847 issue of *Punch* magazine before being published as a novel the following year.

<sup>129</sup> For an examination of *Vanity Fair* in the context of empire, see Hall, ‘Culture and Identity’, 206–215.

<sup>130</sup> L. Kriegel, ‘The Pudding and the Palace: Labor, Print Culture, and Imperial Britain in 1851’, in A. Burton, ed, *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp – pp; John M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

much of the monkey about them', whilst 'the poorest Hottentot in Cape Town appears in better light' than the drunken Malabar women.<sup>131</sup> If, as Ann Stoler importantly asserts, 'bourgeois respectability entailed dispositions and sentiments coded by race',<sup>132</sup> then French Mauritians according to Duff had jeopardised their whiteness and class through both the alien locale and inappropriate interaction with non-white colonists. From white colonists with simian resemblances and thus questionable racial purity, through to Malabar residents perceived as worse behaved than Cape 'Hottentots', Duff's account reveals how travelogues could serve as salve for wounded British colonial respectability. In this analysis, derision of neighbouring colonies bolstered local esteem.<sup>133</sup> If we are to examine how the metropole represented the periphery, and the corollary response from the periphery itself, we need also to understand how peripheries themselves came to define themselves within and against one another.<sup>134</sup> One popular means was through travelogues such as the one above, written expressly for a colonial audience and published in the colonial press, which acted as imaginative interlocutors for colonists unlikely to visit the places described.

In 1849, the Australian *Geelong Advertiser* carried an article on a 'Malay' wedding from *Sam Sly's African Journal* without acknowledgement.<sup>135</sup> This riled Sammons, for although little regard was given in the 1840s to copyright by the colonial press, it was an unwritten courtesy to acknowledge authorship. The article described a three-day-long wedding in Cape Town through an orientalist gaze, revealing familiarity and alienation for the outside observer of the customs of Cape 'Malays', a distinct group amongst ex-slaves and their descendents. The bride and groom (the former in a 'pink satin' dress, the groom in a 'blue jacket' and waistcoat) and their guests are entertained by a man who 'crows like chanticler ... with songs and good wishes' and resembles 'the Old English Jester'. Placed in the centre of a table consisting of 'pyramids' of sweetmeats, the union jack demonstrates 'loyalty to Victoria', whilst inharmonious Islamic 'hymns' are 'chaunted [*sic*] at intervals in Dutch'.<sup>136</sup> Despite

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<sup>131</sup> *SSAJ*, 20 July 1848.

<sup>132</sup> Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 100.

<sup>133</sup> We can see this self-definition through opposition and disavowal of the 'other' in Britain's often disdainful reaction to continental Europeans and even extra-Europeans. In economic competition and engaged in occasional wars with the loathed 'other', it was this belief in national superiority, according to Linda Colley, that helped to unify the Scots, Welsh, Irish and English to varying degrees and forged a 'British' identity. See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging a Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Linda Colley, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992), pp. 309–329.

<sup>134</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 6.

<sup>135</sup> *SSAJ*, 15 February 1849. For the origin of the term 'Malay' employed as a descriptor by white colonists for Muslims, see Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride*, pp. 35–37.

<sup>136</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 June 1848.

many British markers of identity, the alterity of the scene predominates rendering it a farce. The ‘Malay’ wedding guests are not Christian, nor are they white, preconditions for full acceptance as ‘Britons’.<sup>137</sup> Although we are not told the Australian response to the article, white colonists battled to define their Britishness in the stark face of racial otherness, something always at tension with the liberal ideals of civilising and evangelising colonial subjects. The principles of racial equality espoused by liberalism were always undercut by colonial unease over the supposedly innate idleness and thieving of the ‘coloured gentry’,<sup>138</sup> as one Cape colonist facetiously referred to them, whose occasional public displays of British patriotism failed to mask their supposed threat to urban order and labour control. Celebrating the anniversary of emancipation, they utilised British patriotism in the second half of the nineteenth century in festivals and songs both as a declaration of collective identity and as satirical resistance against British power.<sup>139</sup> Whether in the cultural syncretism of the ‘Malay’ wedding, or in other demonstrations of British belonging, in the eyes of most white colonists ‘to be Anglicised ... [was] *emphatically* not to be English’.<sup>140</sup>

If visions of black colonists in print culture were skewed, so were those of European origin. Much attention has been given by postcolonial scholars to how indigenous peoples were colonised both imaginatively and literally, yet, as Stoler asserts, white colonists were ‘often viewed disparagingly from the metropole as *parvenus*, cultural incompetents, morally suspect, and indeed “fictive” Europeans, somehow distinct from the real thing’.<sup>141</sup> This largely metropolitan vision is well personified in ‘The Gipsy’s Curse [*sic*]’, written by a Cape Town woman for the *African Journal*.<sup>142</sup> A young lady with the appropriate name of ‘Miss Southerne’ departs from England for India near destitute after her uncle and guardian dies insolvent, and arrives in Cape Town en route. Orphaned and forced to emigrate to maintain some semblance of her social status, her voyage soon manifests into moral taint. Pursued to the Cape by Claude Marville, the man she had been courting in England, she accepts his hand in marriage only to find out through a letter that he is her half-brother through a secret

<sup>137</sup> For Islam as an ‘alternative respectability’, see Ross, *Status and Respectability*, pp. 138–145.

<sup>138</sup> *SSAJ*, 4 January 1849.

<sup>139</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Meaning of Freedom: Social Position and Identity among Ex-Slaves and their Descendants in Cape Town, 1875–1910’, in N. Worden and C. Crais, eds, *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and Its Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994).

<sup>140</sup> Homi Bhabha, ‘Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse’, in Cooper and Stoler, eds, *Tensions of Empire*, p. 154.

<sup>141</sup> Anne Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 102.

<sup>142</sup> *SSAJ*, 24 August, 14 September and 5 October 1848. The author used the pseudonym ‘Personne’.

marriage her long-deceased father entered into as a young man. Financial ruin, emigration from her homeland, and an engagement tainted by potential incest are made even more ominous by her situation having been foretold in England by a ‘gypsy’ reading guests’ fortunes at a regimental ball. As the embodiment of Lady Duff Gordon’s maxim that ‘a change in hemispheres will reverse reputations’,<sup>143</sup> the story of ‘Miss Southerne’ likely resonated with colonial readers who could identify in some part with her predicament. If moralising scandals helped patrol the boundaries of social status in the colonies, as Kirsten McKenzie has shown,<sup>144</sup> the appeal of fictional tales of scandal and ruin lay not only in their ability to entertain, but also to remind readers how easily and even unintentionally they might fall from grace. They could read such stories safe from the fear that real individuals might be harmed.

The imagined empire embodied in literature might not reflect lived reality, but it does reveal, as Cora Kaplan has written, ‘the hopeful and fearful projections of the political and social relations of metropole and colony’.<sup>145</sup> If ideas and fantasies of empire permeated metropolitan imaginations through print culture, as many adherents of the new imperial history have emphasised, the corollary effect of print culture on colonists also needs to be given due attention. This is of course not to disregard the more tangible manifestations of empire, such as wars, networks of trade, governance and social interaction, but even these were governed by discursive mediators across the distances of empire. Literature and travel accounts might have entertained colonists, but they also need to be read in the context of a colonial readership and its implication for how they might have perceived their identities within the empire. The contents of William Sammons’s *African Journal* reveal the imbrications of fact and fiction, imagination and opinion that destabilise distinctions between imaginative literature and letters, travelogues and editorials within which fictive ‘projections’ are equally noticeable.

## News and Distance

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<sup>143</sup> Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, annotated by D. Fairbridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 47.

<sup>144</sup> McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*.

<sup>145</sup> Cora Kaplan, ‘Imagining Empire: History, Fantasy and Literature’, in Hall and Rose, *At Home with the Empire*, p. 193.

Nothing hampered British colonists' attempts at negotiating their identity more than the immense tyranny of distance separating colonies from each other and Britain. The average journey from a British port to Cape Town lasted close on three months, resulting in a sense of disconnectedness for colonists from the news and occurrences of mainland Europe, Australia or the East Indies. 'The weary waste of waters that lie between the Cape and England prevent all possibility of proof or fact for at least five months', Sammons wrote in an editorial in 1845, questioning why 'the anxious merchants [have] to wait thus long without a paragraph that affects their interests, because the truth or falsehood cannot be ascertained'.<sup>146</sup> In the years before reliable syndicated news was sent half way round the world by telegraph in a matter of minutes, news reports were gleaned in the colonies from old newspapers delivered by passing ships. What made such reports unreliable was not just the lag in time, but also the common practice of reprinting news reports from one newspaper to another without acknowledgment.<sup>147</sup>

Foreign news was particularly sought after regarding dramatic episodes overseas. Hearing of the revolutions and insurrections across continental Europe in 1848, colonists were fearful of the disastrous consequences for the colonies if revolution broke out on the streets of London. When news of the 1848 revolutions in Europe reached New South Wales, the *Sydney Morning Herald* kindled fears of extensive conflict when it claimed that Britain and France had declared war on Russia, Austria and Prussia, but retracted the story several days later. In Jamaica, the power of rumour and a misinformed press on an anxious public resulted in false claims that Queen Victoria had abdicated her throne.<sup>148</sup> Cautious of such unreliable channels of information, an editorial in the *African Journal* complained that

whatever the news might be from Europe, it reaches Africa like a spent ball, the distance it has travelled has rendered it weak and ineffective. For of what avail is a *French Revolution*, a *Hamburgh on Fire*, an *Irish Row*, a *Scotch Mist*, or a *London Fog*, seeing that whatever may be our emotions or surprise, the one will have subsided and the other evaporated long before we can return a sentiment or a sensation thereon. It is almost presumptuous to imagine that anything can travel 6 or 7,000 miles without some dilution or change. Not even French Brandy or Constantia Wine is at all times free from such a liability ... Besides, we know nothing of REVOLUTIONS, Rows,

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<sup>146</sup> *SSAJ*, 12 June 1845.

<sup>147</sup> Simon J. Potter, 'Webs, Networks, and Systems: Globalisation and the Mass Media in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Empire', *Journal of British Studies*, 46 (2007), p. 629.

<sup>148</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July 1848; 'Deposition of Robert Ricketts', 6 July 1848: Public Record Office, Colonial Office 137/297, fos. 165–166, cited in Miles Taylor, 'The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire', *Past and Present*, 166 (2000), p. 172.

and DEMONSTRATIONS in the South, except from pictures and hearsay, and what the London Journals are pleased to tell us.<sup>149</sup>

The idea that news could become ‘weak and ineffective’ and undergo ‘dilution or change’ over time is extraordinary, but it is directly tied to the lack of immediacy that old news granted to a colonial reader. Colonists desired ‘*personal* acquaintance’ with these events ‘to show the African world that we keep pace with our contemporaries’.<sup>150</sup> Despite the knowledge that foreign news was out of date, the reading of colonial newspaper reports, with the current date confidently placed under the newspaper title, created the temporary illusion that the events described had occurred recently and in some way overcame the distance between metropole and colony. This was crucial for maintaining British colonists’ self-esteem, predicated as it was on a sense of closeness to the mother country. It was this illusionary direct link with events at home that gave foreign news its greatest potency. Ross Harvey has shown that so great was the premium placed on overseas news in 1840s New Zealand, then a young colony the most isolated from Britain in distance, that local news hardly featured next to the high demand for the latest possible foreign correspondence.<sup>151</sup> This might be an extreme example owing to New Zealand’s remoteness, but it does highlight how reciprocal exchanges of news between colonies and Britain bolstered colonial esteem.

The advent of a monthly steamship between Plymouth and Cape Town in 1851 heralded a quicker transit for the transmission of news and more recent publications from the metropole, the journey being cut in half to 43 days or less.<sup>152</sup> Despite this not yet being a reality in the 1840s, excitement over the potential globalising effect of technology elicited an editorial in the *African Journal* to state that ‘Steam and Electricity are to bring the four quarters of the Globe together, so that a voyage to our antipodes will in point of time, be but a trip to the frontiers and back again’,<sup>153</sup> a similar sentiment to that expressed a year later in 1849 by the British Prime Minister John Russell who claimed that ‘Halifax [Nova Scotia] is now almost as near as Inverness was a century ago’.<sup>154</sup> Subsequent decades would see the emergence of

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<sup>149</sup> *SSAJ*, 29 June 1848.

<sup>150</sup> *SSAJ*, 29 June 1848; see also *SSAJ*, 1 June 1848.

<sup>151</sup> Ross Harvey, ‘Bringing the News to New Zealand: The Supply and Control of News in the Nineteenth Century’, *Media History*, 8, 1 (2002), 21–34.

<sup>152</sup> Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 178–179.

<sup>153</sup> *SSAJ*, 25 May 1848.

<sup>154</sup> Russell to Grey, 19 August 1849, quoted in Taylor, ‘The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire’, 149.

an imperial press system with formalised news agencies such as Reuters.<sup>155</sup> However, globalisation of communication had a gradual effect, long-distance telegraphs only linking London and Cape Town in 1879, coinciding with the gold rush in the interior. The *Cape Argus* would become the first Cape newspaper to utilise a steam press in 1857, whilst in 1882 the founding of a Newspaper Press Union for the colony signalled the growth of journalism into a full-time profession.<sup>156</sup>

In the decades before such changes, links with the rest of the empire were beset by delays and improvised networks of newspaper exchange and correspondence. *Sam Sly's African Journal* is but one example of many colonial newspapers in the nineteenth century that utilised news to help bridge the gap between metropole and colony and provide some tangible connection with 'home' for Britons living in the colonies. We should not lose sight of how colonial publications in turn helped shape metropolitan perceptions of empire, and it bears reminding that news reports were not mere conveyancers of fact but were also loaded with discourses and arguments calculated towards forming public opinion. News had the power to misinform as well as inform, and should be viewed not separately but alongside other contents of the press such as letters, literature and travelogues as crucial in sustaining networks of ideas across the oceans and domains of empire.

## Conclusion

Scholars of Britain and its colonies have begun in recent decades to move beyond the parochial confines of region-specific studies. Emphasis on interconnected networks within the British Empire has stimulated fresh insight into how colonial identities were negotiated. Within this field of enquiry, the colonial press is a promising focal point for analysing the complexities of circulating ideas of empire owing to its worldwide readership. With contents varying from fiction and poetry through to travel accounts, letters and news, such publications are treasure chests of material that provide insight not only into competing settler, humanitarian and official discourses but also perspectives on the dialogues, fantasies and dilemmas of white colonial identity. The cultural implications of what it meant to be

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<sup>155</sup> For the globalisation of media and its effect on empire, see D.R. Winseck and R.M. Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets and Globalization, 1860–1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Potter, 'Webs, Networks, and Systems'.

<sup>156</sup> Wessel de Kock, *A Manner of Speaking: The Origins of the Press in South Africa* (Cape Town: Saayman and Webber, 1982).

British but not live in Britain were writ large over the pages of the colonial press. Like many other colonial publications, *Sam Sly's African Journal* situated itself knowingly within this British world, using its influence and circulation to not only shape local identities, but also perceptions of colonial Britishness throughout the metropole and wider British Empire.

## CHAPTER 2

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### **Cant and the Cape Press: The Cultural Politics of Satire and Respectability**

This chapter deals with an aspect of nineteenth-century Cape printing culture that has been largely neglected, namely the importance of amusement and humour to colonial sensibilities and identities and the concomitant tensions around their limits. It takes as its starting point the contention that ‘there exists a dialogic interchange between the humorous text and its culture... that humorous and comic representations function politically by revealing contradictions in ideological discourses, by exposing repressed illogicalities and prejudices, by way of irony or ridicule, attendant to nineteenth-century ideologies of gender, class, race, nationalism’.<sup>157</sup> Too often in historical scholarship the impression is given of dour and moralising individuals, united in their condemnation of vice, their call for civilising the native or reforming the working class, and for improving the morals and social cleanliness of the town. In short, the focus on respectability has often overemphasised the seriousness of social codes of behaviour and attitudes whilst neglecting the important role played by leisure or comedy. This chapter examines how satire was an important aid in evoking British cultural affinities for colonists. This was not solely the appreciation of humour, but an approach that took seriously the role of satire as a reformatory aid in maintaining the status quo of white middle class supremacy and its respectable appearance in the Cape Colony.

William Sammons’s *Sam Sly’s African Journal* was written with a humorous bent that appealed to the penchant for satirical and entertaining material in printing culture. Codes of behaviour and manners were important markers of status during the period. If clothing, occupation or housing denoted respectability, so too did what one read. Newspapers had to portray an image of faultlessness, by upholding family values and etiquette, whilst their editors had to avoid reporting scandal or delving into too delicate or lowly a topic. Since Englishness, as the leading form of Britishness, was the dominant cultural signifier in the

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<sup>157</sup> Jennifer A. Wagner-Lawlor, ‘Introduction: New Perspectives on the Victorian Comic Spirit’ in Wagner-Lawlor, ed, *The Victorian Comic Spirit: New Perspectives* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), p. xvi.

nineteenth century Cape, British print culture too would come to dominate what was read.<sup>158</sup> Sincerity was a crucial trope in aligning satire with the bourgeois aims of transparent and virtuous conduct, hence the emphasis on denouncing cant (or hypocrisy). Sammons and his readers avoided the defamatory approach of attacking prominent officials or figures to expose their folly, claiming that ‘satire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century requires a fine arrow:- sharp in point, and light and delicate in feather, and such as will pierce instantaneously, without tearing and mauling.’<sup>159</sup> It nevertheless still had a purifying quality by noting, ‘when any ludicrous excrescences, funguses, or diseases, appear on the face of society, it is the business of an honest and charitable humourist, to clip them off, with as little suffering as possible to the afflicted, and without leaving a scar behind.’<sup>160</sup> Unlike scandal, that was seen as a disreputable discourse, which might police the conduct of colonists and thus perform a similar purifying purpose, but might also be utilised to spread falsehoods and destabilise the bourgeois order,<sup>161</sup> satire could be fashioned as a respectable and even patriotic form that served to protect the middle class establishment. Satire had become less dangerous precisely because it had been shorn of overt sexual or violent content, its target more often than not an ironic ridicule of groups in society perceived as exhibiting aberrant behaviour, whether drunkenness, female outspokenness or fraudulent practices. Although theorists such as Bakhtin have notes the subversive form of satire that used grotesque tropes of bodily functions and sexuality to delegitimise the standing of authorities, satire was increasingly, as it entered the Victorian era, noted for its comic quality and avoidance of moral grossness. Satire could call for the expunging of subversive elements, through a mediating comic variety, as powerfully as it could be used as a radical challenge to authority.<sup>162</sup>

As a deep historical discourse of the nineteenth century, satire and its counterparts humour and laughter have received surprisingly little attention in colonial settings from social historians. As Sandra Swart has noted in a recent article on early Afrikaner identity from the

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<sup>158</sup> See Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>159</sup> *SSAJ*, 29 March 1849.

<sup>160</sup> *SSAJ*, 23 November 1843.

<sup>161</sup> McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*.

<sup>162</sup> Frank Palmeri, ‘Cruikshank, Thackeray and the Victorian Eclipse of Satire’, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 44, 4 (2004), 753-777. The Bakhtinian approach to laughter, too, can be re-evaluated in a colonial context. This is the theme of a recent revisionist article by Alecia Simmonds, who examines a case of convict women’s laughter in Australia to demonstrate how laughter is not only a method of subversive resistance, but was also deployed as a form of coercive control by the laughing elite. Alecia Simmonds, ‘Rebellious bodies and subversive sniggers? Embodying Women’s Humour and Laughter in Colonial Australia’, *History Australia*, 6, 2 (2009), pp. 39.1-39.16.

Anglo-Boer War until the 1930s, humour facilitated group cohesion and shaped folk identity and national character.<sup>163</sup> The reception and production of humour in its printed form, through to laughter as a corporeal reaction in the context of a history of emotions, provides a means for both recreation and the articulation of societal anxieties. As theorists of humour have noted, by yielding to the pleasure of a joke, participants are more open to its theme even if this is controversial.<sup>164</sup> Humour should be seen as a facet of the history of leisure, as its presence in the pastimes and social life of Dutch and British colonists and the black labouring population speaks of the vitality of social relations. Vivian Bickford-Smith has shown how leisure activities in Cape Town ranging from the theatre and sports through to literature and public parades was fertile ground for the expression of social identities and were thus contested sites of public debate around what constituted rational and acceptable amusements.<sup>165</sup> Satire, like broader issues of leisure, had a polemicist edge that debated the boundaries of social relations.

One should venture a note of caution, however, for there was not one hegemonic version of middle class respectability. It was a contested realm, with differing viewpoints from evangelical preachers and missionaries, through to merchants who enjoyed frequenting public houses, yet saw no contradiction in their conduct. Early nineteenth-century popular culture in Britain, and indeed the colonies, was characterised by a battle over the censoring of coarse humour and the monitoring of manners in leisure. As Ben Wilson words it, ‘the British prided themselves on their frankness and candour’ and their favoring of bawdiness and disregard for hypocrisy. Such transparent conduct was an embodiment of British liberty.<sup>166</sup> Yet, this was an attitude that was fading out as the nineteenth century progressed, with the pressures of middle class censure and propriety holding greater sway over expressions of satire and public merriment. Newspapers, novels, the theatre and public fairs were all the targets of moral disapproval and legislated reform, but still sought to maintain some semblance of the old rowdy British character without straying from the prescribed script of middle class decorum and respectability.

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<sup>163</sup> Sandra Swart, “‘The Terrible Laughter of the Afrikaner’: Towards a Social History of Humor’, *Journal of Social History*, Summer, (2009), pp. 889-917.

<sup>164</sup> Paul Lewis, *Comic Effects: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Humour in Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 34-39.

<sup>165</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town, British Cape Colony, 1838-1910’, *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 25 (1998/9), pp. 103-128.

<sup>166</sup> Wilson, *Decency and Disorder*, p. xviii.

The **first section** of this chapter considers the success of the editor of *Sam Sly's African Journal*, William Sammons, to ascribe to middle class expectations for respectable publication, despite the perceived scandalous appearance a satirical journal in a colony might first hold. The **second section** explores how humour and leisure, reflected in the contents of the *Journal*, remained a vital part of British character, and how seemingly 'low' imagery and popular culture still found a place within the literary taste of well-to-do colonists. The **final section** re-evaluates the symbolic place of alcohol and the possibility for its respectable consumption amongst the middle class in the Cape, a position championed by Sammons in his *Journal*. In short, these themes will elucidate the very ambiguities within the many versions of middle class respectability, and how leisure and amusement in the Cape need not be solely a grim reformist and evangelical enterprise lacking attachment to jovial popular culture. The Cape, like elsewhere, did not usher in immediately a uniform model of bourgeois values, as the contested realm of appropriate conduct melded elements of the previous generation's values with contemporaneous concerns.

### I. COLONIAL JOURNALISM: A DISREPUTABLE PROFESSION?

Satirical publications, whether they were published in Britain or the colonies, needed to avoid what might be perceived as overly licentious content. For this to be achieved, newspapers needed to strive to cater for the needs of a community. They might offend the sensitive respectability of a colonial community, but they could also intend daring exposés whilst remaining within the limits of community acceptance. According to Raymond Williams, it was crucial that newspapers were seen to be 'written *with* people if not *by* them' and not 'merely *for* them'.<sup>167</sup> This sense of community investment added legitimacy to a newspaper's content. One also needs to be aware that the line between 'radical' and 'respectable' in print culture can be overdrawn. Many of the techniques of early radical newspapers in Britain found greater acceptance in the Sunday newspapers that emerged from the 1830s onwards and even within so-called respectable newspapers. The popular press began to lose its direct association with working class political aims, and began to reflect on the sensationalism of crime reports and the scandal of high society with greater acceptance and readership from the middle classes.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Raymond Williams, "Radical and / or Respectable" in R. Boston, *The Press We Deserve* (London: 1970) pp. 14-15.

<sup>168</sup> Williams, "Radical and/ or Respectable".

One needs to view *Sam Sly's African Journal* as a product of this move towards a new form of popular press, one that was embraced as popular by varying classes, who still nevertheless kept a watchful eye to ensure it never overstepped the mark. In the editorial for the opening issue, Sammons made clear the role he knew the Cape public would play in this regard:

Every work now stands up to its own merits- if it be a monster, the Public are sufficient to frown it down or “damn it with faint praise.”- If it speaks the truth and is pure, and have a streak of originality and talent, it will find readers who will cherish it at its full amount, and no extraneous force will close their eyes or ears.<sup>169</sup>

For a newspaper to gain community acceptance it needed to not only ‘speak the truth,’ or in other words avoid cant, but also to survive the scrutiny of an ever-watchful public. If concerns for middle class respectability were prominent in Britain, where the very suggestion of infidelity, corruption or incest could threaten the financial and moral standing of an entire household, this was perhaps even more so in the colonial communities owing to their relatively small size and sensitivity to metropolitan judgement. Newspapers were highly effective in spreading gossip within communities, colonies and globally, poisoning the name of the individuals under question and potentially damaging the image of the colony.<sup>170</sup> With such power to create far-reaching scandals Denis Cryle, a historian of the Australian colonial press, has described colonial journalism as a ‘disreputable profession,’<sup>171</sup> conjuring up the vulnerability to public disdain or the promise of public veneration newspaper editors faced.

An example of the former is Thomas Johnson’s *Satirist* published in 1843, which printed the scandalous indiscretions of Sydney’s inhabitants. With the motto of ‘Fools are my theme- Let Satire be my song’,<sup>172</sup> the *Satirist* commenced publication in the same year as Sammons’s *Sam Sly's African Journal*, but with some key differences. Sammons never faced the storm of public indignation and a libel trial that Johnson faced. In Johnson’s *Satirist*, the latest scandal in Sydney was announced in a gossip column titled ‘Sat Wishes to Know’ with content such as ‘Whether S\_\_\_\_\_A C\_\_\_\_\_K of Bridge-street has recovered her VIRGINITY, since she parted with her *maiden-head* to the young BRASS-founder next door? The old TIGRESS

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<sup>169</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 June 1843.

<sup>170</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004).

<sup>171</sup> Denis Cryle, ed, *Disreputable Profession: Journalists and Journalism in Colonial Australia* (Rockhampton: Central Queensland University Press, 1997).

<sup>172</sup> *The Satirist and Sporting Chronicle*, 4 Feb. 1843.

says she's as clean and *tight* as ever she was.'<sup>173</sup> Despite the names in Johnson's newspaper being blanked out except for the first and last letters of each name, the individuals were clearly identifiable in a small colonial town such as Sydney with close on 50 000 inhabitants at mid century. Although popular with many colonists, the newspaper still struck a collective nerve. Johnson was convicted of obscene libel in a prominent trial, where the prosecution urged the jury to consider the insulting overtures made against the colonial family, accused of promiscuity and drunkenness, and to defend it against the watchful eyes of the world. It was noted that the circulation of published gossip scandalised a colony, deterring emigration and the colony's reputation.<sup>174</sup> The antithesis of the colonial newspaper as propaganda sprucing up the image of the colony, printed scandal in the guise of moralising satire broke ranks with the code of acceptable publishing practice. Freedom of the press, in short, was limited in large part by what was allowed by the colonial public.

If Johnson faced the wrath of Sydney's colonists, why did Sammons not receive the same treatment? An examination of the prospectus printed before the first issue of *Sam Sly's African Journal* was published, reveals a rhetorical declaration similar in disregard to that of Johnson's. However, in practice this was largely initial bombast to titillate the public into buying the paper, rather than an outright attack on the moral standing of Sammons's fellow townsmen for the journal contained no sexual scandal or scatological revelations. As with Johnson who had claimed his Sydney *Satirist* would 'cleanse the Augean Stable of our metropolis and its environs, from the vice with which it abounds',<sup>175</sup> Sammons laid claim to the moral worth of ridiculing vice out of society. The editor 'intends for this purpose,' Sammons wrote in his prospectus,

to present a striking picture of the Cape; and, as every body is anxious to see his own phiz on canvas, however stupid or ugly it may be, he has no doubt but the whole town will flock to see his exhibition. His picture will necessarily include a vast variety of figures, and should any lady or gentleman be displeased with the inveterate truth of their likenesses, they may ease their spleen by laughing at those of their neighbours.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> *The Satirist and Sporting Chronicle*, 1 April 1843, quoted in McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, p. 161.

<sup>174</sup> McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, pp. 162-163. Pandering to the continued interest in scandalous newspapers in the wake of the *Satirist's* suspension in publication, a rival publication the *Omnibus; or Satirist and Sydney Spectator* emerged. Both newspapers were discussed during the trial.

<sup>175</sup> Quoted in McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, p. 160.

<sup>176</sup> *SSAJ*, Prospectus, 1 June 1843.

By likening his journal to an ‘exhibition’, Sammons conjured forth a powerful reference to an important part of British metropolitan culture: the spectacle of London shows of the absurd, grotesque, exotic or scientific as well as the display of satirical prints and advertisements on shop windows and street walls. According to Richard Altick, ‘no English trait was more widespread throughout the entire social structure than the relish for exhibitions’ whilst ‘they were an indispensable way of momentary escape from the dullness... [and] suppression of the imagination which were too often the price of life in the enveloping city’.<sup>177</sup> As an important means of social literacy and entertainment (they were accessible to both the literate and illiterate), the exhibition became the focal point for contestations over appropriate public instruction launched by middle class evangelicals and reformers as the ribald fair and travelling freak show gave way to the ordered, reformist vision of the museum.<sup>178</sup>

Central to negotiating the satirical press’s place within the new reformist order, was to preserve the satirist’s role of exhibitionist and entertainer whilst avoiding the perceived taint of the carnivalesque. The satirical press, like London street exhibitions and the ritual symbolism of the old carnival and rural festival, came to represent the lowly, dirty, subversive elements of the human body and social spaces that were taboo for the rising bourgeoisie. Freak shows displaying bodily deformities through to the exaggerated celebration of dirt, genitalia and sex in carnival costumes and rituals had their printed word equivalent in satirical poems, novels and newspapers. The evangelical tide of popular opinion was turning against the display or publishing of subjects deemed offensive to bourgeois politeness.<sup>179</sup> Sammons was aware of his initial perceived position as a purveyor of scandal (read dirt) and affront to bourgeois attempts to cleanse themselves of any shameful exposure to bodily, sexual or subversive influences. He was spared any letters objecting to his newspaper (or, at least, he omitted printing them), yet he included letters that demonstrated the power of insults that used ‘low’ imagery, perhaps as a way to demonstrate blame in the reader and not himself. In the letter columns of his newspaper, one correspondent insulted another by calling him a ‘self-opinionated *little scorpion*’ when he stated that the Cape Amateur Musical Society and its instructors were of inferior quality. These comments were

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<sup>177</sup> Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Ms. And London: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 1-3

<sup>178</sup> Wilson, *Decency and Disorder*; Altick, *Shows of London*.

<sup>179</sup> Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London, 1986).

said to be ‘low *grub street puns* upon their [the musical instructors’] names’.<sup>180</sup> Grub Street was a common referent in the parlance of nineteenth century Britain. It was not only the name of a street in London with a notorious publishing history, but also became a metonym for the unsavoury and scandalous print culture of earlier years, the dregs of working class publication and newspapers that Victorian propriety tried to avert the public gaze and memory away from.<sup>181</sup> By referring to ‘*grub street*’, the responding letter sought to literally rubbish the claims of the other, by both refuting them and casting the writer as of the same *filthy* moral stock of Grub Street print editors and contributors.

Sammons strove to align himself with virtuous aims and place distance between himself and the Grub Street associations of irreligion, radicalism and immorality. Upon the arrival of the new Bishop of Cape Town, Robert Grey, in 1848, he lamented in an editorial the strictures placed by the religious fraternity on expressions of satire and amusement:

like the showman, we feel at the moment as if “we could not talk our own talk because the *Bishop* is here.” But what has the Bishop to do with *Sam Sly*, and is there not room for both? For is it not the high prerogative of the former, to attend to and supply the spiritual wants of the community, and it is the agreeable honor and pleasure of the latter, to “drive *dull* care away”.<sup>182</sup>

Here was the editor as the apostle of puns and public enjoyment, the correlative antidote to an overdose of grave sermonising. As evangelicalism was the major critic of print culture’s potential for licentiousness, it was important for Sammons to stress a mutual place for both priest and editor in contributing to the public good. Besides his role as entertainer, the satirist also played a moral role to ‘laugh a man out of mischief, when he can neither be prayed or preached out’.<sup>183</sup> Sammons was not alone in this sentiment. As a point of comparison, in Australia, a former convict wrote to a Reverend Mantach in 1849 about the benefits of a satirical press in expunging lax morals from the streets of Hobart in Van Diemen’s Land:

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<sup>180</sup> ‘M.E.’ to the editor, *SSAJ*, 16 May 1844; ‘AN OLD FRIEND WITH A NEW FACE’ to the editor, 4 July 1844.

<sup>181</sup> Bob Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street: An Illustrated History of English newspapers to 1899* (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, USA, 2004). Grub Street was close to the impoverished area of Moorfields, with brothels, coffee houses and book shops lining its streets. Hack writers, low-end publishers, newspapers and poets of little literary merit were based there. For the diarist Samuel Johnson, ‘Grub Street’ was ‘originally the name of a street... much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems, whence any mean production is called grubstreet’. Lawrence Lipking, *Samuel Johnson: The Life of an Author* (Cambridge, Ms.: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 49.

<sup>182</sup> *SSAJ*, 2 March, 1848.

<sup>183</sup> *SSAJ*, 11 April, 1844.

It often occurs to me that a body of “literati,” styled the moral police, ought to be raised, who by declamation and otherwise would unmask the public and private vices of individuals: they might also be assisted by a periodical of a satirical nature, whose duty it would be to ridicule those public vices out of fashion. I would have those *literati* exempt from any prosecution for defamation, &c., by an Act of Council.<sup>184</sup>

This call was in a similar vein to Sammons, and echoed Johnson’s *Satirist* in Sydney, but was easily open to suspicion. The letter was enclosed to the Secretary to the Colonies Earl Grey in London, as evidence of the danger posed by literate convicts and their control of the colonial press, claiming that ‘it leaves large room for suspicion of that kind of *cant* which is too common among the better educated of these people [former convicts]’.<sup>185</sup> Here, accusations of cant are targeted not at hypocritical reformers and evangelicals, but are turned on their head against the very satirist and exposé of vice himself. If the satirical press was treated with suspicion by the middle classes in Britain, satirical newspapers in the colonies were open to even further suspicion. The reputation of Australian editors with convict origins threatened to poison the trust in satirical newspapers in other colonies, as Sammons well knew. Distancing himself from such allegations, Sammons wrote of the ‘badge of disgrace’ that remained on the breast of every former convict editor who seemed ‘to live and thrive like the Crockery folk at county fairs and markets, by *swearing!* And *smashing!* and kicking up a dust and pother [sic]’. Sammons makes a direct reference to the site of bourgeois hysteria, the ‘county fair’ where so often the carnivalesque, dirt and disorder was manifest. ‘What would be thought in Cape Town, if the elements were to be disturbed with such a South Easter,’ Sammons mused in his editorial, proceeding to quote a vitriolic article from the *Launceston Cornwall Chronicle* from Van Diemen’s Land to greater illustrate the excess and uncouthness of the convict press.<sup>186</sup> Here Sammons used a common ploy for gaining acceptance from colonists, by proving one’s respectability through disapproving of morally abject behaviour in other colonies. By denouncing the convict press in Australia, Sammons aligned himself with comments by reformists weary of the moral stain that might be caused by allowing the Australian press to be dominated by former convicts. This same reputation might stain the perception of Cape colonial newspapers, and it was thus important for Sammons to echo the words of the reformer more than those of the convict satirist.

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<sup>184</sup> Anonymous to Rev. R. Mantach, March 1849, enclosure in Elliot to Grey, despatched 7 September 1849, *British Parliamentary Papers Online* (hereafter *BPP*), 1153 (1850), pp. 129-130.

<sup>185</sup> Elliot to Grey, despatched 7 September 1849, *BPP* 1153 (1850), p 129. My emphasis.

<sup>186</sup> *SSAJ*, 19 March 1846.

Sammons made a pained attempt at stressing middle class propriety amidst his claims to entertainment and controversy synonymous with early-nineteenth century exhibitions and print culture. This balancing act is reflected again in the initial publishing notice of 1 June 1843 for *Sam Sly's African Journal*:

This paper will run into a different channel from any Paper now extant in the Colony, by taking a more literary and amusing form... for the entertainment of a dull and "work-a-day" world. The *Journal* will be a faithful mirror of the Cape, and will contain full intelligence of LOCAL AFFAIRS- of the "Sayings and Doings"- and give occasional *Sketches* from time to time, of its present position and most striking features. But it will be entirely free from objectionable personalities, or any article obnoxious to readers of the most fastidious taste- with any pretensions to a correct judgement and a healthful state of mind. The *Journal* will encourage and foster the efforts of young heads, and prove a vehicle for Native Talent, by publishing such effusions, when indicative of mental growth or original genius; and will give occasional Rewards, as a stimulus for study and application. It will also be open to Controversy of all shades, so long as conducted with a proper spirit, and an aim to the Good and True, and the happiness of all. The *Journal* will pay less respect to *persons* than to *principles*, and have an inferior regard for *money* than for manners; and, being neither restricted nor fettered by any party, clique, sect, committee, or shareholders, it will be perfectly independent to speak the Truth unequivocally and boldly... In short, "SAM SLY'S AFRICAN JOURNAL" will be a Family Paper and a mental recreation "For the Million"- the doings of one who has nothing to do, and nobody to help him- and will be placed on such a respectable footing as to insure elegance and correctness of typography.<sup>187</sup>

Sammons starts by stressing entertainment and the accurate reporting of events as 'a faithful mirror of the Cape'. Despite promises to 'be entirely free from objectionable personalities' and content 'obnoxious to readers of the most fastidious taste', the editor later claims that his *Journal* 'will also be open to Controversy of all shades'. Sammons promises to play the satirist by ridiculing particular individuals who have abandoned middle class moral principles, but balances this by pledging that such controversy will be carried out 'with an aim to the Good and True'. The well-intentioned authority of Sammons is promised through encouraging literary contributions to his journal, thus aiding the furthering of Cape arts. The respectability of the Journal is further enforced in the material manifestation of the journal having an 'elegance and correctness of typography', setting itself apart from many scandal sheets notorious for bad grammar. By promising to be a 'Family Paper', Sammons appealed to the greatest mark of respectability. If a newspaper could be read by the entire household of husband, wife and children, it had to be deemed apolitical and instructive, free from material that was morally dubious or that might encroach on the masculine domain of serious political

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<sup>187</sup> SSAJ, Publishing Notice, 1 June 1843.

discourse. By stressing literature and ‘mental recreation’, Sammons appealed to the most common traits of the Victorian family newspaper or periodical, the most famous of which would be Dickens’s *Household Words* published in Britain in the 1850s.<sup>188</sup> He wrote that

we trust that every man and woman having children, will place it [*Sam Sly’s African Journal*] in their hands and induce them to contribute to its pages. Its purity and intentions no one need fear, for however we may *err in manner*, we are right in *motives*, and have no secrets to conceal.<sup>189</sup>

In the words of Davidoff and Hall, the nineteenth-century home had become ‘the nursery of virtue,’ a place of stability, love and instruction.<sup>190</sup> Illustrations of the time often showed a family seated at home, reading books or periodicals amongst themselves.<sup>191</sup> To enter this inner sanctum of domestic life, print culture needed to be virtuous and instructive. If children could read, but also contribute material, to the *Journal* it would follow that its contents were not only harmless, but also nurturing for young minds. “*Sam Sly’s African Journal*” is constantly perused by most of the leading families in the Cape,<sup>192</sup> Sammons boasted within three months of commencing publishing. If this was true, Sammons had achieved not only community acceptance, but also, importantly, acceptance for family consumption.

He had certainly been accepted as a respectable public figure in Cape Town. He frequently attended invitation-only functions, such as Government Balls of which he commented in his paper. As a member of the minor gentry during his time in Bath, England, prior to emigrating to the Cape, Sammons had established a name for himself as the satirist ‘Sam Sly’ in the Bath press.<sup>193</sup> The editor of the *Cape Town Mail*, William Buchanan, noted that ‘Sam Sly’ was

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<sup>188</sup> Hillary Fraser, Stephanie Green and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>189</sup> *SSAJ*, 31 August, 1843.

<sup>190</sup> Leanore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, Revised Edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 149-192.

<sup>191</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 180.

<sup>192</sup> *SSAJ*, 24 August, 1843.

<sup>193</sup> He received appreciative responses from readers, such as the following poem ‘To Sam Sly’, by ‘Ego’. *Keenes’ Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 13 July, 1836. The poem is reprinted in Thomas Dalling Barlee, ed., *Miscellaneous Poetry* (London: BiblioLife, 2009), p. 110:

Why is your wit so often in the *Journal*?  
Is it to make them *both* the more eternal?  
‘Tis not my wish its Editor to flatter,  
But while your wit buoys up his solid matter,  
The *Journal* gives your wit a weightier worth,  
And lends its wings to fly around the earth.

‘much respected in Bath’ for his contribution to Somerset weeklies.<sup>194</sup> Sammons’s father Robert had been a prosperous cooper, whilst William Sammons was a property owner and entitled to the Parliamentary franchise. Residing in Springfield Place, he mixed well with Bath high society, which had become dominated by the rising middle class. Appreciated as a theatrical and literary critic, it was only financial troubles that had driven him to emigrate with his family in 1842.<sup>195</sup> With such respectable credentials, and his efforts at making himself visible at social events in Cape Town, Sammons secured a level of trust by the public in the respectable intentions of the satirical bent of his newspaper.

Sammons was also aided in part by the rise of *Punch* magazine in Britain in the 1840s, whose issues were soon available to Cape colonists in the library and reading rooms. Satirical journals had long been held in suspicion of having a radical ideological bent, hardly the desired folio to countenance the table of a middle class family. *Punch* aligned satire with popular taste by avoiding moral grossness, and was thus welcomed into the Victorian home.<sup>196</sup> The respectable *Bentley’s Miscellany* wrote in May 1842 that in *Punch* ‘there is nothing low or vulgar...it may safely be introduced into the family circle, where it will provoke many a hearty laugh’.<sup>197</sup> By avoiding sexual, scatological and scandalous content, Sammons had also won family trust. Six month after commencing publication of *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, Sammons contrasted the dismay he expected to see from colonists with its family acceptance and readership:

on the first of June, “*Sam Sly’s Journal*” , made its first appearance on the Cape stage, and naughty boys laughed, and the Puritans groaned, and the Merchants tittered, and the ladies veiled their faces and ran behind curtains and to the tops of houses, thinking their sweet portraits might embellish its pages, but they soon found that the creature was harmless, and *Sly* only its name, and as innocent as themselves, and has now become their especial favorite, being cherished by them with a motherly affection.<sup>198</sup>

The fear of *Sam Sly’s African Journal* making public scandal out of private gossip was alleviated by its calculated attempt at achieving family acceptance. Satirical publications

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<sup>194</sup> *Cape Town Mail*, no date, cited in Alan Hattersley, ‘Friend of George Cruikshank: William Layton Sammons (“Sam Sly”)’ in his *Oliver the Spy and the Others: A Little Gallery of South African Portraits* (Cape Town, 1959), p. 96.

<sup>195</sup> On Sammons’s English background, see Hattersley, *Oliver the Spy and Others*, pp. 86-95.

<sup>196</sup> Richard D. Altick, *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997).

<sup>197</sup> Quoted in Altick, *Punch*, p. 10.

<sup>198</sup> *SSAJ*, 28 Dec. 1843.

could easily be a threat to middle class morality and personal and community respectability, yet in striving to allay such fears and through the editor's respectable background, Sammon's *Journal* was welcomed rather than shunned.

Sammons never ventured into the vulgar shaming of individuals. The closest to published gossip the journal ran was the occasional carefully worded report that made sure to remain vague around identities, and offer sympathy for those affected by the scandal:

The death-like tranquillity of the Cape has been somewhat disturbed the past week, by the sudden disappearance of a *married Lady*, - but whether for Gretna-Green or India, at present lies buried amongst the grand secrets of Doubt and Uncertainty... as faithful "registrars" of the "Sayings and Doings," of the times, it is dotted down, more as historical than as food for scandal, - for this is a commodity small towns and confined districts are seldom in want of. "Let he who is guiltless throw the first stone." Yet would it seem as if we "Joined in the *tattle* but pitied the man."<sup>199</sup>

There is no visible delight in the foibles of the married lady expressed by Sammons, but a careful adherence to acceptable codes of reportage. The editor mentions the event as the neutral stating of fact and as 'historical' rather than 'food for scandal', deferring suspicion of scandal-mongering to townsfolk rather than the editor himself.<sup>200</sup> By taking on the tone of a sermon in quoting Jesus- 'let he who is guiltless, cast the first stone'- the editor presents himself briefly as a moral and godly voice of reason and chastisement rather than a purveyor of gossip. How effective was this rhetorical tool? Michael Seidel argues that satire may aim to cleanse society of its social evils, but this also holds the satirist culpable to contamination by the very themes he seeks to ridicule. This is true no matter how much the satirist seeks to distance himself from his content.<sup>201</sup> Despite Seidel's analysis, distancing devices, such as Sammons biblical reference above, partially cleansed him from potential contamination. By following the script of middle class evangelical discourse, Sammons could tread more safely within the boundaries of respectable print culture.

Such social boundaries had their legal equivalents. If publications had the power to sway public opinion, act as a political tool or scandalise an individual or community, this prompted regulatory measures in Britain and in the colonies. Published political criticism was legalised since the struggle for a free press in the Cape in the 1820s, but measures were still in place to

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<sup>199</sup> *SSAJ*, 16 May 1844.

<sup>200</sup> This expansion of culpability to the reader was made explicit in an article included in the first issue of *Sam Sly's African Journal* by Laman Blanchard entitled, 'Something About "The Reader!"'. *SSAJ*, 1 June 1843.

<sup>201</sup> Michael Seidel, *Satiric Inheritance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 14.

ensure the respectability of newspapers. Ordinance 60 of 1829<sup>202</sup> prescribed that each new journal had to find two sureties to vouch for the good aims and future conduct of the journal, to ‘keep the peace, and to refrain from pulling down the Church or upsetting the Government,’ as Sammons put it. For him, this ‘exceedingly fusty act... [was] a shackle to the Press and a bugbear to the timid and virtuous,’<sup>203</sup> yet Sammons managed to secure the support of the Attorney General of the Cape, William Porter, and a highly respected retired military man from India, Colonel Sutherland, as sureties.<sup>204</sup> Ordinance 60 was the crowning achievement of the struggle for a free press at the Cape in the 1820s. Former governor Charles Somerset had forbidden newspapers to publish matters of personal controversy or those related to the policy and administration of the colonial government, which had resulted in strict censorship.<sup>205</sup> Ordinance 60 still prevented the publishing of scandalous material, but allowed for comment and criticism of the government. In addition, the place of printing and name and place of abode of all editors, printers, publishers and proprietors of each newspaper had to be made known to the government. A signed affidavit, with the above stipulations, had to be issued to the Colonial Secretary for approval of any new newspapers, whilst each new issue had to be delivered to the office of the Colonial Secretary or a severe fine of 20 pounds would be incurred.<sup>206</sup> These more stringent regulations were relaxed by Ordinance 9 of 1839,<sup>207</sup> which amended Ordinance 60 of 1829. Instead of approval from the Colonial Secretary, only the approval of a Justice of the Peace anywhere in the colony, with a record being kept by the Resident Magistrate, were required for new publications. A further stumbling block for colonial newspapers was the levy placed on them by the Stamp Act, increasing their sale price. This tax was abolished in 1848 by a Stamp Ordinance. *Sam Sly’s African Journal* benefited from the Stamp Ordinance by being the first Cape newspaper without a stamp in its issue of 29 June 1848.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Ordinance 60 of 1829, published in *The Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette*, 8 May 1829, enacted from 15 May 1829. The full title of Ordinance 60 was ‘Ordinance for the preventing of Mischiefs arising from the printing and publishing Newspapers [sic], and Papers of a like nature, by Persons not known, and for regulating the printing and publication of such Papers in other respects; and also for restraining the Abuses arising from the publication of blasphemous and seditious Libels.’

<sup>203</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 June 1843.

<sup>204</sup> *SSAJ*, 21 September 1848.

<sup>205</sup> De Kock, *A Manner of Speaking*, p. 42.

<sup>206</sup> Ordinance 60 of 1829.

<sup>207</sup> Ordinance 9 of 1839, published in *The Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette*, 29 November 1839.

<sup>208</sup> *SSAJ*, 29 June 1848. Sammons described the move as ‘indicative of the freedom of Literature under the able and liberal Government of Sir Harry Smith... and an enlightened Legislature’.

In Britain, the Newspaper Stamp Act was repealed only six years later in 1854.<sup>209</sup> The inhibiting effect of stamp duties upon newspapers was a subject of debate within the House of Commons leading up to the repealing of the Act, but what was also discussed were several scandal sheets that avoided the stamp owing to their avoidance of reporting ‘news’. One of these scandal sheets under discussion was *Sam Sly*.<sup>210</sup> This was not *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, but it does on the surface give good reason to be suspicious of the intentions of a Cape newspaper seemingly named after a scandalous British journal. For those with a working knowledge of British scandal sheets, *Sam Sly* was a notorious example alongside others such as *Paul Pry* that exposed the latest scandal alongside sensational crime reports.<sup>211</sup> So notorious was the British *Sam Sly*, that its name was featured prominently in a session of the House of Commons in 1850 discussing extending the bounds of the Newspaper Stamp Act as a safeguard to respectability. ‘This paper lived by libelling individuals,’ it was said by the MP Gibson, ‘mentioning their names, places of resident, and every circumstance, to enable parties to identify them, at the same time publishing of them most shameful libels’.<sup>212</sup> If *Sam Sly* was a disreputable publication in Britain, why would Sammons use the name for his newspaper at the Cape?

Like many playful pseudonyms of the time, ‘Sam Sly’ had a wide and varied usage. At one extreme it is the *nom de plume* appended to a radical poem appearing in the *Manchester Herald* in 1792, describing royal addresses being used as the King’s personal toilet paper.<sup>213</sup> The links between satire and radicalism in ‘Sam Sly’ may extend to its usage in scurrilous poetry or as the title of the scandal sheet mentioned above in the House of Commons debate, but it also had a more genial and bourgeois acceptability in its usage. Pseudonyms such as ‘Toby Slim’, ‘Hookem Snivvy’ and ‘Dorothy Lingerlong’ were used frequently by contributors to *Sam Sly’s African Journal*. This served largely to hide the true identity of the contributors, itself an effort to distance the culpability of authors from sentiments expressed.

<sup>209</sup> Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 340–354.

<sup>210</sup> *House of Commons Debates*, vol. 110, 16 April 1850, pp. 373–374. Viewed online at [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1850/apr/16/paper-duty#S3V0110P0\\_18500416\\_HOC\\_1](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1850/apr/16/paper-duty#S3V0110P0_18500416_HOC_1) (accessed 28 Aug. 2009).

<sup>211</sup> Roger Wilkes, *Scandal: A Scurrilous History of Gossip* (London: Atlantic, 2002), p. 70.

<sup>212</sup> *House of Commons Debates*, vol. 110, 16 April 1850, pp. 373–374. An example given by Gibson was of a clergyman from Barking, whose name was tarnished by the British *Sam Sly* when it published allegations that ‘he had been guilty of some improper communication with one of his female servants’.

<sup>213</sup> Sam Sly, ‘Epigram’, *Manchester Herald*, 28 July 1792, reprinted in Michael Scrivener, ed, *Poetry and Reform: Periodical Verse from the English Democratic Press, 1792–1824* (Wayne State University Press: Detroit, 1992), p. 52.

However, this was also an age when nonsense names were delighted in even into adulthood and could be carried over from childhood usage. Writing in *Keenes' Bath Journal* five years before his emigration from Britain to the Cape, Sammons reminisced about his days at the Hog Lane School in Bedford, where his playmates had nicknames such as 'Stingy Bull', 'Rough Dick', 'Big Ben' and 'Cockey Pierce'.<sup>214</sup> It is likely that 'Sam Sly' may well have been a childhood nickname, a play on his surname *Sammons* and a possible early inclination towards *sly* playfulness and wit. 'Sam Sly' seems to have had usage as a childhood nickname, as it appears as the name of a character in a children's story published in the 1860s.<sup>215</sup> What is clear is that there was a fluid meaning around many of the nonsense names used in nineteenth century newspapers and literary output. One advertisement for the journal quotes the jester character Christopher Sly from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, renaming him as 'Sam Sly',<sup>216</sup> whilst many readers referred affectionately to Sammons as 'Samivel', in reference to the cockney misfit Sam Weller from Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*.<sup>217</sup> Such references evince a deep cultural acceptance of his literary and satirical objectives, with there being little evidence of awareness by Cape colonists of the British scandal sheet *Sam Sly*.<sup>218</sup> Sammons did note, however, that 'it has been whispered to the Proprietor by several friends, that the name assumed, still operates prejudicially to the minds of many well-informed and wealthy individuals, whose sensibilities are shocked, at so fantastic a "heading"'.<sup>219</sup>

Sammons was quick to try to allay fears around the unusual name of the *Journal*. He appealed to the wisdom of the well-respected Leigh Hunt, one of the last surviving members of the Byron/ Shelley circle, who claimed that 'never did gossips, when assembled to determine the name of a new-born child... experience a difficulty half so great as that which an author undergoes in settling the title for a periodical work'.<sup>220</sup> Sammons, in his usual friendly jesting, exposed the inanities of existing titles of Cape newspapers. For the *Zuid Afrikaan*, Sammons gave the following retort: 'South African what? South African Marigolds, or South African cheese?', whilst for the *Cape Town Mail*, Sammons commented

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<sup>214</sup> *Keenes' Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 24 July 1837.

<sup>215</sup> For example, George M. Baker, 'The Rival Politicians' in Oliver Optic's Magazine, *Our Boys and Girls* (Lee and Sheperd: Boston, Ms., 1868), p. 379-81. In the story 'Sam Sly', labeled a radical, engages in a political debate with 'Slow Boy', a conservative, in an American school hall.

<sup>216</sup> *Graham's Town Journal*, 21 December 1843.

<sup>217</sup> *SSAJ*, 3 July 1845.

<sup>218</sup> *SSAJ*, 30 May 1844.

<sup>219</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 June 1843.

<sup>220</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 June 1843.

that it was ‘the silliest name imaginable where no Mail is found’.<sup>221</sup> Names may be powerful declarations of intent, but it would ultimately be the conduct and content of the *Sam Sly’s African Journal* itself that would decide its perceived respectability.

Such conduct also encompassed rhetorical duels between editors. If one of the functions of a newspaper was to expose vice and cant within the scope of public acceptance, then another was to act as a rhetorical foil against rival publications. Commenting on the recommenced publication of the *Frontier Times* in the eastern Cape as a competitor to Robert Godlonton’s *Graham’s Town Journal*, Sammons noted that

*One paper in a large district is not good- it would be a dangerous experiment. Editors are not immaculate, but possess the ordinary features and failings of mortality. Were it not for an antagonist, monopoly might become rampant, opinions dogmatical, and vanity and party spirit, unbearable. We should have no clear field, and but little favour. The truth would be quenched, and neither our troubles, nor our disappointments meet with adequate redress. The slightest umbrage would shut out our editorial chambers, and the key would be turned against us for ever, and no voice of the charmer, charmed he ever so charmingly, would have a charm to open it, or strike or fall upon the ear of the inmate.*<sup>222</sup>

The argument here is that if there is greater variety of newspapers in a district, there is a decreased chance of an individual newspaper gaining too great a sway over public opinion. Editorial rivalries on an ideological level, fought out in editorials and letters to the editor, thus served an important function in opening up a public sphere of free debate. The dangers facing the liberty of the press are made explicit by Sammons in the metaphor of being ‘shut out of our editorial chambers’ and imprisoned, an allusion to former governor of the Cape Charles Somerset’s censure of the *South African Commercial Advertiser* in 1824 and subsequent legal measures against those involved in its production. One of the editors, Thomas Pringle, and the printer George Greig were not imprisoned but Greig’s offices were searched by the authorities, his press sealed and both were banished from the colony by Governor Somerset. However, Somerset imprisoned a leading figure in the fight for the free press in one William Edwards, whose trials for libel against the Governor became a *cause célèbre* for colonists’ demands for greater constitutional freedoms and an independent press at the Cape. Edwards would later be discovered as an escaped convict from New South

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<sup>221</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 June 1843.

<sup>222</sup> *SSAJ*, 7 Aug. 1843.

Wales, but the efforts of Pringle, Fairbairn and Greig would endure in Cape memory.<sup>223</sup> The efforts of Somerset to suppress a free press and maintain the official government *Cape Town Gazette* as the only newspaper would become the epitome of ‘Old Corruption’ in later popular memory. A single newspaper might again instil a ‘vanity and party spirit’ akin to the times of Somerset, making a multitude of newspapers with differing opinions a perfect remedy.

There was also a potentially negative side to editorial rivalries. The image of editors as pugilists was a common motif of the time. In one of the most memorable scenes in Charles Dickens’s first novel *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-7), the rival editors and supporters of the *Eatanswill Independent* and *Eatanswill Gazette* exchange insults of ‘humbug’, ‘knavery’ and ‘filth’, followed by a violent scuffle inside a coach house, all over an allegedly insulting paragraph printed in the *Gazette*.<sup>224</sup> This, for Sammons was the quintessence of taking editorial rivalries too far, to the extent that he included the extract from *Pickwick Papers* in an issue of his *Journal* to further prove his point.<sup>225</sup> Such rivalries might be entertaining, but they were apt in Sammons’s view to ‘attract the morbid sensibilities of the looker-on’<sup>226</sup> and thus jeopardise the moral and objective standing of the newspaper in the long term.

If rival country editors in Britain were known for their antagonism, so were their colonial counterparts. In a woodcut appearing in the *Ceylon Times*, the newspaper gave visual impetus to its allegations of mistreatment by the rival *Bombay Telegraph*. The illustration, with the description ‘*ye Bombay Telegraph and Courier arrogantly taketh ye Ceylon Editor by ye throte, and then and there choketh him for ever,*’ was even more dramatic than those included in Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers*.<sup>227</sup> Disagreements between editors in the Cape may not have

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<sup>223</sup> H.C. Botha, *John Fairbairn in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1984). For William Edwards, see Kirsten McKenzie, ‘The Daemon Behind the Curtain: William Edwards and the Theatre of Liberty’, *South African Historical Journal*, 61, 3 (2009), pp. 482-504; and Christopher Holdridge, ‘The Escape of William Edwards: Respectability, Intrigue and Invented Identity at the Early British Cape and Australia’, Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 2008.

<sup>224</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 2000), pp. 664-676.

<sup>225</sup> *SSAJ*, 14 Sept. 1843.

<sup>226</sup> *SSAJ*, 14 Sept. 1843.

<sup>227</sup> *Ceylon Times*, 22 Dec. 1843, quoted in *SSAJ*, 19 April 1843. Little description of the reasons for the antagonism between the editors is given, but Sammons took delight in describing the woodcut to his Cape readers:

if the woodcut be a true picture of proceedings, it does indeed seem all over with the “Ceylon Editor,”... for in the grasp of the mighty fist of his contemporary and opponent, he looks like a throttled beetle- his hair stands on end and flies back like “the quills of the fretful porcupine”- his eyes are ready to start from their sockets- his tongue from its root- his frontispiece and face run to a point like a pen, and his life seems not worth a minute’s purchase. Verily, these Colombo Editors are the

gone to the extremes of their Indian counterparts, yet there was still influential debate that took place within newspapers themselves. As important publicists of colonial opinion, the editors of the *Graham's Town Journal* and *South African Commercial Advertiser* were often at loggerheads over colonial policy. This reflected differing views around the treatment of indigenous peoples on the frontier, and whether policies should be pro-settler or humanitarian. Such ideological duels were important indicators of the regional opinions of the eastern and western parts of the Cape colony, but were also played out on an international stage. As Alan Lester has argued, newspapers such as the *Graham's Town Journal* forwarded arguments in defence of their propertied and 'respectable' British colonial readers, in the hope that such views would be read in British newspapers and influence official policy.<sup>228</sup> To ensure the 'respectable' voice of the readers prevailed, Robert Godlonton strove to 'rise above the colony's internal polemics' by promising to avoid a party line.<sup>229</sup> This avoidance of politics was an obvious humbug, one that Sammons saw through and ridiculed in *Sam Sly's African Journal* by placing an extract of the *Graham's Town Journal* on colonial frontier policy alongside one from the *Commercial Advertiser* to demonstrate 'the spirit of party... interests' in these newspapers.<sup>230</sup> Why would editors promise to distance themselves from commenting on politics? Robert McKend suggests that it was to project an image of 'objective distance' for the editor to be seen as the guardian of public interest and custodian of readers' views, something seen as a criterion for an editor's middle class respectability.<sup>231</sup> I would take the argument a step further. Such bombast stems from Godlonton's desire to distance himself from editorial polemics often associated with radical journalism. If one promised to pursue an ideological agenda, particularly one that questioned government policy, it would be easy to elide the desired respectable image of an editor into one of a rabble-rouser, or even scandalmonger. It was far more prudent to defer responsibility for political views upon the readers themselves.

### **The Anti-Convict Agitation**

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most unloving, or the most artful rogues under the sun. They must either be deadly enemies or first cousins...

<sup>228</sup> Alan Lester, 'British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire', *History Workshop Journal*, 54, 1 (2002), pp. 24-48.

<sup>229</sup> Robert A. McKend, "'A Journal Among Them': Colonial Discourse and the Creation of an Imaginary Community in the *Graham's Town Journal*, 1831-36", MA thesis, University of Cape Town (1997), p. 73.

<sup>230</sup> *SSAJ*, 10 October 1844.

<sup>231</sup> McKend, 'Imaginary Community in the *Graham's Town Journal*', pp. 71-72.

At moments of political crisis, newspapers were utilised vociferously to rally support, and satire in turn became more daringly defamatory. This brief section examines the satirical response of *Sam Sly's African Journal* during the convict crisis at the Cape in 1848-50. The colonial press established vital capillaries of opinion for lobbying networks in favour of representative government for the settler colonies, increasing calls for which were made by colonists in the 1840s. Such calls came to a head in 1848 when news reached the Cape that it had been designated a penal colony for the reception of ticket-of-leave men mainly from Ireland aboard the *Neptune*. Livid with the Colonial Secretary Earl Grey and fearing the colony might now be perceived as morally degenerate, colonists felt that the presence of convicts would prolong the granting of representative government to the Cape and deter immigrants. The press was used to mobilise thousands of colonists into forming an Anti-Convict Association and in soliciting support for refusing supplies to the colonial government by signing a pledge. Propaganda prevailed, with Fairbairn's *South African Commercial Advertiser* the mouthpiece for the movement. The importance of circulating newspapers, petitions and tracts for metropolitan support of colonial aims was never more pressingly felt.<sup>232</sup> Sammons signed the pledge, but refused to ill-use his neighbours or to curtail the free expression of sentiment on the issue.<sup>233</sup> Such a move came with a price, and late in 1849 Sammons was forced to print his journal from the safety of the government printers. As a voice for the 'moderates', the *Journal* was critical of the extreme measures of the Anti-Convict Association and included pieces satirising Fairbairn as 'Johnny Foulburn',<sup>234</sup> whilst publishing letters comparing him to 'Nero' and 'Robespierre'.<sup>235</sup> Perceived as sympathetic to the colonial government, Sammons's paper suffered and eventually closed down in September 1851 after he suffered a bout of ill health.<sup>236</sup> With the sending away of the *Neptune* early in 1850, Fairbairn would be lauded for his contribution to a struggle that led ultimately to representative government, the 1853 constitution and the liberal franchise for the Cape.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> For the anti-convict movement, see Alan Hattersley, *The Convict Crisis and the Growth of Unity: Resistance to Transportation in South Africa and Australia 1848-1853* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press, 1965); McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, 171-179; Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 225-231.

<sup>233</sup> *The African Journal*, 11 October 1849.

<sup>234</sup> *The African Journal*, 22 November 1849.

<sup>235</sup> *The African Journal*, 17 January 1850.

<sup>236</sup> Hattersley, 'Friend of George Cruikshank', 99-100.

<sup>237</sup> Botha, *John Fairbairn*, 195-298.

Such an account of a liberal triumph, however, has generalised the press's response to one of unanimity during the anti-convict period. In opposition, however, Sammons and many of his readers questioned what they labelled the abuse of the rule of law by the 'ultras', those in favour of the economic boycotts advanced by Fairbairn and others. No doubt reflecting on his recent move to new publishing premises owing to the discontinued patronage of his previous printer, Sammons lamented the loss of "Freedom of Speech" and "Liberty of Action," - those John Bull requisites which he [a Briton] inherits as a Birth Right, but which many must have silently felt, have been sadly subdued and curtailed in the Cape, lately'.<sup>238</sup> Sammons's and his readers' response is telling of the political power of satire. His newspaper became the home for moderate responses that were marginalised by the wide public consensus echoed in the streets and on the pages of most of the Cape press. Several satirical responses can be found in Sammons's *Journal*, including a long poem published separately as a pamphlet.<sup>239</sup> In one poem, titled 'Neptune's Song', the god of the sea rebukes the editor of the *Advertiser*:

Bad luck Johnny Fleecebairn, you must be an ass,  
 Sure soldiers and Sailors can't live upon grass,  
 You want to cut off *their* supplies it appears,  
 Take care they don't cut off *your* long pair of ears!

If this physical threat was not enough, 'Britannia enraged would then scratch out your eyes/ And I would stand by for to brush off the flies.'<sup>240</sup> This was a strongly-worded satirical assault on Fairbairn's character. His patriotism was called into question, but also even further his allegiance to the tenets of being 'a freeborn Englishmen'. By denouncing Fairbairn's advocacy of economic boycotts and mass political action as 'radical outbursts',<sup>241</sup> Sammons made clear his allegiance to a more conservative approach. This was akin to that later adopted by the governor of the Cape Colony himself, Sir Harry Smith, opposed to the sending of convicts, but absolved to wait for word from the 'Home Government' in Britain, once all the petitions had been considered, to send the *Neptune* away and abandon further convict plans.

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<sup>238</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 November 1849.

<sup>239</sup> J.S. Nichol, *Lines Written on the Occasion of the Cape Town Anti-Convict Association, Attaining Its Climacteric, By Closing the Shops, Injuring the Community, and Attempting to Starve the Opponents of the Pledge* (Cape Town: William Sammons, 1849).

<sup>240</sup> Author unknown [likely William Sammons], 'Neptune's Song', in *SSAJ*, 24 January 1850. The threats of violence in the poem are particularly surprising, especially in the context of Fairbairn having recently been attacked at his home by a disgruntled and unemployed coloured mob. Hattersley, *Convict Crisis*, ch. 6. As Keegan notes, they were likely expressing their frustration at the exacerbating effects of the economic boycotts of the pledge on their job prospects, with a global slump caused by the unstable political climate of the 1848 revolutions in Europe. Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 229.

<sup>241</sup> *SSAJ*, 12 July 1849.

He supported a delay in the granting of a Constitution and representative government to the Cape, decrying their ‘ultra doctrines’ that threatened a ‘*safe path to Self-Government*’.<sup>242</sup> Such a delay was also supported by the secretary to government, John Montagu, Robert Godlonton in the eastern Cape, as well as the larger merchants, such as John Ebdon.<sup>243</sup> The latter were smarting particularly from the double effect of a global economic slump and the decrease in commerce brought about the boycott measures of the pledge. Sammons’s satirical edge is thus informed by more conservative politics aligned with richer merchants and high officials, his denouncing of Fairbairn as residing in ‘the Dictator’s Chair’ and as a ‘Jacobinical’ leader of an unruly ‘mob’ mobilised as justification for his extreme pillorying of Fairbairn’s character. The response Fairbairn rallied was decried as ‘factious and unconstitutional’, ‘inconsistent with every principle of allegiance to the Crown of England’ and threatening to drive colonists to the ‘level of the lowest savages’.<sup>244</sup> This was not a radical call by Sammons for the bringing down of government, but a call for the restoration of order by shaming Fairbairn through satire. This would have been justified as a noble response not founded on radical objectives. However, it would be dubious to refer to Fairbairn and his supporters as radicals, or as even as holding Chartist objectives, with their mercantilist interests and pledges of loyalty to the crown used as justification for extreme political protest that demanded only modest reforms in colonial governance. Sammons’s claims of radicalism were a strategic response to delegitimise Fairbairn’s reputation amongst his readers, a task drawing strongly on satire and influenced by his new publishing premises of the government printers.

Satire was a tool of stirring political feeling used by both sides. As with the struggle for a free press in the 1820s, placards once again appeared in the streets of Cape Town. These were mostly targeted against merchants who had allegedly supplied the government or army with supplies and thus broken the pledge, with libellous placards even ordered by the secretary of the Anti-Convict Association John Saunders. One, in particular, showed the merchant Benjamin Norden suspended from a hangman’s noose at the gallows, the words ‘traitor’s

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<sup>242</sup> *African Journal*, 28 April 1850.

<sup>243</sup> John Montagu, as secretary to government, spearheaded administrative reforms and road-building through local convict labour in the 1840s vastly improving infrastructure for the Cape economy, yet his opposition to an immediate Representative Assembly for the Cape severely diminished his popularity. See Nigel Penn, “‘Close and Merciful Watchfulness’: John Montagu’s Convict System in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony”, *Cultural and Social History*, 5, 4 (2008), pp. 465-480.

<sup>244</sup> *African Journal*, 21 Feb 1850.

doom' scrawled beneath.<sup>245</sup> The street protest at play here is obviously a more complex phenomenon to analyse, but the crucial element in such satiric responses was the aim not only to intimidate those depicted, but also to defame them. Satire of the street was often cruder, more clandestine, and thus immensely intimidating in its ominous public display to passers-by.

Not all satire during the anti-convict agitation was of the Neo-Juvenalian variety that attacked personal reputation, a form that was gradually losing favour owing to its defamatory agenda at odds with the reformist desires of the age. This form of satire had been used at the Cape during moments of strong ideological feeling around the issue of abolishing slavery in the 1830s, yet it was only noticeably revived during the anti-convict agitation owing to the crisis to the security of status convicts posed to the middle class order at the Cape. More subtle satire concerned with protecting the sanctity of the home, for example, would have found common cause with all factions of political feeling at the Cape. Thus, in one poem colonists shout ironically:

The Convicts are coming! Hurrah, hurrah!  
How it gladdens the heart of each anxious papa,  
For how quickly his children may now learn a trade,  
From that best of preceptors- a thief ready-made.<sup>246</sup>

The language of moral contagion that permeated the rhetoric of protest in speeches and petitions from the Cape, but also in the vocal opposition mirrored in the Australian colonies, emphasised the detrimental impact of convicts on the humanistic vision of advancing civilisational progress in the colonies. There was a moral panic that convicts would instil their criminality into the white population, but worse still undermine the racial order by inculcating new forms of criminality in the black labouring classes as well as undoing the work of missionaries on the frontier. As McKenzie has noted, 'white convicts were a "taxonomical anomaly" in a post-emancipation era in which respectability was increasingly aligned with whiteness'.<sup>247</sup> The fear lay in the damage to the *image* of the colony that convict transportees might bring, hampering the possibilities for representative government by

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<sup>245</sup> Hattersley, *Convict Crisis*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>246</sup> William Sammons, 'A New Song', *SSAJ*, 12 April 1849. Demonstrating the extent of transnational feeling against convict transportation and the transmission of newspapers between colonies, this poem was adapted by *The Perth Gazette*, 16 November 1849, with the words 'Cape' replaced with 'Swan' (the latter was the main river running through the town).

<sup>247</sup> McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, p. 172.

associating Cape colonists with criminality.<sup>248</sup> Satire thus needed to note, through irony, the ridiculous moral consequences that colonists believed would befall them.

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To ensure respectability and acceptance in the eyes of middle class colonists, a newspaper editor needed to vow allegiance to representing community interests and upholding moral codes and virtues, a task that could be aided and not hampered by the use of satire. The early bombast of *Sam Sly's African Journal*- its controversial choice of name, claims to expose and ridicule the vices of Cape society- was in some ways a sales pitch likening itself to the content of the popular and high selling Sunday papers in Britain. The content of the newspaper was far more reserved than it claimed to be, appealing to the light-hearted, family-orientated humour that was beginning to develop in the early days of Victorianism, notably embraced by the British public in the form of *Punch* magazine or the novels of Dickens. Extracts from these, and other comic annuals, were included in the *Journal*, alongside Sammons's own witty social commentary and original doggerel, short stories and letters submitted by colonists. It is to the comic and literary vein of the journal, then, and to a study of the social function of literature<sup>249</sup> and humour in the Cape colony, that this chapter now turns.

## II. 'THE OLD BROAD HUMOR AND HEARTY LAUGH'<sup>250</sup>: COMIC LITERATURE AND COLONIAL BRITISHNESS

The first section of this chapter has considered the respectable boundaries within which a satirical editor could tread at the Cape, but what of the role of the editor in encouraging entertainment and literature? It will be argued that *Sam Sly's African Journal* forwarded an ideal that the two were intertwined, where literature needed to have a vein of the comic within it. What were the prevalent attitudes towards literature in the nineteenth century? David Johnson, in a thought-provoking article entitled 'Starting Positions: the Social Function of Literature in the Cape', has examined the overlapping evangelical, utilitarian,

<sup>248</sup> Ross, *Status and Respectability*, pp. 161-2.

<sup>249</sup> It is important at this stage to note the shifting meanings around the word 'literature'. Nineteenth-century usage of the word tended to encompass not only imaginative works, but all print output including political and scientific tracts. However, there was often an elision in the usage of the term at this time, so that 'literature' sometimes referred exclusively to imaginative works. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1983), pp. 183-8.

<sup>250</sup> SSAJ, 30 May 1844.

Romantic and imperial discourses, or ‘positions’ prevalent in Cape literature in the mid-nineteenth century. As he makes clear, literature was seen as a potential social threat, but could also perform a ‘social function’. These four discourses or positions are as follows:

1. **Missionary position:** the view that literature should serve as a complimentary substitute for the scriptures and should thus reflect an instructive Christian message that avoids perceived immorality.
2. **Utilitarian position:** a focus on the educative function of literature in uplifting social classes and thus advancing the capitalist order, with the common refrain of ‘useful knowledge’ privileging usefulness over simple entertainment.
3. **Romantic position:** a discourse that saw an innate secular truth, often through ruminations of the natural world, reflected through artistic greatness.
4. **Imperial position:** linked to Britannic patriotism, with the role of literature seen as a means of celebrating national identity and trumpeting British ascendancy.<sup>251</sup>

As Johnson makes clear, although these positions were sometimes antagonistic- such as the Romantic position’s celebration of Byron compared to the missionary position’s moral censure of his works- they were more often than not overlapping, so that utilitarian, missionary, Romantic and imperial positions might be prevalent in the same argumentative vein around the social function of literature. Johnson’s approach is useful as it takes cognisance of the historical context around literature’s reception at the Cape and the discursive terrain that surrounded literature. This is not an insignificant consideration, since literature and print culture played an importance role in the leisure and social identities of many colonists.

What Johnson does neglect is the appreciation of humour in literature and its distinctive social function. Literary studies have often sold short the Romantic period and even Victorian periods by overemphasising the popularity of sentimental verse over the satirical. ‘The so-called Romantics did not know at the time that they were supposed to do without satire,’ Marilyn Butler has commented wryly, though ‘future generations have become convinced

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<sup>251</sup> David Johnson, *Shakespeare and South Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 13-39. See also David Johnson, ‘Literary and Cultural Criticism in South Africa’, in D. Attridge and D. Attwell, eds, *Cambridge History of South African Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), forthcoming.

that the Spirit of the Age was very different'.<sup>252</sup> Many of the most popular writers of the Age produced satirical works, or at least commented on satire's importance. Between 1789 and 1832 over 700 satirical titles were published in England, which were immensely popular with the public eager to chuckle at the foibles of the aristocracy or Parliamentary scandal set to rhyme and often visual print.<sup>253</sup> As has been argued in the previous section of this chapter on the colonial press, satire of this time was more daring and shockingly provocative compared to later standards of humour, with the penchant for references to bodily functions, sexual indiscretions and personal scurrility. This was anathema for the rising tide of evangelical middle class morality, and humour itself began to shift towards a safer more subdued mode. Leisure was being domesticated. By subduing provocative literature and the ribaldry of street theatre, the sanitising vision of reformers permeated the realm of satire. Within the lexicon of the mid-nineteenth century, satire, with its unreserved ridiculing of individuals and societal vice, was increasingly being conflated with comedy's emphasis on entertaining humour. The lively comic sensibility so important to the common sense of eighteenth century British character had become, in William Thackeray's words, 'washed, combed, clothed, and taught... good manners.'<sup>254</sup> The bawdiness that had earlier been so central to British sensibilities was being replaced by a tamer, less offensive and more family-friendly comic spirit. Nevertheless, at mid-century there was still a generation with a strong attachment to the old sense of satire as rowdy social frankness and a celebration of all things British.

It is all too easy to confine such debates around the changing attitudes to humour to Britain, yet as a colony with several thousand British subjects (and many more Dutch, ex-slaves and Khoi colonists) the place of British sensibilities towards humour was equally current in the attitudes of colonists in the Cape. If we return to David Johnson's four positions on the social function of literature in the Cape- the missionary position, utilitarian position, Romantic position, and imperial tradition- one might add a fifth, the *comic position* (or *satiric position*). This is crucial for understanding literature not only as a somewhat sombre enterprise, but also

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<sup>252</sup> Marilyn Butler, 'Satire and the Image of Self in the Romantic Period: The Long Tradition of Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris*', in Claude Rawson, ed, *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 209.

<sup>253</sup> Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 14-15. Sammons had written his own satire of Bath society, named after a famous play by Richard Sheridan: *School For Scandal: a chit-chat between the Sphinxes in the Royal Victoria Park, Bath, by Sam Sly, Gent* (Keene: Bath, 1836). No extant copy exists, although part of the satire was also published in *Keenes' Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 18 July 1836. See also, Hattersley, *Oliver the Spy and Others*, p. 91.

<sup>254</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, pp. 417-418.

as entertainment and often, in the old satirical sense, as performing the function of social critique through ridicule.

*Sam Sly's African Journal* is an ideal starting point for considering the prevalence of the *comic position* in the Cape. William Sammons well understood the social role of comic literature, and the material in his *Journal* elicited eager responses from colonists wishing to 'drive dull care away'.<sup>255</sup> The *imperial position* and *comic position* are perhaps the most dominant within the *Journal*, with a common emphasis on the link between a patriotic British spirit and humorous literature. Sammons hoped that 'should there be any real *John Bulls* at heart in Africa... they may have not forgotten "auld lang syne," but still cherish the desire for the old broad humour and hearty laugh, and in consequence will not suffer "*Sam Sly*" to emigrate'.<sup>256</sup> Typical responses ranged from enthusiastic letters to doggerel verse emphasising the centrality of humour to expressions of Britishness as well as the ameliorative effect of leisure. The following letter to the editor, contributed under the pseudonym 'MIRTH,' reflects in eager and dramatic fashion the desire for satirical humour as a necessary expression of British identity:

Dear Sir,- Hearing that a feather- to wit the "African Journal," has been thrown up by one Samuel Sly, to see which way the wind may blow it- I anxiously watched its progress, and never passed the Curiosity Shop without glancing at your letter box to count, if possible! how many lovers of literature- how many jolly dogs, and funny fellows, might be crowding around, waiting their turn with some mental contribution... If it were universally proclaimed that, in so large a community as our own, (libraries abounding) talent, and originality sufficient to *fill* one small sheet once a week, could not be found,- would no indignant blushes suffuse our cheeks?... Is Momus afraid to laugh? Have the muses forsaken our Byron Secundus, and in the most unladylike manner broken the lyre about his head? Whither have departed the once buoyant spirits of Roderick Random? Has Nimrod grown tired of African sports? Is Nauticus wrecked on a mountain of Ice? and Mars now forbidden to handle his pen? In the name of all that's laughter-moving and glad,- in the name of cheerfulness and smiling faces,- in the name of Dickens,- in the name of Sly,- yea! in the name of Punch itself- I conjure you (as Dan would say), let us drown such apathy and prove our willingness- our ability to cope with other Colonies in maintaining at least one agreeable es-cape! for drowsiness and ennui... In the absence of real events we must set the imaginative powers hard at work- scandal mongers often do so- ours is a loftier aim, manufacture something to lighten dull care, something that our sons and daughters may revert to, in after times, and read with pleasure and with-  
MIRTH!<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> SSAJ, 2 March 1848.

<sup>256</sup> SSAJ, 30 May 1844.

<sup>257</sup> 'Mirth!' to the editor, SSAJ, 21 March 1844.

For ‘Mirth’, humorous literature is ‘a loftier aim’ than the pursuit of scandal and is intimately tied to the advancement of a literate culture at the Cape with libraries and local writers. By referring to the greats of the British tradition of humour- the satiric genius of Byron, the comic novelist Dickens and the popular serial *Punch*- the letter writer actively desires a replication of the comic print culture of Britain in the Cape. In dramatic fashion, as if appealing to the muses, the names of ancient Greek and Roman gods and figures- Momus (the Greek god of satire), Mars and Nauticus- are mentioned, an example of the popular nineteenth-century penchant for aligning classical culture with civilised artistic taste. At the heart of humorous literature, and in line with the Victorian emphasis on the family, ‘Mirth’ hoped that it would aid in the leisure activities of the household and the ‘sons and daughters’ of the colony.

Reading as a leisure activity had historically been the privilege of the wealthier classes, but cheaper publication costs and rising literacy widened the readership to the middle and working classes. Shorn of its elite standing, reading newspapers and books became a common pastime for the respectable nineteenth century middle class family and respite from a hard day’s work for a husband.<sup>258</sup> Referring to a perennial complaint by the colonists of Cape Town regarding the strong South-East winds, ‘Hookem Snivvy’ wrote:

So, in good truth, I’ve had enough  
For once, of this South-East;  
For proverbs say that ‘*quantum suff*’  
Is equal to a feast.

I’ll toddle home, and there I’ll sit  
Till the furious gust goes by,  
And I’ll smoke my weed, and read what’s writ  
In the pages of ‘*Sam Sly*’.<sup>259</sup>

Evidently, *Sam Sly’s African Journal* held pride of place in the leisure life of this colonist. The reading of newspapers not only aided leisure, but could also inject the town with a sense of moral purpose that need not have ties to a humanitarian or mercantilist prerogative such as in Fairbairn’s *South African Commercial Advertiser*. A reader from Graham’s Town wrote, ‘I wish, Mr. Sly, you was here, and could occasionally administer a sarcastic pill or two,’ further hoping that this would remedy the ‘selfishness, spleen, or over business-like habits’ of

<sup>258</sup> See Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

<sup>259</sup> *SSAJ*, 27 July 1843.

the town's inhabitants that threatened their 'moral duty' to others.<sup>260</sup> In this vein, charity and good human nature are synonymous with cheerfulness whilst commerce burdened by too much seriousness leads to miserliness and lack of brotherhood in individuals. The British character might be distinguished by a mercantile spirit, yet it was the job of the editor, entertainer or satirist to encourage a good-natured laugh to balance out the dullness. As Sammons was often fond to remind his readers, there was much truth in the old English proverb of 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'.<sup>261</sup> He was worried that 'an over-anxiety for gain and accumulation' was 'shutting up the soul from finer sympathies'.<sup>262</sup>

Literary and scientific institutions were encouraged and prevalent in Cape Town. They formed part of the 'literary public sphere,' a crucial aspect in Jurgen Habermas's model of the bourgeois public sphere,<sup>263</sup> and were perceived as an important facet in mirroring the cultural landscape of Britain in the Cape Colony. Within these institutions manly discussion combined with the appreciation of refined high culture. A South African Library, museum, literary and scientific societies and College were all founded in Cape Town within the first three decades of the nineteenth century, and were bodies aimed at 'the spirit of improvement, civic virtue, scientific enquiry, and reasoned debate' that characterised the emergent aspirations of the middle class of the town.<sup>264</sup>

These were spheres not only for rational conversation but also mirthful recreation. As bodies aimed at 'the spirit of improvement, civic virtue, scientific enquiry, and reasoned debate',<sup>265</sup> their utilitarian desire for useful knowledge surprisingly recognised the social value of laughter and spectacle. Lectures and demonstrations on the latest pseudo-scientific discoveries of phrenology, mesmerism or laughing gas (nitrous oxide) were often advertised in the colonial press. In a demonstration of the latter to a gathering of the Cape Town Institute in 1846, participants inhaled small measures of the gas following a reading of Humphry Davy's research on its scientific properties. Volunteers breathed 'hard and quickly' from a bladder passed to them, following which they elicited fits of laughter from the audience as

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<sup>260</sup> 'Peter Tomkins' to editor, *SSAJ*, 16 October 1845.

<sup>261</sup> *SSAJ*, 8 June 1843.

<sup>262</sup> *SSAJ*, 8 June 1843.

<sup>263</sup> C Calhoun, ed, 'Introduction' in *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>264</sup> Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science Sensibility and White South Africa, 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 44.

<sup>265</sup> Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 44.

they either ‘jumped and danced’, made ‘comical faces’ or roared like a ‘bear with a sore head’. One participant was also reported to have previously ‘attempted to kiss the ladies’ following a dosage.<sup>266</sup> Such conduct would receive disapproving stares outside the context of scientific entertainment, yet the laughter of the audience was a safe yet uneasy guffaw that ‘exorcised aberrant behaviour from the collective whole’.<sup>267</sup> These provocative displays were a psychic release of moral inhibitions, and herein lay their social use.

A utilitarian desire for useful knowledge may have been prevalent, but there was also the link between an appreciation of imaginative literature and bourgeois taste. Saul Dubow has recently re-evaluated the editorial efforts of John Fairbairn and Thomas Pringle by going beyond earlier liberal or materialist concerns, and even Kirsten McKenzie’s examinations of the gendered nature of the rational bourgeois public sphere promulgated in the *Advertiser*,<sup>268</sup> to perceive such efforts ‘as part of a dual-pronged attempt to fashion the moral and cultural politics of the Cape’.<sup>269</sup> The bourgeois project was never as one-dimensional as solely a quest for the advancement of capital and political rights and institutions. It also encompassed cultural politics with the cultivation of literary taste, scientific endeavour, education and rational leisure such as literary journals and the theatre. These were seen as important in constructing a Cape middle class that hoped to emulate the cultural achievements of Britain itself. Without a ‘literary public sphere’, the Cape would lack the literary talent, scientific innovation and print culture necessary for civilised Britishness to flourish.

Reading and literacy were viewed as central for enlightening the habits of the town. The South African Library was described as ‘the bright eye of the Cape’ by the astronomer Herschel in 1854,<sup>270</sup> expressing its stature as a vital civic institution for promulgating a literary culture at the Cape. This same term had in fact been used by William Sammons in 1844 when he described Robertson’s Booksellers in Heerengracht Street as ‘the Cape’s Bright Eye’.<sup>271</sup> The display in the shop window, according to Sammons,

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<sup>266</sup> ‘A Friend of Laughter and Gas’ to the editor, *SSAJ*, 16 April 1846.

<sup>267</sup> E. H. Grayson, ‘Social Order and Disorder: Laughing Gas Demonstrations, 1800-1850’ in R. G. Thomson, ed, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 109.

<sup>268</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, ‘The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town’, MA thesis, University of Cape Town (1993).

<sup>269</sup> Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*, p. 31.

<sup>270</sup> *Proceedings of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the Subscribers to the Public Library, Cape Town, Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1854* (Cape Town, 1854), p. 20. Quoted in Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*, p. 45.

<sup>271</sup> *SSAJ*, 2 November 1844.

will have a tendency ultimately to form a taste, and refine the judgement. The constant display of choice and elegant subjects, through bright plate glass... cannot fail to strike the eye and to reach the heart. Lately the attractions have been of a high order and besides *Cruikshank's Bottle*, and *Sequel, Le Bons Conseil* and *Mauvais Conseil, Le Caresses de Jesus, Le Sauveur du Monde*... views of Cape Town, and Simon's Town, Scenes in Kaffirland, as well as engravings from the modern Cartoons, and spirited Hunting Pieces, and Military Costumes, all treated in a variety of styles, and in the highest excellence of the art, render the exhibition a second *Ackerman's* [sic]; and the desire for beauty and the pictorial being established, a higher and purer taste must necessarily follow.<sup>272</sup>

The comparison with *Ackermann's* is significant. Setting up shop in London in the 1790s, Rudolph Ackermann soon became one of the most successful satirical printshops- displaying the works of caricaturists Gillray, Hogarth and Cruikshank- and catering for an affluent and respectable clientele. Its famous window displays set the standard of refinement and fashion.<sup>273</sup> Despite the seedier connotations aligned to much satirical prints of the Georgian and Regency eras, Ackermann's reputation as an earlier exemplar of fine mercantile taste remained. There is something remarkable in the assortment of objects and artwork displayed in Robertson's booksellers. From the work of Cruikshank through to that of Cape artists such as Thomas Bowler, the visual display emphasised both the popularity and cultural attachment to British (and, judging by the French works, European) art and cartoons, as well as that of a local production. This display hinted at the literary contents available inside the booksellers- the latest books and periodicals shipped from England, alongside local newspapers and the odd tract published at the Cape.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> *SSAJ*, 2 November 1844.

<sup>273</sup> *Gatrell, City of Laughter*, pp. 243-4.

<sup>274</sup> Very few books were published in Cape Town before the 1850s, with pamphlets and religious tracts being more common alongside newspapers and periodicals. For a list of works published in Cape Town in the 1840s, see *The Cape Press: 1838-1850, A Bibliography*, compiled by Joyce C. Mandelbrote (University of Cape Town, 1945). Although Robertson published several works himself, he also seems to have specialised in selling work published by Saul Solomon. Mandelbrote, *The Cape Press*, p. iv.



Figure 6, View of Robertson's Booksellers, by Thomas Bowler in Bradlow, *Thomas Bowler*, p. 97

If one looks at the illustration above [Figure 6], Robertson's large premises on the Heerenracht shows the popularity of books and stationery. The pencil illustration by Thomas Bowler reflects a more intimate side of Cape Town. Martin Hall has argued that Thomas Bowler's work was concerned with the picturesque, with giving prominence to the particular buildings and scenes that represented the cleanly and industrious spirit of the emergent colonial town.<sup>275</sup> The shops are prominent amongst the orderly and productive bustle of the town, with the passengers on the Wynberg omnibus, fashionable families and Malay hawkers in the foreground. The man in a dark coat to the right is 'Old Moses,' a well-known Cape Town vagrant whose brazen conversations with passers-by reflect the position of the vagrant as a subversive commentator.<sup>276</sup> Whilst the cant and uncouth ramblings of the vagrant were perceived as abhorrent by the rising middle class, there was a longer tradition of the vagrant as potentially threatening yet possessing sage-like or comical qualities, the discursive lot of many considered unwelcome yet persistently present in the social milieu.<sup>277</sup> Even the ironic name 'Moses' infers the God-led wanderings of his Old Testament counterpart, with 'Old Moses' wise in name yet comical in social standing. Fulfilling the role of the buffoon in Sammon's *Journal*, 'Old Moses' often appears in a verbal duel with the editor:

“Make your *Journal* twice the size, ‘*Samivel*,’ and you’ll have twice the subscribers, and drop the poetical and imaginative, and introduce *gunny bags* and *guano*, and you’ll have twice the readers.” That will never do, Moses, and we don’t believe it.<sup>278</sup>

Whether an invented exchange of words for the entertainment of readers, or an actual conversation entered into between Sammons and 'Old Moses' on the streets of Cape Town, the occasional place of 'Old Moses' in the *Journal* reflects in part the nostalgia for vagrancy, beggars and the wandering way of life. The more colourful urban melange that greeted pedestrians on the streets of London in the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth century- diminished by laws of public decency and the removal of street urchins, run-down public taverns and Punch and Judy shows from the main thoroughways of London- was

<sup>275</sup> Martin Hall, 'Fish and the Fisherman, Archaeology and Art: Cape Town seen by Bowler, D'Oyly and De Meillon', *South African Journal of Art and Architectural History*, 2, 3 and 4 (1991), pp. 78-88.

<sup>276</sup> See Nigel Worden, Vivian Bickford-Smith and Elizabeth van Heyningen, *Cape Town: The Making of a City* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), p. 15.

<sup>277</sup> For an exploration of the discursive place of the vagrant in Cape history and literature, see P.R. Anderson, "'The Host of Vagabonds": Origins and Destinations of the Vagrant in Cape History and Ideas', PhD thesis, University of Cape Town (2007).

<sup>278</sup> *SSAJ*, 3 July 1845.

lamented as the truer reflection of British character. The absence of formerly prominent vagrant characters in London such as the one-legged black man Billy Waters, ragged clothes and fiddle in hand, led to the position of the vagrant in some minds as the exemplar of a lost way of life, a truer more ribald Britishness. The vagrant was thus also celebrated as the defiant hero against moralist reformists.<sup>279</sup> In some ways, ‘Old Moses’ is viewed in this nostalgic way by Sammons, although for most Cape readers the vagrant was viewed more as the archetype of drunken, uncontrollable Khoi or ex-slave labour. The figure of the vagrant played the role of jester making comic the tensions and contradictions inherent in colonial subjugation.<sup>280</sup>

The lines separating the textual and the urban environment- Robertson’s booksellers as synonymous to Ackermann’s in London, ‘Old Moses’ as a sort of Cape Billy Waters- are in many ways artificial, since both reinforced each other. Just as ideas around society, propriety and cultural attachment in Britain inevitably found their way to the Cape via the emigrants’ own expectations around social space and etiquette, print culture helped perpetuate a sense of nostalgia for the lost urban environment in Britain upon visions of Cape Town. Kirsten McKenzie’s work has been particularly important in demonstrating how the textual, in this case John Fairbairn’s *South African Commercial Advertiser*, influenced ideas around the rational bourgeois sphere, to the extent that reformist visions went beyond moral reformation to the creation of appropriate, sanitised urban spaces in Cape Town. Stray dogs and vagrants needed to be eradicated from the streets, and a rhetorical and physical space for discussion forged- prominently performed by the Commercial Exchange building and in part by the reading rooms and literary and philosophical societies of the town.<sup>281</sup>

This vision of urban order evinced in particular by the middle class British residents of Cape Town reflects one side of the British character, an increasingly more dominant and sober part influenced by religious evangelicalism and the reform of public and private morals. Yet the middle class still desired to pursue amusement, often with greater reliance on the ‘low-Other,’ the carnivalesque side of popular culture, than they would have liked. As Stallybrass

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<sup>279</sup> See Vic Gatrell’s chapter ‘Happiness, Cant and the Beggars’, in his *City of Laughter*, pp. 547-573.

<sup>280</sup> This is present, for example, in Andrew Geddes Bain’s Cape play *Kaatjie Kekkelbek* and its irreverent Khoi vagrant protagonist, published in *Sam Sly’s African Journal* in 1846. This will be explored in chapter three of this thesis.

<sup>281</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, ‘The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town’ (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993); Kirsten McKenzie, ‘Dogs and the Public Sphere: The Ordering of Social Space in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town’, *South African Historical Journal*, 48 (2003).

and White have shown, despite bourgeois attempts to expunge the ‘low-Other’ from public discourse, it still maintained a vital, if more coded, role in their imaginative fantasy life.<sup>282</sup>

This contradictory reliance by the bourgeois upon very anti-bourgeois symbolism was very prevalent in humour and entertainment. Despite efforts to soften the bite of satire and rid the grotesque from dramatic performance and literary output, its presence remained. One startling example of this is the popularity of *Punch* magazine in the Victorian era, despite the foibles of a grotesque little puppet, with phallic nose and humped back, being the publication’s fictive protagonist in satirising society.

One cannot separate the effect of moralist reform and middle class visions of the social and urban environment from its attendant effect and present in print culture. Satire was present in the everyday, as much as in the pages of *Punch* magazine or *Sam Sly’s African Journal*. A desire to replicate this pervasive effect beyond the page and into the streets is reflected in the quote below, where Sammons considers what might happen if the great satirists of the age—George Cruikshank and the fictitious figure *Punch*—were to roam the streets of Cape Town:

An odd thought passes by at the moment of writing. How could *George Cruikshank* live in Cape Town? What sustenance could he derive for mind or body, if bent upon the pursuit of his art? We can laugh at *Punch* at a distance, and think it all very funny—when every face but our own is the subject of merriment: but suppose *Punch* slept in the *Heerengracht*, and the *Parades* only, afforded him objects and topics for his sketches and sallies, where then would be the titter? This then may teach us to have mercy in our smiles, and not suffer a joke to warp or affect our judgements. The greatest proof of the noble feeling, the unbounded good nature, the civilization and refinement, the right understanding, and the high appreciation of genuine wit and humour, is, where these pointed and pungent satires are tolerated, nay, rather courted with delight and avidity. Fall into a lower and more contracted sphere, and then see what a miserable reception they meet with. Litigations, personal insults, salt for old sores; and a thousand coarse and perverted feelings arise, the offspring of prejudice, weakness, ignorance, and cant.<sup>283</sup>

In this passage respectable satire, indicative of ‘civilization and refinement’, is only possible where satire is ‘tolerated’ and not censored. For Sammons, the pinnacle of bourgeois cultural sophistication requires far more than attempts at moral and urban reform. Without an appreciation of satire, and the proper use of satire, colonial society will descend into libel suits, ‘personal insults’ and the opposite of desired truthful discourse, ‘cant’. To remedy the

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<sup>282</sup> Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*.

<sup>283</sup> *SSAJ*, 11 Dec. 1845.

limits of the bourgeois project, Sammons suggests in allegory the presence of satirical greats in the town streets. Interestingly, the idea that Punch ‘slept in the Heerengracht’ is itself tantalisingly ambiguous. There is no clear indication of Punch residing in a house or lodge, with the reference to Punch sleeping *in* the street suggesting a vagrant existence as a vital part of his comic sustenance. Like ‘Old Moses,’ Punch fulfils the role as comic outcast and, paradoxically, vital constituent part in ensuring community moral integrity. Sammons’s emphasis on the positive impact of satire is further illustrated in the following long quote:

We can all laugh at our neighbours, and at the humors of *Punch*, when he is some thousands of miles from us- when we are out of the wood and out of harm’s way. But how should we act if he were among us, and took the liberty of squeaking at some of our own peccadilloes, and of painting and publishing them on his pages? The laugh, *then*, would be on the other side of the mouth; and however witty and funny his gambols and his pencillings might have been considered before,- wherever the force of the truth came home, so in proportion would they be condemned, and *stamped* as puerile, vapid, and impertinent. Suppose Punch were in Cape Town to-morrow, and with one of his electrifying and magic flourishes on his trumpet, were to proclaim on the parades that he had travelled over the “weary waste of waters,” on purpose to turn hither for the Africanders, and to give full length portraits of every man, woman, and child that came upon his ken; and should first commence operations upon old *Sammons*, old *Fairbairn*, or old Bowls [the artist Thomas Bowler], would not the world and his wife be up in arms, and *Curiosity* and *Expectation* be on the tip-toe, to know how these worthies might figure pictorially, and whose turn it would be next? Would not the report spread and run through Simon’s Town and Stellenbosch, Wynberg and Rondebosch, like wild-fire? And would not the old women and blushing and timid damsels, the justice of the peace, the parson of the parish, the field-cornet, the postmaster, the surgeon, and the lawyer, in every village and district throughout the eastern and western divisions of the Cape, hang upon the tender hooks of dread and suspicion, lest they might be “*taken off*” and added to his exhibition?<sup>284</sup>

Sammons’s emphasis is not on how such very personal satirical sketches might cause unwarranted distress amongst the colonists, but more on the positive effects of reform satire might bring about, as shown below:

Would they not begin to brush up, reform, and scrutinise “*Number One*,” and begin to look at home as well as at their neighbours? How carefully they might walk the streets, and how demurely they might enter their churches, lest by any remarkable look or action they should fancy themselves as coming deservedly under the pencil of the great satirist and caricaturist. How *cant* and *hypocrisy* would then hold down their heads; oppression succumb, and tyranny and injustice yield and reform... But what a state of siege, confusion and excitement we should all be in at the first appearance of *Punch*! And what litigations, bickerings, and revilings might follow for want of due

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<sup>284</sup> SSAJ, 30 January 1845.

appreciation and discernment- for where the merit of a joke is not understood, it turns into hatred and condemnation. In proportion, therefore, as a country is tolerant of burlesque, a pleasantry, or a caricature, and receives with them good humor and delight, so does it rise in dignity, civilization, and refinement; and on the other hand, where the converse is the case, we generally find meanness, narrowness, bigotry, superstition, and ignorance. There is no place in the world where the joke goes round with such good nature and right understanding as in England, and the *John Bulls* laugh at each other with perfect impunity. Nothing can be too broad, too personal, or too close. All tending to show the width of his back, the depth of his pocket, and how much he is capable of bearing.<sup>285</sup>

Again, the point is made resoundingly: for a true '*John Bull*' Britishness to prevail in the colonies, the tolerance of broad humour and satire needs to be accepted and not shunned as scandal-mongering. The focus is on the 'merit of the joke', that it can aid in reforming the manners of the colony. Cant, for Sammons, appears in 'garbs and masks' in which over-serious reformers 'work all their mischief'. 'Burlesque writing' thus performs a moral function against the empty rhetoric of 'the sermon of the ordinary Rector'.<sup>286</sup> 'Gravity', the morbidly serious temperament of reformers, was 'often the passport of cant',<sup>287</sup> with a lack of humour being a vehicle for hypocrisy. Gravity and seriousness was still needed, but only if the temperament was balanced with a cheerful laugh at oneself and others.

Such a view of the role of satire was not shared by all, since the boundary between the licentious and acceptable satire was often a blurred one. Satire, like the popular novel, could easily offend evangelical middle class feeling. Colonists often drew on a *missionary position*, to use David Johnson's term, which frowned upon the publishing of taboo subjects such as gambling, sex and drunkenness and that did not reflect the Bible's teachings. For them, there was 'a tendency in novel-reading to affect and deteriorate the mind',<sup>288</sup> an argument extended to discouraging or openly calling for the censorship of all forms of literature including satirical verse. When Samuel Warren's novel *Ten Thousand a Year* was commissioned to be printed in Cape Town in 1842 for a colonial reading public, the printer Saul Solomon refused to publish what he saw as an offensive passage in the book. The passage was omitted and abridged with the following: 'Mrs. Tag-rag, a, showily dressed woman of about fifty, her cap having a prodigious number of artificial flowers in it, sat reading'. The passage should have

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<sup>285</sup> SSAJ, 30 January 1845.

<sup>286</sup> SSAJ, 1 February 1849.

<sup>287</sup> SSAJ, 22 August 1844.

<sup>288</sup> 'A Well Wisher to the Youth of this Colony', 'Open Letter', *Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette*, 2, 11 (November 1832), p. 391. Cited in Johnson, *Shakespeare and South Africa*, p. 618.

continued thus: ‘... sat reading a profitable volume entitled *Groans from the Bottomless Pit to Awaken Sleeping Sinners*, by the Rev. Dismal Horror’. In the novel, the Reverend proceeds to preach at a funeral of a ‘Miss Snooks’ who kept a circulating library, encouraging his parishioners to terminate their subscriptions to it so that they might not end up ‘ruining their precious souls with light and amusing reading.’<sup>289</sup> The printer of the novel seems to have objected to the Church view that entertaining literature might have an injurious effect on prospects for spiritual redemption. Nevertheless, through the amenable help of a rival printer, the office of the *Zuid Afrikaan* newspaper, an appendix of the offending passages was printed, demonstrating differing sensibilities around literary censorship in Cape Town.

There was some room to manoeuvre under the watchful gaze of a middle class Christian public. As long as satire could prove its moral worth and distance itself from its more daring and provocative forebears, it was deemed an important facet of the British character. Satire as a ridiculing of vice out of society was still often conflated in Victorian comic theory with light humour, with the jovial bar-room song or comic poem being deemed of similar worth. As Donald Gray has observed, the rising Victorian taste in humour emphasised recreation over satire’s conventional emphasis on overt social and political critique. Humour was trivialised, whilst the most common form ‘did not intend and require judgment, but offered a holiday from judgment’.<sup>290</sup> This was, in short, a move towards favouring laughter for laughter’s sake with frivolous songs such as ‘Ta-ra-ra-boom-te-a’ and light burlesque heavily laden with puns becoming popular in theatre and literature. Sammons, as a self-appointed theatre critic, wrote of the laughter elicited at performances in Cape Town at the Victoria Theatre, with the chorus of ‘Corporal Casey’: ‘Shivery, shakery, / Crimminnee criminee, / Oh! Isn’t it cold?’ receiving an encore after a performance in 1846.<sup>291</sup> Jill Fletcher, who has written a chapter on Sammons’s theatrical commentary in Cape Town, has pointed out the kind-hearted zeal Sammons invested in attending English and Dutch plays alike, and in his encouragement of the theatre through his column in *Sam Sly’s African Journal* titled ‘Touching Things Theatrical’.<sup>292</sup> As Sammons pointed out about the general feelings of the audience towards the entertainment offered at the opening performance of the Drury Lane

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<sup>289</sup> D.H. Varley, *South African Reading in Early Days* (Johannesburg: SABC, 1958), pp. 23-24; Samuel Warren, *Ten Thousand a Year! : reprinted from "Blackwood's magazine"* (Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1842).

<sup>290</sup> Donald Gray, ‘The Uses of Victorian Laughter’, *Victorian Studies*, 10, 2 (1966), pp. 147-8.

<sup>291</sup> *SSAJ*, 16 July 1846.

<sup>292</sup> Jill Fletcher, *The Story of Theatre in South Africa: A Guide to its History from 1780-1930* (Cape Town, 1994), pp.68-75.

Theatre in Cape Town in 1848, ‘the comic as usual... [is] better understood than the tragic, and the song than the sentiment’.<sup>293</sup>

Sammons was not opposed to verse that lacked humour, but he did dislike the trend towards what he saw as lifeless sentimental poetry. Writing in Bath, England in 1839 as an introduction to a few of his ‘Mutton Sonnets’ in *Keenes’ Bath Journal*, Sammons wrote that

It is very refreshing (as the man said, when he put his wooden leg into hot water) during these sickly and sentimental times, to be enabled to turn from the superabundance of “hospital poetry,” as Goethe terms it, which so frequently infects our Annuals and Ladies’ Albums, to more *solid* and *substantial* matter; and to find that wit and wisdom can be made to flow with the gravy of a “Mutton Chop,” as well as from subjects the most refined and delicate.<sup>294</sup>

Here, humour not only expresses patriotism and enjoyment, but can also be considered of literary merit. The ‘Mutton Sonnets’, which Sammons described as ‘real Beef-eater sonnets’,<sup>295</sup> were a deliberate celebration of British culinary taste as well as of their namesake the royal yeomen warders iconographic of British pride. A jovial tenor within literature was a sound reflection of the British character and worthy of critical notice.

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<sup>293</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 June 1848.

<sup>294</sup> *Keenes’ Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 18 Feb. 1839. The ‘Mutton Sonnets’ alongside the same commentary about Goethe was reprinted in *SSAJ*, 14 December 1843.

<sup>295</sup> *Keenes’ Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 18 Feb. 1839.

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**NOVEL LITERARY  
ENTERTAINMENT.**

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**T. P. HILL**

**R**ESPECTFULLY announces to the Ladies and  
Gentlemen of Cape Town and its vicinity, his  
intention of having

**“An Evening with some choice Spirits,”**  
In the Commercial Exchange.

**On Monday next,**

**THE 12<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER.**

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**Programme :**

Part 1.

**Tom Hood,  
THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.**

**SAM LOVER,**

**A MIGHTY QUEER STORY CONCERNING  
PADDY THE PIPER.**

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Part 2.

**A GLANCE AT THE BRITISH SENATE.**

**SIR ROBERT PEEL AS AN ORATOR,  
A ROW IN THE HOUSE.**

Scene between the Prime Minister, and the **LEADER OF  
THE ANTI-CORN LAW LEAGUE**, described from  
personal observation.

**LORD LYNDHURST'S** celebrated attack upon the **IRISH  
CHARACTER**,—“Aliens in Language! Aliens in Blood!  
Aliens in Religion!”

**SHEIL'S IMPASSIONED VINDICATION.**

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Part 3.

Something sprightly from **SIR WALTER SCOTT,  
THE MANIAC.**

To conclude with **CHARLES DICKENS'** Mirth-exciting  
description of a **TEMPERANCE MEETING** and  
**Mr. STIGGINS.**

[A lapse of 4 minutes between each part.]

Admission, 2s.—Tickets to be had of Mr. **ROBERTSON**,  
Bookseller, Heerengracht; Mr. **REGER**, Chemist, do.;  
Mr. **COLLARD**, Stationer, Long-market-street; Mr. **FRI-  
SHARD**, House Agent, do.; and of Mr. **ROSE**, at the Com-  
mercial Exchange.

Doors open at 7, commence at half-past 7 precisely.

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Figure 7, T.P. Hill Advertisement, in *Sam Sly's African Journal*, 8 October 1846

Sammons was not alone in such sentiments. One of the most popular nineteenth-century poets and humorists, Thomas Hood, was well loved in Britain and at the Cape. His penchant for punning popularised the form amongst the public, linking the role of puns to that of pleasure.<sup>296</sup> For the essayist Charles Lamb, ‘the last breath he [Hood] drew in he wished might be through a pipe and exhaled in a pun’.<sup>297</sup> Demonstrating their commiseration at the loss of Thomas Hood to illness, and joining in with their own antipodean funereal chorus of pun-making and laughter, respectable members of Cape Town society attended a reading of Hood and others’ work by T.P. Hill in the Exchange Rooms in Cape Town. The list of readings on the bill for the evening [see **Figure 7**], included Hood’s ‘The Dream of Eugene Aram’, Charles Dickens’s ‘mirth-exciting description of a Temperance meeting’ and Sir Walter Scott’s ‘The Maniac’.<sup>298</sup> In his introduction to the readings, T.P. Hill expressed similar ideas around sentimental and comic verse to Sammons’s own, saying that ‘true humour necessarily implies a deep sense and faculty of the pathetic’ and gave forth the work of Hood as a prime example.<sup>299</sup> Hill’s insistence that pathos be prevalent in noteworthy comic literature is the compliment of Sammons’s reference to Goethe’s lament about sentimental ‘hospital poetry’, and its need to be injected with ‘wit and wisdom’.<sup>300</sup>

Poems from colonists, including Andrew Geddes Bain, George Fletcher (son of the former valet of Lord Byron) and many others writing under pseudonyms filled the pages of *Sam Sly’s African Journal*. It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss these poems at length, yet it is worth noting the following doggerel by ‘Proteus’ for it highlights some pertinent themes:

...Nor will I deprecate

Your Editorial censure, sir,  
Your satire’s pungent lash;-  
My song, - you may pronounce it fair,  
Or you may swear it’s trash.

I shall not crow, I shall not weep,  
Whatever you may think;

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<sup>296</sup> Sara Lodge, *Thomas Hood and Nineteenth-Century Poetry: Work, Play and Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007). Lodge notes that much of the early opposition to the pun arose from class concerns about its ‘vulgar’ origins. It would later, however, play a central role in Victorian humour.

<sup>297</sup> Lodge, *Thomas Hood*, p. 145.

<sup>298</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 October 1846.

<sup>299</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 October 1846.

<sup>300</sup> *Keenes’ Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 18 Feb. 1839.

I write because I cannot sleep,  
And have no grog to drink.<sup>301</sup>

Sammons was indeed critical of his contributors, chiding the quality of the poem by pointing out it was ‘written in too much haste’,<sup>302</sup> yet it illustrates perfectly a jocular approach to popular literature, that writing poetry is a cathartic aid against insomnia and akin to drinking alcohol. Attention to ‘good’ literature by notable poets and authors is important, yet it is often more interesting for the historian to examine literature not on its literary merit, but on its reflection of popular attitudes. Within the realm of print culture and the verbal and aural cacophony of leisure spaces, doggerel verse, ballads and satirical sketches were better indicators of national feeling. Why might ‘Proteus’ write freely of ‘grog’ in his poem, especially since middle class attitudes to drink in the nineteenth century have generally been seen as disapproving? It will be shown below that there was in fact scope for middle class leisure, respectability and the drinking of alcohol to coexist.

### III. CONTESTING THE BRITISH SPIRIT: TEMPERANCE, LEISURE AND HYPOCRISY

The previous two sections of this chapter have considered the manoeuvrability available for satirical newspapers, and literature and humour, to claim a level of respectability in the face of moralistic censure. This section considers the acceptable place for the consumption of alcohol by middle class colonists in Cape Town, and its nostalgic ties to the old sense of Britishness expressed in ribald humour and leisure.<sup>303</sup> Studies of the use and abuse of alcohol in the Cape have focussed almost solely on white middle class chastisement and temperance advocacy against the drunken and degraded black labouring population of largely Khoi or slave origin. Drunkenness was seen as a barrier to improvement and the project of social engineering desired by missionaries and humanitarians, and its prevalence made the ‘drunken Hottentot’ a commonly complained about colonial type.<sup>304</sup> Within the pages of *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, Sammons lamented that ‘[d]runkenness is a sad blemish, for then the man is absent’,<sup>305</sup> yet this reflected a negative view towards *drunkenness*, not towards the recreational consumption of alcohol. Alongside the cascade of temperance tracts, letters to editors of newspapers and temperance meetings bemoaning the drunken under classes, there

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<sup>301</sup> *SSAJ*, 15 Aug. 1844.

<sup>302</sup> *SSAJ*, 15 Aug. 1844.

<sup>303</sup> For a popular history of alcohol in South Africa from colonial times into the twentieth century, see Eric Rosenthal, *Tankards and Tradition* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1961).

<sup>304</sup> Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 125-7.

<sup>305</sup> *SSAJ*, 28 May 1846.

was also criticism of the hypocrisy of humanitarian sentiment on the issue and an equal call for the preservation of moderate and responsible drinking by middle class colonists as a vital part of the British character.

One of the counter-arguments forwarded against temperance advocates in Britain was that alcohol imparted energy and physical stamina, as well as functioning as a vital social lubricant for hospitality, good health and neighbourly relations. It was also long believed that consumption of alcohol aided virility and prevented the spread of disease. Drinking marked a rite of passage or festival, whilst the very drinking of a pint of stout was a symbolic declaration of British patriotism and manly independence. Yet these old associations were soon challenged in the nineteenth century by evangelical reformers. This led to attributing alcohol as the cause of social decay, perpetual poverty, crime, public and domestic violence and unreliable labour owing to drunken nights preceding working days.<sup>306</sup> Katherine Elks has examined the links between leisure, liquor and social control of the lower orders in 1830s and 1840s Cape Town, where she notes there was a strong outcry in the pages of the colonial press against the scourge of drunkenness amongst the poor. The increased regulation and policing of liquor consumption had a strong link to concern from the white middle class over the inappropriate use of alcohol by the lower classes and even ties with alcohol smuggling networks and the criminal underground.<sup>307</sup> In sum, ‘the antithesis of respectability was drunkenness’.<sup>308</sup> The traveller Moodie may have stated in 1835 that ‘Drunkenness in the besetting sin of the lower classes, in all our colonies, and at the Cape’,<sup>309</sup> yet such critiques failed to be launched against the middle class. Double standards reflected the scope within which the consumption of alcohol, and even its abuse, could avoid public condemnation. As Katherine Elks has noted, even the judges of the Supreme Court were described as “‘notable bottle men’”, but since their intoxication was in the privacy of their own houses, they were regarded almost indulgently rather than with disapproval’.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), pp. 39-43. Such claims were also made in the colonies. At a temperance meeting in Geelong, Australia, an individual disrupted a temperance meeting by arguing for ‘the merits of all vinous and spiritous liquors... [claiming] that the whole range of “British compounds” contained virtues, more than sufficient to counter-balance any evil that might arise in the excessive indulgence of them’. *SSAJ*, 1 March 1849.

<sup>307</sup> Katherine D. Elks, ‘Crime, Community and Police in Cape Town 1825-1850’, MA thesis, University of Cape Town (1986), pp. 130-169; ‘notable bottle men’ quote from Alan Hattersley, *A Victorian Lady at the Cape, 1849-51* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, [1951]), p. 27.

<sup>308</sup> Ross, *Status and Respectability*, p. 125.

<sup>309</sup> J.W.D Moodie, *Ten Years in South Africa* (London, 1835), vol 1, p. 53.

<sup>310</sup> Elks, ‘Crime, Community and Police’, p. 138.

This double standard riled Sammons in his editorials, and symbolised the hypocrisy and cant lying behind reformist sentiment. In one letter to the editor, a correspondent spoke of the ‘self-christianised indignation’ of ‘temperance gentlemen’, who in private drank ‘glasses of wine, or have a bottle of Jim Crack’s brown stout, or pale ale for their dinner’. With such insincerity,

their words and actions do not assimilate, their continual vociferous exclamations for education to enlighten and correct the morals of the lower order of the people, arise more from the *Pharisaical* love of outward appearance, and for their own private sinister views, than to ameliorate the condition of the poor man, and his starving distressed families, or to remove the filthy rags from their bodies.

... let them fling the first stone at the publican. That liquor is not destructive to the well doing of families, no man with any share of common sense will dispute, but where is there a remedy to be found against it, not until the man sits under his own fig tree, and the lion lies down with the lamb ... Walk round and look on the other side of the shield, and there unmasked will be seen these ranters and their proselytes, at their different employments, some wholesale dealers selling to the retailer the identical pernicious stuff, but that a few hours before they were railing at.<sup>311</sup>

Many in the middle class may have shared sentiments about the abuse of alcohol by the working class, yet not all were teetotallers. There was a strong enough backlash against the perceived cant of humanitarian sentiment, the ‘anti-liberalism’ that Andrew Bank has convincingly argued was tied to ‘the emergence of Cape print culture’ especially around the ideological debates over ‘race’.<sup>312</sup> The above extract reveals an anti-liberal disdain that preserves much of the evangelical reformist desire to ‘enlighten and correct’ the working class. Concern for the working class, and more specifically the remedying of the social ills of the poor black population, could be married rhetorically with a critique of canting missionaries and temperance advocates. At the heart of this response was an appeal to the virtues of honesty and setting a good example when advocating social reform; however, there could always be a level of vested interest in such criticism of hypocrisy, such as the ridiculing of reformist rhetoric that threatened the security of slave labour for the Dutch in the 1830s.

If reform was the prerogative, over-zealous calls for temperance could be counterproductive in bringing about social reform. As Sammons proclaimed in one of his many contributions to the Bath press in England in the 1830s, ‘dost thee know no difference between *use* and

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<sup>311</sup> *SSAJ*, 24 Sept. 1846. ‘A Peeper behind the Scenes’ to the Editor.

<sup>312</sup> Bank, ‘Liberals and their Enemies’, p. 19.

*abuse*,<sup>313</sup> pointing out the absurd extremes reformers risked of open ridicule rather than serious consideration. Teetotallers grew unpopular particularly in the West of England for such stunts as cutting down apple trees used for producing cider, and for pulling down public houses and replacing them with temperance halls, one with an ironic ‘floor made up of chopped beer vats’.<sup>314</sup> With such a history of the wanton destruction of important leisure institutions, Sammons complained that with railroads proposed for the Cape, ‘we should not wonder but the grass will grow on the old *Coach* roads, and all the old-fashioned Inns be closed and deserted, and turned into barns, or Temperance Hotels’.<sup>315</sup> The march of progress might eradicate the old way of life, whether pushed forward by teetotallers or innovations in transport. To temper such a threat, and allow for a symbiosis of old and new, calls for reform needed to be ridiculed.

At the Cape, placards advertising teetotal meetings were derided as having been ‘written in such a drunken and slovenly manner upon doors and shutters’,<sup>316</sup> an attempt to ascribe to extreme reformers the very characteristics they sought to denounce in others. The forwarding of this image of canting hypocrites and the underlining of the absurd undermined the serious regard desired by temperance advocates. Many did themselves no favours in their use of hyperbole. A temperance tract printed in Cape Town in 1836 for the Juvenile Temperance Society, quoting from the *Preston Temperance Advocate*, claimed that one of the potential consequences of the ‘immoderate use of spirituous liquors’ was ‘spontaneous combustion’.<sup>317</sup> Anecdotes of social, financial and familial ruin were redolent in temperance tracts, and were no doubt effective deterrents for many who read them, yet their inherent hyperbole made them soft targets for ridicule by their critics.

In one satirical sketch written by Sammons whilst in England, a temperance procession held in 1837 of ‘the most opulent and *inveterate soakers*’ is depicted as a comical display of treasured coffee pots, teakettles, water pumps and buckets- a reference to joking claims that water, tea and coffee were the beverages of choice for teetotallers.<sup>318</sup> The historian Norman

<sup>313</sup> *Keenes’ Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 5 December, 1836.

<sup>314</sup> Norman Longmate, *The Waterdrinkers: a history of temperance* (London: Hamilton, 1968), p. 70.

<sup>315</sup> *SSAJ*, 26 September 1844.

<sup>316</sup> *SSAJ*, 4 December 1845.

<sup>317</sup> Juvenile Temperance Society, Cape Town, *Do Thyself no Harm; Or, Facts are Stubborn Things, No. 3* (Cape Town: J.S. Mollett, 1836), p. 5. For the *Preston Temperance Advocate*, see Longmate, *The Waterdrinkers*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>318</sup> Longmate, *The Waterdrinkers*, pp. 73-74. One radical group, the ‘Independent Order of Horabites at Fowley’, drank only neat water as they claimed ‘every attempt to improve it... only tends to injure it’.

Longmate claims that Sammons's satire was more accomplished than Dickens's attempts at ridiculing temperance.<sup>319</sup> Judgements of literary merit aside, there is no doubting the popularity of such accounts among the general public, where the Puritan ideals of sobriety were turned into burlesque extravagance under the keen pen of temperance critics. Such satirical sketches of temperance inanities found appreciation in Cape Town in T.P. Hill's public reading in the Commercial Exchange building of Charles Dickens's 'mirth-exciting description of a Temperance meeting', made even more apt by the bill for the event being titled 'An Evening with some choice spirits' [See figure 7, p. 92].<sup>320</sup> This was an overt aligning of the symbolic place of alcohol with British literary taste.

Many leisure hours for the British were spent in drinking establishments, whether the public houses and taverns of commoners or the respectable clubs and establishments of wealthier inhabitants. The distinctions between 'high' and 'low' leisure pursuits were relatively blurred in the eighteenth century, with 'Britishness' heralded as an embodiment of the frankness and joviality manifest in the bawdy atmosphere of drinking places. Of course, this association began to wane in the face of the reformist backlash of the nineteenth century, but its persistent ties to the character of British identity manifest in literature, leisure and print culture was still palpable, although contested.<sup>321</sup>

At the Cape, the symbolic place of alcohol was strategically employed as a version of colonial Britishness, with the new Dutch newspaper *Het Volksblad* described by Sammons as 'A glass of pure "Hollands," neat as imported, without any admixture of English Alcohol'.<sup>322</sup> In such language, alcohol was symbolic of leisure and genial wit, a sign of refinement rather than social decay. Accordingly, it is British emigrants who have introduced entertainment into Cape print culture, and not the persistently sombre Dutch.<sup>323</sup> The irony notwithstanding-much of the most entertaining material in Cape print culture was Dutch, such as the anti-temperance and anti-humanitarian satire *De Temperantisten* – the message was clear: alcohol still held a prized position in the lexicon of British colonial popular culture. Doggerel verse in

<sup>319</sup> Longmate, *The Waterdrinkers*, p. 105.

<sup>320</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 October 1846.

<sup>321</sup> For the position of manliness, Britishness and drinking culture and their relation to satire in Georgian and Regency London, see Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, pp. 110-156.

<sup>322</sup> *The African Journal*, 12 July 1849.

<sup>323</sup> Sammons may have been overstating the point- he actively encouraged Dutch theatrical productions by the group 'Tot Nut en Vermaak' in his theatrical column, reflecting on Dutch efforts at amusement. See Fletcher, *The Story of Theatre in South Africa*, pp.68-75.

*Sam Sly's African Journal* was oft fond of emphasising the links between satire, leisure and alcohol: 'Strike up, my muse! Dispel all gloom and cant, / Enchant with *Wine*, and sing the name *Leibbrandt*'<sup>324</sup> and 'Bitter is the satire that will cause your friend a tear; / Bitter is the bullock's gall, and bitter Wynberg beer.'<sup>325</sup> As a tool against hypocrisy and dour sentiment, satire was aligned with the long-tradition of British drinking culture, albeit with a careful distancing from the imagery associated with its excesses.

Sammons lauded the establishment of 'respectable' drinking establishments in Cape Town, places where young men desirous of alcohol could obtain their fill without frequenting public houses associated with drunkenness and the social excesses of the lower orders. The lodging house of 'Mr Drinkwater' was praised for its 'cleanliness and order', and for possessing 'an air of coziness, and the agréments of private life, that we have not hitherto met with in a colony'. By selling both coffee and glasses of ale in a tastefully decorated environment, alcohol could be consumed amongst respectable company without fear of moral taint.<sup>326</sup> At 'Mr T. Burke's Grecian Saloon in Bree-Street', a well-attended evening comprised of a performance of popular songs such as '*Yankee Doodle*', '*Billy O'Rourke*', '*Highland Fling*' and '*Don't be addicted to Drinking*'. 'Young gentlemen' took part exuberantly in singing along to the songs, whilst drinking their glasses of ale.<sup>327</sup> Although the singing of the last mentioned song was likely in part ironic, the respectability of the establishment owed itself somewhat to distancing itself from drunken behaviour, and to its patriotic attraction of popular songs sung in communal merriment.

This is not to say such establishments were without their critics, for teetotallers ensured alternative recreational spaces for those averse to drinking. Since many reading rooms doubled as public houses serving alcohol, 'Bewley's Temperance Coffee and Reading Rooms' were established in Church Street, offering the latest colonial and overseas newspapers, but also a satire on drunkenness for sale amongst several temperance tracts.<sup>328</sup> In one poem, 'The Teetotal Mill', a self-deprecating parody of the process of reform from drunkenness to sobriety is made through the metaphor of sending the drunkard through a

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<sup>324</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 June 1843.

<sup>325</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 June 1843.

<sup>326</sup> *SSAJ*, 6 July 1848.

<sup>327</sup> *SSAJ*, 6 July 1848.

<sup>328</sup> See the advertisement in *SSAJ*, 12 April 1849. The satire was titled, 'Temperance Rhymes', and was written under the pen name of 'S.A.M.'

‘teetotal mill’ where ‘Old clothes are made new ones’.<sup>329</sup> The strategy of employing satire—traditionally utilised by critics of temperance movements—to further the message of temperance appealed to the persistent presence of humour as a marker of British identity. In *Victuals! Victuals!*, a temperance tract published in Cape Town in 1849 for the Juvenile Temperance Society, puns are utilised to appeal to the type of humour usually associated with popular literature and not with reformist print culture.<sup>330</sup> In the tract, alcohol is personified by its social effects upon the drinker: ‘Ail’ leads to ailments, both physical and domestic; ‘Whine’ to a husband snivelling and complaining to his wife; whilst ‘Brand-Eye’ results in a black eye gained through a bar room brawl. ‘Spirits’ lead to the ‘Spirit’ of ‘folly’, ‘murder’, ‘roguery’ and ‘madness’: the ‘unclean spirit’ antithetical to religious spiritual renewal.<sup>331</sup> In this humorous account of the evils of drink, the serious message of temperance is presented in a satirical form that was in high demand amongst the Cape reading public. When *The Bottle* (1847) by George Cruikshank, an illustrated satire ridiculing the excesses of drunkenness by the renowned satirist who had recently converted to teetotalism, became available at Robertson’s booksellers, it was ‘met with a very rapid and extensive sale’. The popularity of *The Bottle* in the Cape was even manifest in a dramatic adaptation presented at the Drury Lane Theatre.<sup>332</sup> Clearly, print culture and satire were being reconciled with the reformist tide of the times. No longer as tied down as it used to be to the ‘low’ associations of radicalism, scandal-mongering and immorality, humorous print culture could be re-imagined as the embodiment of ‘Britishness’ in the new age of improvement.

Sites of leisure could expose the social fissures in Cape society. In places of social exclusivity, such as Government balls, society meetings and coffee rooms it was easier to

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<sup>329</sup> A section of the poem ran as thus:

You promise by signing this paper I think,  
That *ale*, *wine*, and *spirits* you never will drink;  
You give up, as they call it, “such rascally swill,”  
And then you go into the *Teetotal Mill*.

There’s a wheel in this mill which they call self-denial,  
They turn it a bit just to give you a trial;  
Old clothes are made new ones, and if you are ill  
You are very soon cured in the *Teetotal Mill*.  
(SSAJ, 12 April 1849)

<sup>330</sup> ‘M.S.’, *Victuals! Victuals!* (Cape Town: J.S. de Lima, 1849).

<sup>331</sup> ‘M.S.’, *Victuals! Victuals!*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>332</sup> *The African Journal*, 9 May 1850. Demonstrating how the consumption of alcohol did not contradict condemnation of drunkenness, Sammons observed that at the Theatre ‘it was curious to witness the stock of Beer, Wine and Spirits, that was brought to the refreshment room, “to be drunk on the premises,” in order to inspire the audience with a due portion of sentiment and grief, at the development of the consequences arising from the excesses of the very *Bottle*, with which they themselves might have made too free.’

maintain middle class decorum. At horse races, one of the most popular events for the Cape elite, but also open to the wider public, this appearance was more difficult to preserve. Since the days of Lady Ann Barnard, who had been dismayed at hearing gossip about her at a race meeting, betting was common amidst the presence of soldiers and the motley diversity of Cape society.<sup>333</sup> Observing a race meeting half a century later in 1849, Sammons saw the event as the expression of appropriate British leisure. For him, and many others, ‘cant’ remained a byword in the rhetorical duel over appropriate leisure pursuits. In his commentary on the races, the enlivening effect of leisure is equated in an extended metaphor to alcohol:

Now will the bottle of Cape life, be stirred up as it were to the very dregs; and a little wholesome agitation to the stagnant mass will do no harm to its future repose and quiescence- for, before purification comes fermentation... Now will CANT squint downwards from the corner of her eyes; and with lugubrious looks, and solemn leer, be almost ashamed to hold up her elongated phiz, and show her trade. Now, all the world and his wife will be out of town... for revelry amongst ginger bread, porter, ale, and wine, sandwiches, cold fowls, and biscuits. Now will there be a trimming up of the horses; and fresh life and vigour be put into dull matter, and under the ribs of death.<sup>334</sup>

These remarks were a Romantic picture of pre-industrial rural Britain, the county fair shorn of the polluting imagery placed on it by reformism. For Sammons the race meeting, with its polite revelry, public entertainment and consumption of alcohol, embodied a triumph over the less savoury effect of reformism to associate amusement with moral decay. Alcohol could symbolise the ills of the under classes, but it could also be utilised as a proud metaphor for maintaining a semblance of ‘Old’ Britishness alongside Victorian values. By joining in calls against drunkenness, and observing bourgeois etiquette in their leisure activities and consumption of alcohol, middle class colonists could combine drinking, propriety and relaxation without an adverse effect on their social standing.

The colonial middle class of the reformist and Victorian eras has too often been assumed to have embodied a uniform sombreness, scolding evangelicalism and dislike for the hallmarks of Georgian amusement and humour. For many colonists this was indeed largely true, but a sizable number saw no contradiction in drinking alcohol, reading satires and extolling the worth of a good laugh, as long as this was done with some decorum and moral discernment. The contrasting image of drunkenness and immorality as an innate trait of the black labouring

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<sup>333</sup> Worden, et al., *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, pp.141-143.

<sup>334</sup> *SSAJ*, 26 April 1849.

class still persisted, and thus the next chapter considers how comic depictions of the Khoikhoi functioned in *Sam Sly's African Journal* to emphasise anti-humanitarian sentiment and unease over the easy slippage between the boundaries of white 'civilization' and 'black barbarity'.

## CHAPTER 3

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### Comic Savages: (Mis)Representing the KhoiKhoi

Studies of the representation of the Khoikhoi loom large in the scholarship on colonialism in southern Africa. Discourses of humanitarianism, racial determinism and anxieties over class permeated the boundaries of empire owing to the mobility of imperial subjects. An individual who might have comprised a 'metropolitan' audience may very well immigrate to the colonies, and a colonial indigene be exhibited before a bemused metropole, mobilities that stimulated unease around understanding the racial markers between civilisation and barbarity. Through the theatre, travel accounts, novels, and art, comic representations of the Khoikhoi served to reinforce assumptions about racial difference. Descriptions of the threatening savagery of the indigene could provoke a mixture of fascination, horror, and disgust, yet comedy provided a powerful tool for reinforcing difference through relieving group tension whilst providing coercive power and agency to the reader, viewer or audience in their ridiculing laughter. As Conrad Lorentz and others since have argued, 'laughter draws a strong fellow feeling amongst participants and joint aggressiveness against outsiders... Laughter forms a bond and simultaneously draws a line'.<sup>335</sup> Within the pages of William Sammons's *Sam Sly's African Journal*, humorous representations of the Khoikhoi drew upon metropolitan tropes and traditions whilst taking heed of distinctive colonial contexts. Amongst the literary contributions, was a version of Andrew Geddes Bain's well-known play *Kaatje Kekkelbek* (a parody with the central character of a rowdy, drunken Khoikhoi woman) and several travelogues and comic sketches that mostly emphasised the image of the ignoble or comic savage. This was an uncomplimentary representation that emphasised supposed indolence, drunkenness, sexual deviance and physiological deformity resulting in a caricature of the colonial conditions to which the indigenous peoples had supposedly succumbed.<sup>336</sup>

There is a long tradition of travel accounts dating from early modern Europe onwards that depicted the Khoikhoi as backward savages (after Thomas Hobbes and others), tempered in

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<sup>335</sup> Quoted in John Lowe, 'Theories of Ethnic Humor: How to Enter, Laughing', *American Quarterly*, 38, 3 (1986), p. 440.

<sup>336</sup> Andrew Bank, 'The Return of the Noble Savage: The Changing Image of Africans in Colonial Art, 1800-1850', *South African Historical Journal*, 39, 1 (1998), pp. 17-43.

part by a more complementary enlightenment representation of them as noble savages possessed of an antediluvian innocence (after Rousseau and other Enlightenment thinkers).<sup>337</sup> Giving credence to the textual imaginings of the Khoikhoi in the travel literature was the display of live indigenous people as a spectacle of entertainment and scientific curiosity in Europe. Most famous of these performers in what Bernth Lindfors has called ‘ethnological show business’<sup>338</sup> was the Khoikhoi woman Sara Baartman, whose much-reported large posterior and genital ‘deformities’ combined with her performance singing and dancing in native dress before audiences in London and Paris from 1810 to 1815 confirmed the markers of difference that were common sense in the popular imagination.<sup>339</sup> In the early eighteenth century naturalists were already speculating that ‘Hottentots’ and orang-utans were on par at the bottom of a classificatory scale, with the only difference being that orang-utans lacked the ability to speak. This pseudo-scientific speculation was aided by the idea of a ‘missing link’ between ape and man. This was an intrinsic part of hierarchical notions of racial and ethnic superiority, with a long tradition dating back to pre-Enlightenment notions of difference that placed Europeans at the pinnacle of development in a Great Chain of Being, whilst racial others in distant southern lands were lumped at the bottom of this racial hierarchy in the interstitial category between ‘man’ and ‘beast’.<sup>340</sup> With the advent of Darwinian notions of scientific racism, the *Edinburgh Review* expressed a commonly held view in 1863 by claiming that ‘there is no difference between the intelligence of a Bosjesman and that of an orang-utan, and that the difference is far greater between Descartes and Homer and the Hottentot than between the stupid Hottentot and the ape.’<sup>341</sup> The French scientist Georges Cuvier compared Sara Baartman’s physiognomy to that of an orang-utan,<sup>342</sup> whilst it had been a belief of early modern Europe, reinforced through travel accounts, that Khoikhoi

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<sup>337</sup> See, amongst others, Linda E. Merians, *Envisioning the Worst: Representations of “Hottentots” in Early-Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001); M. Van Wyk Smith, “‘The Most Wretched of the Human Race’: The iconography of the Khoikhoi (Hottentots) 1500-1800”, *History and Anthropology*, 15, 3-4 (1992), pp. 285-330; Nigel Penn, ‘Written Culture and the Cape Khoikhoi: From Travel Writing to Kolb’s “Full Description”’, in A. Delmas and N. Penn, ed, *Written Culture in a Colonial Context, 1500-1900* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2010), pp. 166-187.

<sup>338</sup> Bernth Lindfors, ed, *Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999).

<sup>339</sup> The recounting of her representation, performances and elusive life have given rise to what Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully have called ‘ghost stories’, the attempts to conjure her forth in imaginative literature or ‘recover’ her dignity by postcolonial scholars and activists. Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and Biography* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2009; Witwatersrand University Press: Johannesburg, 2009).

<sup>340</sup> Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (London: Macmillan, 1965), p. 42.

<sup>341</sup> Quoted in Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>342</sup> Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman*, pp. 135-6.

women had sexual relations with baboons.<sup>343</sup> The Khoikhoi were thus viewed as lower than the ‘Negro’, a half-human/half-animal curiosity. The description and staging of animalistic bodies and primal manners spoke to European unease around the easy slippage from civilized conduct to barbarity. Prostitution, and the filth and poor hygiene of urban slums threatened a divide between the ‘backward’ African and the propriety-conscious European. Character communicated racial advancement or regression. To be compared to an orang-utan or ‘Hottentot’ was to express a transgression of societal boundaries, with sexual excesses, idleness and the inability to attain cultural upliftment.<sup>344</sup>

Consider the following scene reported in *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, one enacted purportedly not on the streets of London, but of Cape Town in 1844:

Two Foreigners have arrived lately in Cape Town, not from the Courts of Windsor, Saxony or Russia, but from the Woods of Borneo, and have taken up their residence at a suitable mansion in Long-market street. They bear the titles of “Ourang-Outang, Chimpanzee, or Wild Man of the Woods,” from their great likeness to the latter noble animals. Some have manifested surprise, that anything wild, or of the monkey species, should be considered a rarity, seeing that our large towns and cities have so great a supply- the more remarkable for having no tails, and from a kind of fire and smoke issuing from their mouths, and from their forcing a dirty kind of powder up their nostrils. But hark! Listen to the Showman. “Valk up, ladies *and* gentlemen- be in time- be in time, and behold the vonderful vorks of nature. The great Baboon! the Ourang-Outang! the Chimpanzee! commonly called the *Vild* Man of the *Voods*, but he’s no more vild than you are- (stand back, there little boys, does your mother know, &c.- not that I *enwies* you your little innocent recreations, but the public morals *and* decency must be attended to) He measures 3 foot *nuffin*, from the crown of his pretty head to the tip of his innocent tail, *and* 3 foot 3 from the tip of hiss innocent aforesaid, to the crown of his pretty ditto. See how he wraps his blanket around him like a Christian, and gives that knowing scratch, all as natural. Valk up! valk up! be in time. Ladies *and* Gentlemen, a shilling each, vorking people and Malay boys, only sixpence; valk up! be in time.” (Taps the canvas- Exit showman.)<sup>345</sup>

This spectacle reveals a fascination with constructing freakish difference as a burlesque of familiar tropes of civilization and barbarity. The display might be of an orang-utan, yet through a deliberate staging of anthropomorphic qualities, the ape both delights the audience and threatens the civilisational divide. Sammons jokingly blurs the distinction between man and beast for white colonial inhabitants, by calling them ‘of the monkey species’ in their

<sup>343</sup> Merians, *Envisioning the Worst*, pp. 48, 228.

<sup>344</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>345</sup> *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, 10 October 1844.

uncouth smoking and partaking of snuff. Writing fifty years earlier, John Barrow had claimed that the smoking of a pipe was indicative of Boer lethargy where his ‘pipe scarcely ever quits his mouth,’<sup>346</sup> a similar accusation to that levelled at the Khoikhoi with a sketch of Sara Baartman, for example, giving prominence not only to the enormity of her naked posterior, but also the smoke emanating from both her pipe and mouth.<sup>347</sup> Sammons draws on this trope, with echoes of Barrow, to satirise the shared indolence of the pipe-smoking Dutchmen or Khoikhoi. Assumed civilised habits as mundane as tobacco, he warns sardonically, might ‘ape’ atavistic behaviour rather than European refinement. The showman enters and in his Yiddish or German accent emphasises the orang-utan as a ‘*Vild Man of the Woods*’ who ‘wraps his blanket around him like a Christian’. This scene would likely have attracted several guffaws from the audience, particularly from those critical of missionary efforts amongst the Khoikhoi and Xhosa. A blanket or bible, they would argue, were outward markers of conversion that failed to mask the irredeemable inward nature of their converts. Behind the laughter of the audience and grandstanding of the showman lay unspoken anxieties. The blanket might reveal the futility of turning an ape human through dress up, yet it also signalled the ambiguous lines between ape and human. Remove clothing from a hirsute human, and an orang-utan in a hat and jacket might appear more human than a genuine man. It is very likely that the display of the orang-utan in Cape Town did in fact occur, if one considers the traffic in freakish exotica for display in Europe via Cape sea routes. A brief stopover in Cape Town, with a short stint of shows, is thus not unlikely, as such displays were reported several times, one example involving a Kangaroo accompanying a travelling Adelaide newspaper editor who gave a lecture on emigration to Australia for interested Cape Town residents.<sup>348</sup>

The penchant for Africans as exhibits to be viewed alongside animals was no less resonant in the colonies than in Britain. The expanse of African bush might have presented an open laboratory for the travellers’ gaze, yet this spectacle also presented scope for the staged authenticity of sideshows and museums. At Bullock’s Liverpool Museum in Piccadilly in

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<sup>346</sup> John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa, in the years 1797 and 1798*, vol. 1 (London, 1801), pp. 77-78. Barrow’s indictment of the Dutch needs to be seen in the context of Britain’s recent acquisition of the Cape and her imperial need to denounce the legitimacy of Dutch right to rule by attacking their character. Barrow may have noted their slothfulness, but was still appreciative of their sociability, even going so far as to marry a Cape Dutch woman. Nigel Penn, ‘Mapping the Cape: John Barrow and the First British Occupation of the Colony, 1795-1803’, *Pretexts*, 4, 2 (1993), p. 35.

<sup>347</sup> Z.S. Strother, ‘Display of the Body Hottentot’, in Bernth Lindfors, ed, *Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 27-29.

<sup>348</sup> *SSAJ*, 26 February 1846; 5 March 1846.

London, more famously known as the Egyptian Hall, live and stuffed animals, ranging from zebra, elephants, ostriches, and lions, were presented alongside backdrops and props to suggest their natural environment.<sup>349</sup> This was a place not only for the popular entertainment of the natural sciences, but also for the sometimes indistinguishable attraction of ethnographic curiosity. Charles Bell, the Cape amateur artist well known for his caricatures of the Khoikhoi, for example, was invited to exhibit his artwork alongside various African artefacts in the Egyptian Hall in the 1830s following his exhibit in Cape Town,<sup>350</sup> whilst Sara Baartman's promoter Alexander Dunlop had earlier approached William Bullock in 1810 to display her at his museum, but was rejected owing to his preference for exotic exhibition rather than the seedier connotations of burlesque spectacle.<sup>351</sup> Within this context, it is interesting to note the following comic sketch submitted to the *Journal* by George Duff, an amateur artist specialising in ethnographic drawings like his contemporaries de Meillon, J.W. and Bell.<sup>352</sup> Headed 'the South African Exhibition in London', which Duff had apparently 'overheard' (although evidently an imagined scene), it was set presumably in the Egyptian Hall or street sideshow with Sam Sly as a cockney barker:

Walk in, walk in, we've Lions here!  
 And crested Serpent shapes of fear,  
 And Camel-leopard we can shew!  
 The Elephant and Tiger too,  
 The lordly Eland and the Gnu,  
 The Wild Dog and Hyena fell,  
 Any more than there is room to tell!

[Spoken.]-“Walk in, walk in, ladies and gentlemen!- the opportunity may never occur again.” “This way mam, if you please.” “Lawks ma! look at that horrible looking what's o' name in the glass case?” “Oh dear! sir, pray what's that?” “That, marm, is the vunderful pisonus and pestiferous Puff Adder, that springs twenty feet backwards at one spring, and always lights on the tip of his tail, just as you see him there!” “Hilloa! Sammy, what's all that row about in the other room?” “Vy, master, its only the the Hottentot Wenus a singing one of her out-landish songs all about catch me cackle-back!” (Aside.)- “Sammy, she mustn't have any more gin, she gits too obstropolous!” “Well, I declare, a very fine collection, upon my word!”...<sup>353</sup>

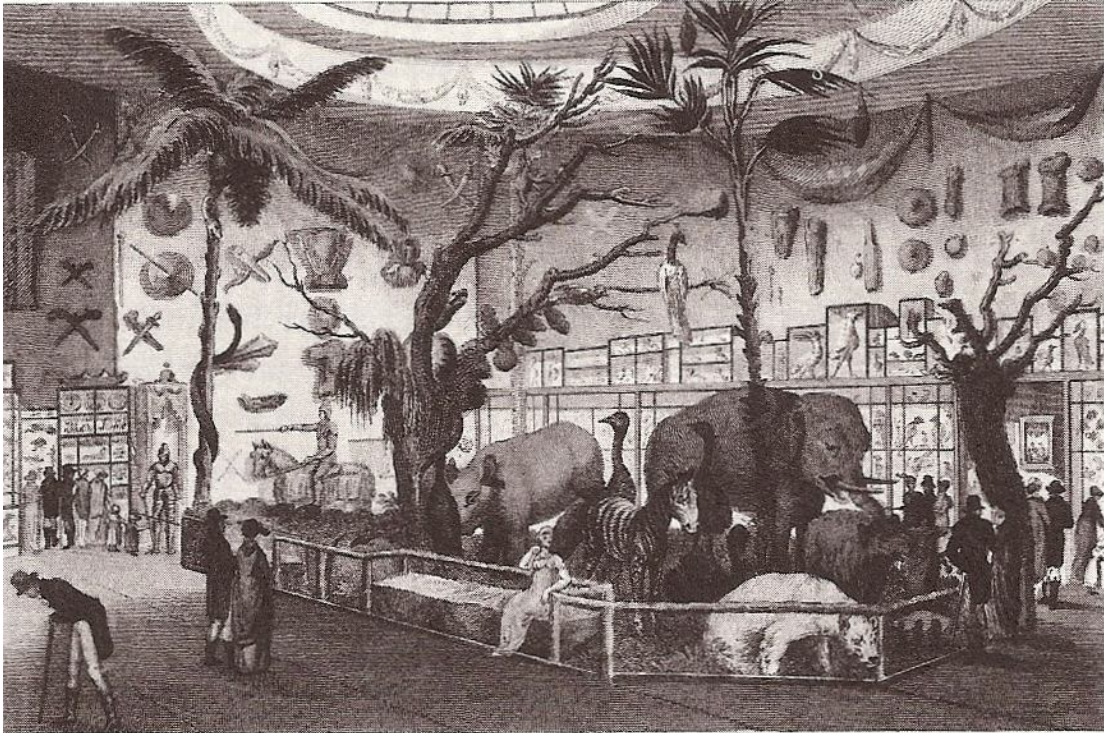
<sup>349</sup> Altick, *Shows*, pp.235-242.

<sup>350</sup> Bank, 'Return of the Noble Savage', p. 23.

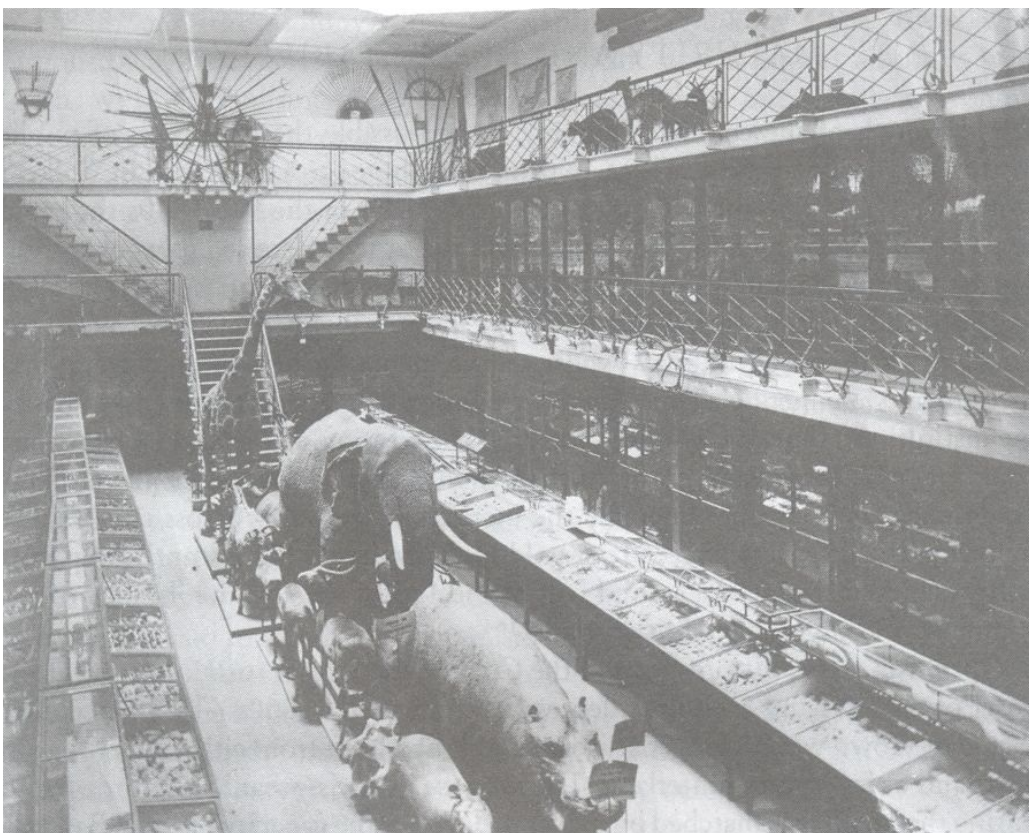
<sup>351</sup> Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman*, pp.68-9.

<sup>352</sup> Much of Duff's artwork and literary sketches were compiled together and published as George Duff, *A South African Miscellany of Historic, Narrative, and Descriptive Sketches, Tales, Poetry, &c.: Part I- May 1852* (Cape Town: T.W. Collard, 1852); George Duff, *A Trip to Swellendam, and Back by Another Route; also Miscellaneous Sketches* (Cape Town: Mathew, Chevens and Bryant, 1859). The former comprised of much of Duff's contributions to *Sam Sly's African Journal* in the 1840s, the latter his contributions to the *Cape Weekly Chronicle* in the 1850s. The latter also included pieces by 'Terry Byrne', a pseudonym assumed by Duff.

<sup>353</sup> SSAJ, 12 October 1848.



**Figure 8**, Bullock's Liverpool Museum ('the Egyptian Hall') in Piccadilly Street, London, c. 1810 in Altick, *Shows of London*, p. 238



**Figure 9**, The interior of the South African Museum, (then sharing premises with the SA Library), c.1880 in Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*, p. 59

There were no qualms about presenting a Khoikhoi woman as a specimen of African fauna, as the centrepiece of a menagerie of ‘wild’ exotica to be gawked at and prodded. Such displays moved from the theatrics of street display towards the ordered scientific vision of the museum, which Bullock’s museum was an intermediary exemplar. There are strong similarities between a view of Bullock’s museum in the early nineteenth century with that of the South African Museum in the 1880s [see **Figures 8 and 9**], barring perhaps the exotic backdrop of the former.

The South African Museum, like its counterparts the British Museum in London and Musée de l’Homme in Paris, displayed real-life casts of ‘Bushmen’ within its natural history collection. Such displays reinforced the differences between ‘barbarism’ and ‘civilization’ for a Victorian visitor.<sup>354</sup> It is not surprising then that Duff’s comic sketch combines theatricality with the curiosity of the natural sciences. Like the exaggerated feats of the Puff Adder, who the cockney barker Sammy says can ‘spring twenty feet backwards’, the Khoikhoi woman on display must also demonstrate extraordinary characteristics, notably the dominant image of the hyper-sexualised, drunken and unruly indigene. Duff’s racist amalgam of Sara Baarman, the ‘Hottentot Venus’ (sic), with Kaatje Kekkelbek, the rollicking, drunken and outspoken protagonist of Andrew Geddes Bain’s play written in the mid-1830s and published ten years later in *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, reveals the pervasiveness of such an image in popular culture.

We will return later to Kaatje Kekkelbek and the political context in which it was produced at the Cape, but it is worthwhile for the moment to consider further the links between theatricality and racial thinking in the context of the editor Sammons’ predilections and background. Sammons was intimately familiar with the picaresque in theatre and art in Britain. His friendship with George Cruikshank meant he not only frequented dinner parties, but also made ‘the round of several of the theatres and gardens’ in London, and was personally acquainted with Cruikshank’s method of social observation in the underbelly of London from ‘St. James’s Chapel’ to ‘Pentonville’ where he sought inspiration ‘to reclaim by a moral and pictorial force the repelling, the vicious, and the vile’. Having spent many hours in conversation with Cruikshank visiting his ‘requisite haunts’, Sammons also perused his

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<sup>354</sup> Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*, pp. 55-59. Dubow observes that there was no overt attempt to curate the South African Museum as a validation of any ‘overarching theory of racial superiority’ at mid century, yet the very inclusion of ethnographic displays as part of natural science collections reinforced an idea of cultural, and hence racial, backwardness.

drawings of ‘Odd Peoples and Things’ in his workshop.<sup>355</sup> Fancying himself then as something of an art critic, Sammons wrote a series of art criticisms in the Bath press as ‘A Hint to Reviewers’. In one, he appraises one of the many depictions of ‘the Hottentot Venus’, Sara Baartman:

If any thing, the cutaneous envelope of her ladyship is rather too much ebonised. We prefer the bronze tints, as samples of exquisite beauty and loveliness; the features are also too much rounded... Our extreme modesty checks our runs into detail, or we could wish to have *enlarged*... upon that particular locality or part of her person, which Smollet so very appropriately describes as retiring from a drawing room the last’.<sup>356</sup>

Sammons’s focus is overtly sexualising, as he focuses on the purportedly large posterior and genitalia of Sara Baartman. She is less a ‘lady’ than a counterpoint to European beauty, her vulgar body (black, not white; ‘immodest’ physique) reflecting the dangers posed for transgressive European femininity, as reflected in the scandalous female characters of Smollet’s eighteenth-century novels. The depiction of black female bodies as grotesque and sexually subversive reinforced a discourse of degeneracy located in the triptych of racial, gender and class marginality noted by feminist scholars. Sander Gilman, for example, has linked the iconography of the ‘Hottentot’ female with that of a prostitute, with the former (particularly following depictions of Sara Baartman) serving as ‘the central icon’ for the sexual deviance to which whites might regress.<sup>357</sup> As Rosemarie Garland Thomson words it, ‘what we assume to be a freak of nature was instead a freak of culture’, an embellished unusual body that ‘represented at once boundless liberty and appalling disorder, the former the promise and the latter the threat of democracy’.<sup>358</sup> What is important here is not only that bodily difference inscribed cultural difference, but that this very spectacle reflected unease within the body politic. To clarify, the display of Sara Baartman might have entertained and titillated, and offered scientific curiosity, yet it also provided a platform for parody and thus critique of the meanings of liberty. Broadsides lampooned Parliament as ‘The Broad Bottom Ministry’ during Baartman’s exhibition in England, for example, the sexual excess and cultural regression encoded on Baartman’s body acting as metaphoric of ‘Old Corruption’ in the body politic of Tory and Whig parliamentarians and the profligacy of the Prince Regent

<sup>355</sup> Blanchard Jerrold, *The Life of George Cruikshank* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1882), pp. 64-73.

<sup>356</sup> *Keenes’ Bath Journal and General Advertiser*, 30 April 1838.

<sup>357</sup> Sander Gilman, ‘Black Bodies, White Bodies: Towards an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine and Literature’, *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1985), p. 212.

<sup>358</sup> Thomson, pp. 10-12.

(whose equally large posterior was emphasised next to that of Baartman's in several cartoons).<sup>359</sup> Central to controversy over Baartman's exhibition was whether she was enslaved, anathema to abolitionist sentiment that resulted in a court case spear-headed by the abolitionist Zachary Macaulay. The court case may have found that Baartman was acting under her own consent and was thus not a slave or coerced, yet the tensions between the need for black liberty (as well as the political capital abolitionism offered to British politicians) and the perceived (sexually-debasing) barbarism of the black body highlighted in Sara Baartman's display was central to her public reception.<sup>360</sup>

It is interesting to note that Sammons's art criticism of Sara Baartman quoted above also made oblique reference to 'Jim Crow', the popular minstrel figure of a slave from the American South who performed in London in the 1830s by a white American actor T.D. Rice in black makeup and tattered jacket, his jovial dance and wide foolish grin making a mockery of the potential for cultural refinement and liberty for a black slave.<sup>361</sup> Black minstrelsy and the literary figure of the black fool also found expression in 'Zip Coon' and 'Sambo', to name other comic types, with racial picaresque a thriving literary, artistic and theatrical genre in Britain and America. Black-faced actors portraying slaves, servants and African royalty elicited laughter from a white audience that 'struggled to reconcile notions of a "free and virtuous empire" with an emerging conviction about its national and racial supremacy'.<sup>362</sup> By rendering race as a mask that could be 'washed off' to reveal a white actor underneath, blackness as a disguise in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century theatre was synonymous with issues of vice (black as satanic), labour (black as dirt) and/or comedy (the black mask, tunic and tights of the Harlequin). This in turn elicited discomfiting laughter, for the ambiguity of disguise exposed the 'black' heart of whiteness whilst confirming comic stereotypes of black backwardness.<sup>363</sup> The theatre of the stage held unnerving echoes of the

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<sup>359</sup> Scully and Crais, *Sara Baartman*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>360</sup> For the trial, see Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman*, ch. 4; Yvette Abrahams, 'Disempowered to Consent: Sara Baartman and Khoisan Slavery in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony and Britain', *South African Historical Journal*, 35 (1996), pp. 89-114.

<sup>361</sup> Alan Green, "'Jim Crow", "Zip Coon": The Northern Origins of Negro Minstrelsy', *The Massachusetts Review*, 11, 2 (1970), pp. 385-397.

<sup>362</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum, 'The Theatre of Empire: Racial Counterfeit, Racial Realism' in Kathleen Wilson, ed, *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 71.

<sup>363</sup> Nussbaum, 'The Theatre of Empire', pp. 71-90. Nussbaum argues that white actors in black masquerade diminished after 1838 when abolitionist aims were achieved, with a move toward realism that favoured racial essentialisms. Blackness in the Victorian era needed to be seen as something that could not be 'washed off', a firmer alignment of ethnicity with cultural difference that confirmed the 'reality' of actual blacks encountered in

‘theatre’ of real life, where an industrialising world wrought threatening changes to the social fabric in the form of a rising working class in squalid living conditions and intermittent political turmoil in continental Europe. As liberal sentiment, buoyed by evangelicalism, decried slavery and ill-treatment of indigenes in the colonies in the early nineteenth century, the cultural markers of difference between ‘civilised’ whiteness and black ‘barbarity’ were coming under strain. This anxiety was well expressed in popular representations of blackness.

Expressing settler unease over the social position of the Khoikhoi in the Cape Colony in the 1830s, Andrew Geddes Bain’s satirical poem-play *Kaatje Kekkelbek, or Life Among the Hottentots* provides a useful glimpse into how representations of blackness were intertwined with the political concerns of white colonists sceptical of missionary motives towards rehabilitating the Khoi from a state of drunkenness, heathenism and thievishness, expressed in the sole character of Kaatje who defies humanitarian efforts to ‘civilise her’. The play was first performed on 5 November 1838 at the Graham’s Town Amateur Theatre, with an early manuscript draft dating to 1835, whilst differing versions were later published in the *South African Sentinel* on 4 March 1839 and *Sam Sly’s African Journal* on 5 March 1846.<sup>364</sup> The 1830s was the high noon of liberalism in the Cape Colony, with Khoikhoi freedom of labour secured by Ordinance 50 of 1828, and slavery abolished in 1834 with final emancipation in 1838. Not all were jubilant about this legislation, since it smacked of meddling from abolitionist politicians and lobbyists in Britain, as well as a small clique of liberal-minded colonists such as the journalist John Fairbairn, the colonial administrator Andries Stockenstrom and the missionary John Philip. Unable to tie labour to the land through indenture or slavery, and with black labourers possessing freedom of movement to choose an employer or terminate employment more easily, many white colonists were upset about such legislation. *Kaatje Kekkelbek* parodied the drunkenness, indolence and ignorance assumed of Khoikhoi colonists. Typecast as vagrants, or pretenders to ‘whiteness’ in their ownership of land in the Kat River Settlement founded in 1829 in the eastern Cape, Khoikhoi loyalty to the colony was questioned by anti-liberals, whether Dutch farmers or British settler conservatives in the eastern Cape suspicious of liberal optimism toward frontier policy. Thus, Bain’s

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every day interactions. In turn, on the stage black actors playing black parts were increasingly favoured over white actors wearing black makeup, the first black actors appearing in the 1830s in Britain.

<sup>364</sup> The most extensive treatment of the poetics and literary historical context of *Kaatje Kekkelbek* is P.R. Anderson, “‘The Host of Vagabonds’: Origins and Destinations of the Vagrant in Cape History and Ideas”, PhD thesis, University of Cape Town (2007), ch.3. See also M. H. Lister, *The Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1949), 193-201.

opening lines introduce us to a caricature of a Khoikhoi woman that amplified anti-liberal anxieties:

My name is Kaatje Kekkelbek,  
I come from Katrivier,  
Daar is van water geen gebrek,  
But scarce of wine and beer.  
Myn A B C at Ph'lipes school  
I learnt a kleine beetje,  
But left it just as great a fool  
As gekke Tante Meitje.<sup>365</sup>

The figure of Kaatje sings of her origins in Kat River, her failed education by John Philip's missionary school that left her 'just as great a fool', drinking and cavorting in canteens, her wanderings through the 'Kowie Bush', her labour to 'Engels setlaars', and crimes committed such as stealing sheep (the lifeblood of the eastern Cape economy) and beating a rival 'vrouw' to her 'sweat heart' resulting in imprisonment. Her jovial indifference to her vagrant and criminal existence serves as a parody of the humanitarian project of granting greater liberty to the Khoikhoi. She shuns sobriety, fails education and religious instruction, and ignores property rights through stealing. As such, she is the antonym of humanitarian ideals, as she tramples over the laws and conduct expected of loyal colonists by forging her own 'right to steal and fight/ As Kaffir has or Fingoe', itself a not so veiled threat at military insubordination. Written in the context of the Sixth Frontier War of 1834-5 between the British and Rarabe Xhosa, in which the Gcaleka Xhosa chief Hintsas was brutally murdered (his ear infamously cut off by a soldier as a souvenir, his body mutilated),<sup>366</sup> Bain here expressed a fear that the Khoikhoi of the Kat River Settlement, a source of British combatants as well as a frontier buffer against the Xhosa, might change allegiance and fight against the British. It is thus important that *Kaatje Kekkelbek* was resurrected as a text through being reprinted in *Sam Sly's African Journal* in 1846, just as the War of the Axe was being fought on the frontier. A Khoikhoi mutiny might not have occurred then, but it did five years later in 1851 during the War of Mlanjeni. The picturesque (aesthetically pleasing and sentimental depictions of indigenous figures and customs) and picaresque (comic and parodic depictions) were often

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<sup>365</sup> Klip Springer [Andrew Geddes Bain], 'Kaatje Kekkelbek, or Life Among the Hottentots', *SSAJ*, 20 August 1846. This was also published as a separate pamphlet.

<sup>366</sup> The many interpretations of Hintsas's murder in South African historiography are well-explored in Premesh Lalou, *The Deaths of Hintsas: Post-Apartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Past* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2009). The iconography of his murder has led to the war being named 'The War of Hintsas', yet this is misleading. Hintsas had declared himself neutral, yet this was disputed by Harry Smith who claimed clandestine support for the Maqomo-led Rarabe Xhosa whom the British were at war with.

employed to attract focus away from the unsavoury reality of colonial violence,<sup>367</sup> with *Kaatje Kekkelbek* an example of the indigene rendered for a brief moment on stage as ‘black, happy and harmless- a source of hilarity rather than shame, guilt and anxiety’.<sup>368</sup>

The hilarity of *Kaatje* lay not only in direct parody of the civilising mission to the Khoikhoi, but also in the comedy apparent in her performance on the stage by a white, male actor.<sup>369</sup> We can imagine crude face-paint for blackness and a dress for femininity, with the obvious cross-dressing serving to emphasise the failed project of colonial mimicry. The absurdity of gender and racial role reversals on stage made out the real life acculturation of blacks toward European manners and customs appear to be more slapstick than genuine, a temporary guise rather than a true reflection of black essentialisms. Homi Bhabha has been the most successful in exploring the ambiguities of Europeanised indigene, in that they are ‘a reformed, recognizable Other... *that is almost the same but not quite*’.<sup>370</sup> One of the central jokes of the colonial project is thus the ultimate failure of the civilising mission in transforming colonial subjects into exact replicas of white cultural attainment. The Khoikhoi is presented as a middling figure, not fully black, but only ever possibly a counterfeit of whiteness. This is exacerbated even more by the emerging vision of Khoikhoi (increasingly conflated in popular iconography in the post-emancipation era with (ex-)slaves to represent a ‘coloured’ identity<sup>371</sup>) as a bastard race, the product of miscegenation. Not exactly black, but not quite white, their creolised Dutch further emphasising the ‘barbarised’ tongue of mixed parentage.<sup>372</sup>

Ana Deumert, drawing on Bakhtin, has usefully located texts such as *Kaatje Kekkelbek* not as a proto-Afrikaans as Afrikaner nationalist scholars were prone to claim, but rather as a mock/mockling vernacular written by colonisers to parody those (in this case the Khoikhoi)

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<sup>367</sup> Bank, ‘Return of the Noble Savage’, p. 24, drawing upon Linda Nochlin, ‘The Imaginary Orient’, *Art in America*, 71 (1983), p. 126.

<sup>368</sup> Green, ‘Northern Origins of Negro Minstrelsy’, p. 395.

<sup>369</sup> The part of ‘Kaatje’ was likely performed by George Rex who probably co-wrote parts of the comic sketch (the prose would be Rex’s, the verses are attributed to Bain) or Louis Meurant, the founder of the *Graham’s Town Journal* who had played the character of ‘Kaatje’ for Etienne Boniface’s play *De Burger Edelman* several years earlier. Fletcher, *The Story of Theatre in South Africa*, p. 66.

<sup>370</sup> Homi Bhabha, ‘Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse’, in F. Cooper and A.L. Stoler, eds, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 153.

<sup>371</sup> Bank, ‘The Return of the Noble Savage’, p. 24.

<sup>372</sup> As early as 1627, the Englishman Thomas Herbert remarked that the Khoikhoi ‘language is rather apishly than articulately sounded, with whom ‘tis thought they have unnatural mixtures’. Thomas Herbert, extract from R. Raven-Hart, *Before Van Riebeeck: Callers at South Africa from 1488-1652* (Cape Town, 1967), p. 120.

who spoke creolised Dutch. This regional dialect portrayed the ‘other-ness’ of the text, as opposed to the ‘our-own-ness’ of the emergent Afrikaner dialect literature from the early 1860s onwards.<sup>373</sup> Bain was fluent in Dutch, as he acted as court interpreter and contributed several letters and satires to the colonial press in a Dutch patois, and employs the mixed Dutch/English of Kaatje’s speech, the hard consonants and wordplay, as a sophisticated satirical device. P.R. Anderson, by placing *Kaatje Kekkelbek* within its literary historical context as essentially an anti-humanitarian text, provides an engaging deconstruction of Bain’s linguistic play. The alliteration of her name is suggestive of ‘the verbal play of children, the chatter of apes, the stuttering of... vagrant cant... [and] European representations of Khoesan speech’.<sup>374</sup> Under Bain’s pen Kaatje’s speech is regressive, as she ‘mutilates’ European language back to the empty stammer of ‘Hottentot’ chatter. Her name ‘Kaatjie Kekkelbek’ denotes ‘Katie Chatterbox’ at its most tame translation, but is more correctly translated as the harsher ‘Katie Cackle-beak’, evoking a hysterical woman or dangerous gossip. The connotations extend to ‘Katjie’ (Dutch for Kitty), a feral cat symbolic of feminine sexuality and roving, and more directly to the ‘Kat’ of the Kat River Settlement from where she hails.<sup>375</sup> Her many names (she proclaims: ‘My name is Kaatje Kekkelbek’; with ‘name’ a plural in Dutch) makes her elusive and untrustworthy, a woman of many aliases, a fiction birthed in Bain’s literary imagination, as well as echoes of real life Khoikhoi women and colonial iconography. Her voice is neither a ‘genuine appeal for the plight of the Hottentot’<sup>376</sup> as claimed by some liberal scholars, nor is it a progenitor of Afrikaans.<sup>377</sup> Bain had several influences, the most obvious being Ettiene Boniface’s play *De Temperantisten* (1832), where Khoi ex-convicts drink and brawl in the streets before heading off to a temperance society meeting headed by liberals John Philip (‘Dominee Humbug Philipumpkin’) and John Fairbairn (‘Sir John Brute’).<sup>378</sup> The anti-liberal focus could also have been influenced, as has been recently claimed by Damien Shaw, by a slave narrative of

<sup>373</sup> Ana Deumert, ‘Praatjies and Broerenbrievien Popular Literature in the History of Afrikaans’, *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 20, 1 (2005), p. 24.

<sup>374</sup> Anderson, “‘The Host of Vagabonds’”, p. 126.

<sup>375</sup> Anderson, “‘The Host of Vagabonds’”, pp. 125-7.

<sup>376</sup> A.J. Coetzee, Tim Couzens and Stephen Gray, ‘South African Literature to World War II’ in Albert Gérard, ed, *European-Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), p. 183. Stephen Gray also argues, incorrectly, in his essay ‘The Frontier Myth and the Hottentot Eve’ that *Kaatje Kekkelbek* provides a ‘court of appeal’ for her grievances, neglecting to note her position as a literary foil to indict humanitarian viewpoints and actions towards the Khoikhoi Stephen Gray, *Southern African Literature: An Introduction* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), pp. 52-58.

<sup>377</sup> For example F.C.L Bosman, *Drama en Toneel in Suid Afrika, I: 1652-1855* (Cape Town and Pretoria: HAUM and J.H. de Bussy, 1928), pp. 24-27.

<sup>378</sup> For a summary of the play and its context see Andrew Bank, ‘Liberals and their Enemies: Racial Ideology at the Cape of Good Hope’, PhD thesis, Cambridge University (1995), pp. 173-180.

a West Indian woman, *The History of Mary Prince* (1831), edited by liberal poet Thomas Pringle, with Bain's play a parody of earnest slave claims for equality.<sup>379</sup> *Kaatje Kekkelbek's* provenance lies in the context of anti-liberal sentiment, the figure of Kaatje serving to ridicule both the Khoikhoi and more importantly the liberal project of education, equal rights and religious teaching toward them.

Kaatje is sassy and outspoken in her drunken address, as she feminises her race with bombastic declarations (she stands in part as a spokesperson for all Khoikhoi, evidenced in her frequent 'we'). To deliver the full force of her message she resorts to her feminine wiles. Here, we return full circle to the dominant image of Khoikhoi women as sexually deviant and biological anomalous with their protruding buttocks:

Oom Andrie Stoffels in England told,  
 (Fine compliments he paid us,)  
 Dat Engels dame was juist de same  
 As ons *sweet* Hot'not *ladies*,  
 What drest up in voersits pak,  
 What hearts will then be undone,  
 Should I but show *my face* or *back*  
 (Kaatje here turns round)  
 Among the beaux of London.<sup>380</sup>

Andries Stoffels was a Khoikhoi witness before the Select Committee on Aborigines in London in 1836, yet according to Kaatje it is not political equality that he preached but the equal physical attractiveness of Khoikhoi and European women. The joke is made even more dramatic by the direct reference to Sara Baartman who also displayed her face and back to

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<sup>379</sup> Damien Shaw, 'Two 'Hottentots', Some Scots and a West Indian Slave: The Origins of *Kaatje Kekkelbek*', *English Studies in Africa*, 52, 2 (2009), pp. 4-17. Shaw claims that, on the evidence of a letter sent by Pringle to John Fairbairn on 31 December 1831, several copies of *The History of Mary Prince* were sent to Fairbairn, who might have circulated them amongst the close-knit Scottish community at the Cape. He backs up the claim that Bain read a copy and responded in satire, by comparing the circumstantial links between the characteristics of slave narratives and *Kaatje Kekkelbek*: slave narratives begin with a name and place of birth but no date ('My name is Kaatje Kekkelbek,/ I come from Katrivier'); they describe the cruelty of masters or overseers, yet Kaatje describes the lenient naivety of her employers; they emphasise a diligent work ethic, yet Kaatje is slovenly, lazy and a drunkard; they focus on the difficulty in seeking education and literacy, yet Kaatje laughs off the ineffectiveness of missionary attempts at her education; finally, slave narratives appeal to abolitionist aims of granting equal rights and freedom to slaves, yet Kaatje does all she can to thwart the law in drinking, stealing and brawling. Shaw's circumstantial argument is a compelling piece of the jigsaw toward tracing Bain's literary influences, yet he errs in failing to differentiate between the separate legal standing of slaves and Khoikhoi. He refers to 'the system of indentured labour (which ended in 1838 [sic]) to control the vagrant 'Hottentot' population' on p. 7. It was in fact *slaves* who were granted final emancipation in 1838, with Khoi granted greater labour freedoms in Ordinance 50 of 1828. Their indenture prior to this had, in practice at least, amounted to a form of slavery. For this see V.C. Malherbe, 'Indentured and Unfree Labour in South Africa: Towards an Understanding', *South African Historical Journal*, 24 (1991), pp. 3-30.

<sup>380</sup> SSAJ, 20 August 1846.

‘the beaux of London’, and we can imagine the actor playing Kaatje to have turned his backside to the audience with comic aplomb and sexual innuendo. The Select Committee in the closing stanza is said to have met ‘in *Extra Hole*’, not Exeter Hall, a politer allusion to female genitalia, more vulgarly ‘gat’ in Dutch or ‘cunt’ in English. Much like the satirical cartoons comparing the British government to Sara Baartman, Bain’s play attacks the image of the Select Committee as holding rational, masculine and morally upright debate by replacing it with that of female irrationality and sexual looseness. Kaatje’s obloquy to achieve her ‘rights’ to ‘brandewyn’ and sexual licence in turn makes out the Select Committee to be a bastion of the vices she espouses, rather than the values of sobriety, education and civil freedoms.

Pervasive within satires of the Khoikhoi is a grappling with the unease over class and race, where a soot-blackened worker of European descent might appear blacker than an African in genteel dress. As one joke in *Sam Sly’s African Journal* put it: ‘A negro is a “black,” but one who cleans boots is- “a blacker”’.<sup>381</sup> This was evident in the ambiguities of black representation on the stage, as has been explored earlier in this chapter. In 1848, for example, a French Theatrical Company touring Cape Town performed a scene from the text of Victor Hugo and the grand air of the Barber of Seville. Describing the performances, Sammons bestowed praise on one actor who ‘shone conspicuously in three characters consecutively, in the personification of Age- a *Hottentot woman*, and a *chimney sweeper*- which were acted to the life, and drew great applause’.<sup>382</sup> The racialising of class difference, and the class-conscious approach to race, was a manifestation of a cultural dialogue between Britain and its colonies. The supposed indolence and inebriation of Khoikhoi labour could be compared to that of the working class in Britain and vice versa. As Anne McClintock observes, within European attitudes in the nineteenth century, ‘as domestic space became racialized, colonial space became domesticated’,<sup>383</sup> with servants easily compared to black colonists and black colonists lampooned for their inadequate potential for upward social mobility. A classic example of this within *Sam Sly’s African Journal* is the woodcut of a Khoikhoi woman sitting outside her ‘Hottentot’s Hut’ [Figure 10], which resembles a sketch by the artist George

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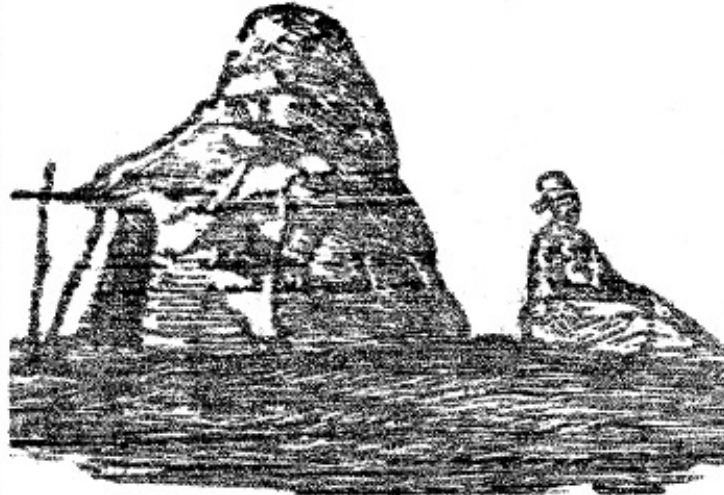
<sup>381</sup> *SSAJ*, 31 December 1846.

<sup>382</sup> *SSAJ*, 6 April 1848.

<sup>383</sup> McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 36.

8. A negro is a "black," but one who cleans boots is—  
"a blacker."

### A HOTTENTOT'S HUT.



"All amongst the Hottentots capering ashore," is a song universally known in England and elsewhere, but perhaps few have seen their domiciles. Here is one of their mansions; rough and rustic it is true, and differing somewhat from the style of architecture employed in Fonthill Abbey, yet, nevertheless, sufficiently convenient for the purpose of the inmates, and like the cobbler's stall, does for kitchen, parlour, and all. My lady is sitting outside, enjoying the cool of the evening, perhaps watching the setting sun, or waiting for the coming of her lord. Who can tell her thoughts? Whether she be ruminating on the last new fashions or the Kaffir war, or anticipating the entree at Almack's—where few can excel her, although they try to imitate, in the more excessive developments of nature. One thing may be said, that she has no bad debts or returned bills to trouble her, or her *better half*, and should she overrun the constable may defy them to seize her effects, and draw out an inventory,—which would fetch but little on the *Parades*.

The artist says, "this is his first attempt at wood-cutting, and wishes it were better." We must, therefore, take the will for the deed, and lament at the low state, or rather appreciation, of the arts in Africa,—for we have gentlemen amateurs, highly advanced, whose skill has frequently embellished these pages.

Figure 10, [George Duff], Woodcut of 'A Hottentot's Hut', in *Sam Sly's African Journal*, 31 December 1846.

Duff, a likelihood confirmed by his frequent written contributions to the journal.<sup>384</sup> We are given wry commentary by Sammons of one of their ‘domiciles’.

Here is one of their mansions; rough and rustic it is true, and differing somewhat from the style and architecture employed in Fonthill Abbey, yet, nevertheless, sufficiently convenient for the purpose of the inmates, and like the cobbler’s stall, does for kitchen, parlour, and all. My lady is sitting outside, enjoying the cool of the evening, perhaps watching the setting sun, or waiting for the coming of her lord. Who can tell her thoughts? Whether she be ruminating on the last new fashions or the Kaffir war, or anticipating the entree at Almack’s...<sup>385</sup>

Sammons observations come across as crass to a modern reader, yet his racial lens finds comedy in the disjuncture between European gentility and Khoikhoi customs. The hut is anything but a ‘mansion’, nor does it bear any resemblance to a church, yet Sammons makes a jab at the criminal underbelly of its occupants who are derided as ‘inmates’. The Khoikhoi woman is anything but a fashionable member of high society, as she more likely sits preparing the evening meal than contemplating invitation-only balls and expensive dresses.

The Khoikhoi were often depicted in early modern travelogues as the antithesis of civilised manners, with rude clothing including foul-smelling intestines worn as ornaments around their necks; at their worst an appetite for eating their own dead, and mothers suckling infants by throwing a breast over their shoulder.<sup>386</sup> Sammons’s satire is a parody of travel writing and ethnographic artwork that served as a nostalgic reflection on the noble savagery of Khoikhoi customs, domiciles and physical appearances. At play here is a comic tension between the aesthetic conventions of depicting the Khoikhoi as noble or ignoble savages, with the humour evoked from the disjunction between an idealistic view of the Khoikhoi as resembling classical figures with European resemblances, and that of an uncomplimentary view of them as degraded, heathen, treacherous and ape-like.<sup>387</sup> Such depictions spoke to their target audience, with mid nineteenth-century artists such as George Angas’s artwork aimed for a European market that favoured, in the climate of humanitarianism, an idealistic

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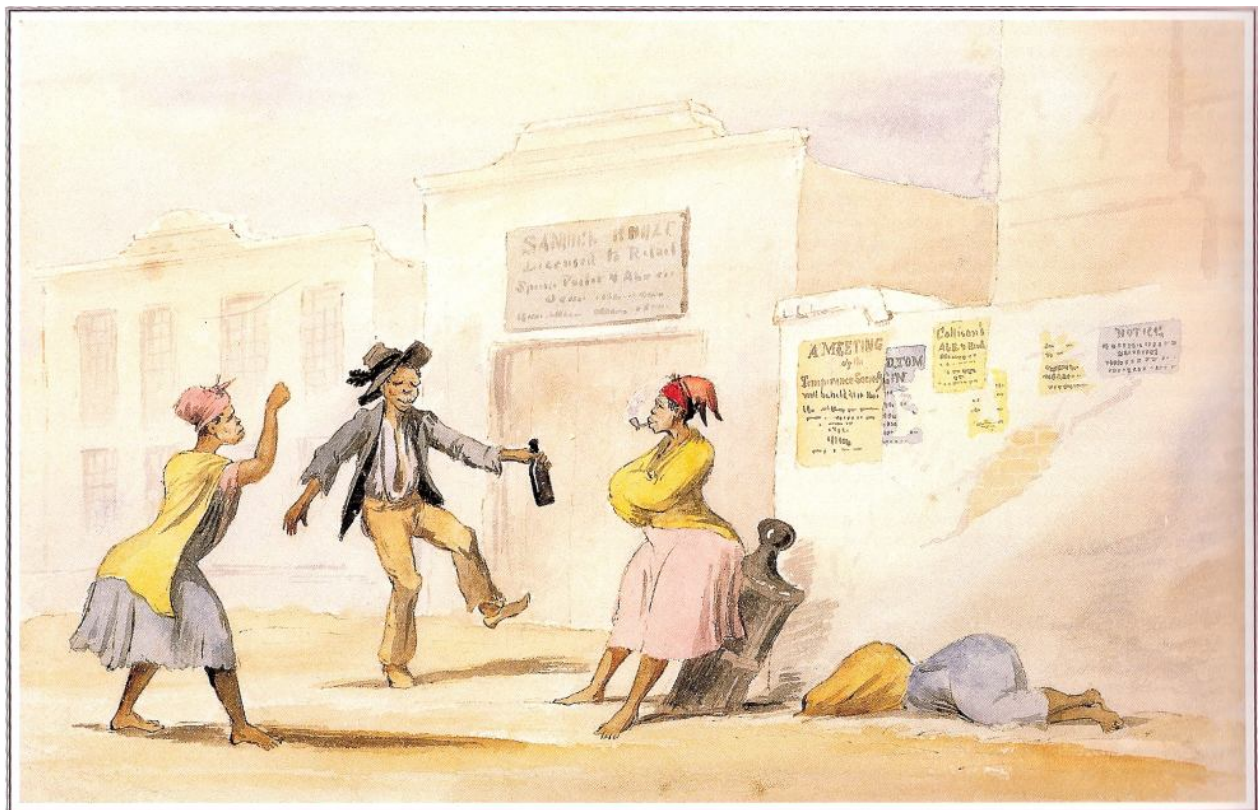
<sup>384</sup> The woodcut resembles an inversion of the watercolour D455, ‘Hottentot Hut Algoa Bay’, in R.F. Kennedy, compiler, *Catalogue of Pictures in the Africana Museum* (Johannesburg: Africana Museum, 1966), vol. 2, p. 244.

<sup>385</sup> *SSAJ*, 31 December 1846.

<sup>386</sup> Van Wyk Smith, “‘The Most Wretched of the Human Race’”, p. 293.

<sup>387</sup> Bank, ‘Return of the Noble Savage’.

aesthetic in ethnographic sketches<sup>388</sup>. In contrast, Charles Bell's well known visual satires of the Khoikhoi as drunken vagrants were sold mainly to a colonial market, thus reflecting the anti-liberal views held by many colonists and reflected in work such as Andrew Geddes Bain's play *Kaatje Kekkelbek* discussed above. If we consider briefly Bell's *Hottentots-Street Scene* [Figure 11], Khoikhoi carousing is depicted in four personalities: a quarrelsome woman with large buttocks (like Kaatje), a man dancing in drunken merriment, a woman leaning against an old cannon smoking a pipe, and lastly a woman passed out face down from drunkenness. On the wall in the background is a poster advertising a temperance society meeting, to further underlay the over-optimism of liberal aims toward Khoikhoi reformation. In all the sketches, the Khoikhoi hold bottles and not glasses, a cultural statement where bottles symbolised heavy drinking and lower class waywardness, glasses restraint in consumption and a level of middle class refinement.<sup>389</sup>



**Figure 11**, Charles Bell, *Hottentots- Street Scene*, in Simons, *The Life and Work of Charles Bell*, p. 148

<sup>388</sup> Russell Viljoen, 'Sketching the Khoi: George French Angas and his Depiction of the Genadendal Khoikhoi Characters at the Cape of Good Hope, c.1847', *South African Journal of Art History*, 22, 2 (2007), pp. 277-290.

<sup>389</sup> R. Viljoen, 'Alcohol and Art: Charles Davidson Bell and his caricatured images of Colonial Khoikhoi in early nineteenth century South Africa', *South African Journal of Art History*, 23, 1 (2008), pp. 190-202.

The decline in humanitarian liberalism in Cape racial views coincided with disillusionment with the ability to redeem and uplift blacks. It was missionary zeal that was blamed for stirring up dissent amongst the Xhosa in the mid-1830s by British frontier settlers, a complaint used again to explain the Kat River Rebellion of the Khoikhoi in 1851. The 1840s were thus an uneasy transition period in racial opinion at the Cape, with satire playing upon the contradictory tensions between settler imperialist racial scepticism and humanitarian liberal assurance.<sup>390</sup> Much of the satire in *Sam Sly's African Journal* reflected a conservative view sceptical of racial equality, drawing upon motifs satirising the British working class. Take for example the following letter sent by 'Kitty Veller', written in a cockney vernacular bemoaning the moral threat of the 'Hottentots' and hopes for their spiritual redemption.

I'm greatly trubbled about them there Hottentots, they are awl goin to the divul, and wee Kristians ought to stop em. I shalks my hed at em when drunk, and does the best i can, but its wurse than nuffin, they larfs and tawks nauty words, shurly you cud send us some moere parsons to convart em from the horrors of their vays; they be very big sinnurs most viked.<sup>391</sup>

The irony lies in Kitty's own suspect social position reflected in her poor grammar and, as evidenced in another letter where she professes her undying love for the editor thus threatening the private realm of personal letters with the public concerns of the newspaper, a lack of propriety and tact in expressing her concerns.<sup>392</sup> 'Kitty Veller' is more than likely an invention of a male contributor, possibly Andrew Geddes Bain or George Duff, as many of her letters reflect contrived vernacular mistakes and a misogynist intent. This will be explored more fully in the next chapter, but it is worth noting again an allusion to symbolism of a cat for a troublesome female persona in 'Kitty', perhaps a European version of Bain's 'Kaatje'. Further, the 'Veller' is a clear reference to the 'Weller' of *Pickwick Papers* fame, Dickens's cockney character Sam Weller whose comic aphorisms offset their impertinence through well-meaning irony. As a satirical mode, Wellerisms became highly popular amongst the Victorian public.<sup>393</sup> If Kitty is morally suspect, with her amorous overtures towards the editor and poor writing skills, she is made to represent the untrustworthy face of liberal sentiment. Those in the general public calling for reform of the Khoikhoi, like Kaatje's characterisation

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<sup>390</sup> Andrew Bank, 'Losing Faith in the Civilising Mission: The Premature Decline of Humanitarian Liberalism at the Cape, 1840-1850', in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern, *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 364-383.

<sup>391</sup> 'Kitty Veller' to editor, *SSAJ*, 1 May 1845.

<sup>392</sup> *SSAJ*, 13 February 1845.

<sup>393</sup> Florence E. Baer, 'Wellerisms in *The Pickwick Papers*', *Folklore*, 94, 2 (1983), pp. 173-183.

of the Select Committee on Aborigines, are presented as uneducated and hysterical in contrast to the many eloquent communications to Cape newspapers opposed to humanitarian aims.

Continuing the discussion of vernacular contributions to *Sam Sly's African Journal*, we turn now to a revealing narrative of the misfortunes of an Irish shepherd, Jim Corney, on an eastern Cape farm by George Duff.<sup>394</sup> Jim Corney begins relating his tall tale before patrons at a road-side inn in Dublin. Boarding ship for a better life at the Cape, he is contracted soon after landing to a sheep farmer, and relates his fascination with 'thim black craythurs the fingers [Fingoes]' and 'the little the devils of Hottentoths that're quite good nathur'd people and very pleasant company, if ye only take the throuble to kape to windward of em'. He thus reinforces notions of Khoikhoi heathenism and foul body odour. Upon arriving at the farm 'nigh the grate fish river' where he jokes 'there's no great fishes in it at all', he erects a rudimentary hut and proceeds to watch the sheep in their 'krawls [kraals]' for the next several weeks, negotiating the prickly 'allers and mimosers' that might 'play distructhun wid yer unmentionables'. Corney's scatology continues for a fierce storm shortly blows away his hut after he has undressed from his wet cloths, leaving him with nothing to wear but his coat and boots, and worried about the 'purty figure I'll be cutting before the missis and thim randies the hottentoths!' Making his way to the farm for assistance, he is met by derisive laughter at the farmhouse door.

... some ov the hottentoth wimmin open it and sot up a noise as if they didn't know me at all, at all!- kekky daar so siz, one!- what soort of mens in ye, sid, anoder! Och bother, sid I, sure, ye'll be knowin I am Jim Corney, don't be sthanden there a jabbering, but lind in a hand wid sumthin or a coverin for I'm mighty cold siz I, but the skirlygig craythurs sits up a screech ov laughin and wint and told the masther who directly sot eyes on me, burst out a laughin so hearthy and so bother'd me... plenty of jokes he cut, and all at my expinse your Honner; but at last when he'd done wid his vagary, and tuk himself clane off, one ov the hottentoths slips off her gown and hands it to me and rale obleeged to her I was and sune slid myself into it and by the same token we were very great friends ever after it, and she was the youngest of em and as I'm thinking not so bad lookin for thim craythurs at all!...

At this point Jim Corney's recollections are cut short by his irate wife, who complains about 'thim nasty craythurs, the Hottentots that ye're always dhraming and expaysiating about, before yer wedded wife,... more shame on yer'. Corney then gives a sly wink to his listeners and finishes his drink. The humour of Duff's narrative lies in the links between anti-

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<sup>394</sup> George Duff, 'Jim Corney's Account of His Travels at the Cape of Good Hope', *SSAJ*, 11 January 1849.

Hibernian caricature and caricature of the Khoikhoi. Travel accounts were fond of comparisons between the ‘Hottentots’ and the Irish, Scots and Welsh. The Irish, depicted as treacherous in their resistance to the British and alien in their Catholic religion, superstitions and poor living standards, were perhaps the most derided. Their language was compared to that of the ‘Hottentots’, as were their houses, characterised by Abraham Cowley in 1687 as ‘Houses [that were] round (with their Fireplace in the middle of them) almost like the Hutts [of the Hottentots], which are built in *Ireland* by the wild Irish’.<sup>395</sup> This persistent characterisation was hardened by scientific racism, with Charles Kingsley in 1860, for example, declaring the Irish to be ‘human chimpanzees’.<sup>396</sup> Anglo-Saxon pre-eminence over their Celtic counterparts was advocated as scientific fact by prominent figures such as Robert Knox in his lectures and influential *The Races of Men* (1850), just as phrenology and other biological evidence was purported to confirm scientifically the backwardness of the Khoikhoi, ‘Negro’ and ‘Oriental’ Races.<sup>397</sup> There was increased demand for racial caricature of the Irish in the 1840s, evidenced in popular travel accounts such as William Thackeray’s *Irish Sketch Book* (1843), and finding their height of popularity during the Irish famine.<sup>398</sup> Duff’s narrative feeds into this demand for accounts of the Irish that confirmed the prejudices of the English toward their Irish neighbours. Jim Corney’s sexual attraction to the ‘Hottentot craythur’ speaks of the dangers of miscegenation, evidenced in the disapproval of the missionary van der Kemp’s marriage to a 14-year old slave girl or the marriage of the missionary James Read to a Khoikhoi woman,<sup>399</sup> just as his own body is stripped of the civilising emblem of clothing leaving him a ‘wild’ Irishman no better than a troglodyte or black ‘savage’. The negative image of the Irish was largely of the rural poor, however, and generally excluded land tenants and the Irish intelligentsia of writers and civil servants who had been more fully anglicised.<sup>400</sup>

<sup>395</sup> Quoted in Merians, *Envisioning the Worst*, p. 137.

<sup>396</sup> Charles Kingsley, entry for 4 July 1860, *Charles Kingsley, His Letters, and Memories of His Life, Volume 2* (Wildside Press, 2007 [1877]), p. 126.

<sup>397</sup> See Andrew Bank, ‘Of “Native Skulls” and Noble Caucasians”: Phrenology in Colonial South Africa’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3 (1996), pp. 387-403. For Robert Knox, see Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 15-27.

<sup>398</sup> Melissa Fegan, “‘Isn’t It Your Own Country?’: The Stranger in Nineteenth-Century Irish Literature”, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 34, special issue on Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing (2004), pp. 31-45. Ape-like representations of the Irish were particularly evident in satirical cartoons of the Irish in the Victorian era. See L. Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997). For a general history of relations between the Irish and English, see R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr. Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1993).

<sup>399</sup> Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996), pp. 83-4, 117-118.

<sup>400</sup> Fegan, ‘The Stranger in Nineteenth Century Irish Literature’, p. 36.

The dangers of racial regression from interacting too intimately with the Khoikhoi is also reflected in several contributions by George Duff to *Sam Sly's African Journal*. During one stay over at a Dutch farmer's house (his travels included a 18 month journey taken on foot from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town), he witnesses the local teacher playing the violin whilst farmers joined in dancing with 'Hottentots', and cast judgement on the unnaturalness of such conduct, however lightened by his laughter at the incongruous dancing.<sup>401</sup> This is itself reminiscent of the views expressed by John Barrow and others half a century earlier, where rural Dutch cruelty, slovenliness and idleness were described as evidence of degeneration from European civilization, with comparisons similar to early representations of the Khoikhoi. This served then as a strategy to question Dutch legitimacy to rule the Cape, and forward the worthiness of British rule through highlighting their benevolent plans to reform the 'natives' and make productive use of the land.<sup>402</sup> In a mid nineteenth-century context Duff's account is more ambivalent. He questions the potential for the Dutch to regress through inter-racial interaction, yet also praises them for their hospitality. Duff is likely grappling with a desire to underscore British cultural pre-eminence by deriding the Dutch, yet is willing to claim that their regression is only a contingent and partial threat. What lies at the heart of these accounts is a concern with the *class* of racial differentiation, that a lack of education and a low station in life is more likely to call into question the worthiness of claiming the cultural sophistication of whiteness.

The comic representation of the Khoikhoi in *Sam Sly's African Journal* served various functions. Humour was a means to critique liberal optimism that the Khoikhoi could by attaining equal rights and instruction become sober, educated and morally upright colonial citizens. It also served as a warning against the potential regressive influence that black characteristics were supposed to have on female sexual virtue and to the desired values of industry and obedience to the law for the working class. From the sideshow display of the Orang-utan on the streets of Cape Town in 1844 through to Bain's play *Kaatje Kekkelbek* and

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<sup>401</sup> George Duff, 'A Pilgrimage of 500 Miles', *SSAJ*, 18 May 1848; George Duff, 'A Merrymaking at a South African Farm', 15 February 1849: 'Guided by the notes of a violin sufficiently well played, we found him occupying a distinguished position at one end of an empty store-room, while the Hottentots of the establishment and their friends, in their best and grandest attire, were capering away to his music. These people, besides possessing a fine ear for melody, certainly shew a fine aptitude in mimicking the dances of whites. I have often laughed till my sides ached to see from my window in *Port Elizabeth* a party of Hottentot damsels practising their steps, and rehearsing all the airs and graces of their mistresses, not one of which escapes them.'

<sup>402</sup> Merians, *Envisioning the Worst*, pp. 209-211. For English attitudes towards the Dutch in the nineteenth-century Cape, see Michael Streak, *The Afrikaner as Viewed By the English, 1795-1854* (Cape Town: Struik, 1974).

George Duff's tale of the Irishman Jim Corney's nakedness and sexual temptation, racial humour was imbued both with the assumed backward and irredeemable nature of the Khoikhoi whilst also serving as a warning against the transgression of racial boundaries from white cultural and moral superiority to black vice and ignorance. These in turn drew upon a long tradition of the Khoikhoi as noble or ignoble savages, and as freaks of nature and morality. Satires of the Khoikhoi thus served to appeal to and reinforce racial ideologies of white superiority at the Cape.

## CHAPTER 4

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### Gender and Domesticity

Gender as an analytical focus in Cape colonial historiography and more broadly in the scholarship on British colonialism has grown considerably in the past two decades from histories that uncritically ‘subsume “women” under the category “men”’,<sup>403</sup> to histories that go beyond simply ‘adding’ women into the narrative by recognising the salience of concepts such as masculinity, femininity, sexuality and family for understanding identity and social formations and the hegemonic effects of colonialism.<sup>404</sup> As in Britain where historically contingent concepts of separate roles for women and men confined to the private and public spheres respectively were being forged, so to were the colonies sites for maintaining and extending gender norms. The press, read widely by white colonists desirous of shaping respectable middle class identities, helped shape and give voice to the contested realm of appropriate gender roles. The rise of bourgeois conceptions of separate public and private spheres, the former the domain of men and the latter that of women, was enunciated and contested within the pages of the press.

A prominent example at the Cape was John Fairbairn’s *South African Commercial Advertiser* which coalesced support against the old system of patronage-based aristocratic politics embodied in the form of Governor Charles Somerset, and set forward ideals for middle class men to shape the public sphere through active calls for representative government, the advancement of education, morals and civil order, as well as emphasising the manly principles of a self-reliant mercantile spirit for upward social mobility and the duty to defend the moral sanctity of the family and home through active public discussion amongst fellow

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<sup>403</sup> Helen Bradford, ‘Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, C. 1806-70’, *The Journal of African History*, 37, 3 (1996), pp. 352-353.

<sup>404</sup> Several general monographs on gender in the British Empire have been published in recent times, amongst them are Angela Woollacott, *Gender and Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Philippa Levine, ed, *Gender and Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Claire Midgley, ed, *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

middle class men.<sup>405</sup> The realm of public male discourse generally excluded women from participation, whose role was to tend to domestic arrangements, the upbringing of children by instilling religious, moral and civic virtues, and providing a safe haven for their husbands.<sup>406</sup> The emphasis on a man's public role, however, did not exclude him from fatherly duties.<sup>407</sup> The realm of the newspaper press in the nineteenth century may have been profoundly masculine, facilitating rational debate on public affairs, yet other publications such as ladies' magazines and family miscellanies also drew women and children into the fold as readers and contributors, taking their place alongside the serious masculine discourse of political weeklies. *Sam Sly's African Journal* was aimed at a family readership in its discussion of the leisure pursuits, reading habits and fashions of both sexes as well as the duties and responsibilities of men and women in the home and public realm. By functioning as 'a Family Paper',<sup>408</sup> with a further aim to comment on and encourage the leisure lives of the 'man of fashion' and 'ladies of Cape Town',<sup>409</sup> the *African Journal* was well poised at facilitating the ideological debate around gender that was the one the noticeable hallmarks of the nineteenth-century press.<sup>410</sup> As will be shown in this chapter, one of the most effective means for expressing the contested matter of appropriate gender roles was the use of literary contributions and letters as a didactic medium in both serious and satirical modes.

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Attendance at exclusive leisure activities such as fashionable balls and the theatre offered space for bourgeois men and women to demonstrate their middle class cultural refinement. A woman's example could particularly refine the presumed rough manners of colonial men, as Sammons noted, hoping that the prime model of feminine virtue, 'Victoria, the queen of day, [might] affect and lead our fashionable... theatres [which] ought to be full, "full to the brim," since her Majesty has shewn so noble an example, by frequent attendance at the leading

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<sup>405</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, "'Franklins of the Cape": The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Creation of a Colonial Public Sphere, 1824-1854', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 25 (1998/9), pp. 88-102.

<sup>406</sup> Leanore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, Revised Edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>407</sup> John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>408</sup> *Sam Sly's African Journal* (hereafter *SSAJ*), Publishing Notice, I June 1843.

<sup>409</sup> *SSAJ*, Prospectus, 20 May 1843.

<sup>410</sup> Hillary Fraser, Stephanie Green and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

amusements in the metropolis; but her spirit has not yet reached the Cape'.<sup>411</sup> Cultural institutions, too, could help police middle class conduct to ensure that colonists observed the honourable conduct expected of them in their gender roles. An example of the effect of libraries and reading, for example, can be seen in Sammons's praise at port Elizabeth being 'an English place, full of activity, energy, and enterprize', yet this acculturation and virtue would be compromised without the new addition of 'a Library [which] will destroy local gossip and scandal, and fix the attention upon higher thoughts, and greater truths'.<sup>412</sup> English cultural norms 'civilized' the social landscape of the town, yet towns required reading to inculcate moral probity. It was the duty of libraries, reading rooms, books and newspapers to inculcate the appropriate manners and conduct.<sup>413</sup> Reading matter needed to be didactic, as it sought to appease evangelical unease at the potentially harmful effect it might have upon conceptions of morality. Reading influenced the way that readers viewed their social roles. For W.A. Newman, delivering an address before the subscribers of the Cape Town Library in 1849, reading was a didactic imperative. It held the potential to be instructive, but also morally corrosive.

Let then a desire for useful knowledge be more widely spread abroad, let the leisure hours of our young men be more devotedly given to subjects which inform and improve them,- let the wives, and mothers, and sisters in our land, whether their sojourn is at home or abroad, bestow less valuable time on what is merely fictitious, and more on those enlarging and elevating subjects which will enable them more powerfully than ever to maintain their strong influence in correcting, and endearing, and improving and hallowing the domestic circle, and believe me, in a few years we shall exult together in the beneficial change. The public morals will become more and more purified, the subjects of conversation will become more and more instructive, and the minds will not only become larger, but the hearts better...<sup>414</sup>

Sammons, who likely attended the public lecture, seems to have largely agreed with Newman's sentiments, since he included the entire speech in a two page supplement to his newspaper. The utilitarian ideals of reading's educative function aligned with the moral and religious concerns of evangelicalism, but they could also, as in Sammons's case, go hand in hand with the cultural advancement of literary endeavour.<sup>415</sup> His newspaper's satirical aims

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<sup>411</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 June 1843.

<sup>412</sup> *SSAJ*, 7 December 1848.

<sup>413</sup> W.A. Newman, 'Literary Influence', 2 page long lecture delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Subscribers to the Cape Town Library, 28 April 1849, supplement in *SSAJ*, 3 May 1949.

<sup>414</sup> Newman, 'Literary Influence', *SSAJ*, 3 May 1949.

<sup>415</sup> See the chapter 'The Social Function of Literature: 1800-1850' in David Johnson, *Shakespeare and South Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), pp. 13-39.

were seen to fall within the scope of acceptable family content by avoiding morally adverse content, as argued in chapter two of this thesis. His newspaper, he proudly proclaimed, 'is now one of the standing dishes- and shall we say *jokes*- in the Government House, and is countenanced from her Ladyship downwards, and runs through all families and functionaries, remarkable for taste, and for judgement.'<sup>416</sup> The correctness of Sammons's satirical judgement meant that behind his humorous critique lay a didactic message. The middle class ideals of gentility, for men to strive to be 'gentlemen' and women 'ladies', required an air of moral restraint and cultural sophistication, coupled with women's devotion to the sphere of the home and man's public role as breadwinner and family protector. If there was an abandonment of this script of gendered conduct, then Sammons's satirical pen or more serious editorial admonishments were quick to comment.

It should not be assumed, however, that all of the content of *Sam Sly's African Journal* regarding gender was satirical. Sammons proudly claimed to be a social critic of leisure and fashionable activities alongside his satirical bent. He openly welcomed contributions from both sexes, although such contributions from women fell within the ambit of matters considered appropriately feminine, namely literary items or short letters of advice on womanly conduct or the family. Commenting on a letter from a 'Letitia Tattle' to the *South African Commercial Advertiser* in 1824, where the correspondent complained of a lack of material of interest to women, Sammons hinted at his more amenable approach to women's interests. The letter, however, contains stereotypes of women as gossips (implicit in the name 'Tattle'), thus raising questions over whether the letter was written as a parody by a male hand.<sup>417</sup> Fashionable sociability was publicly demonstrative of respectable middle class status, most notably expressed in balls or events such as weddings. A rival newspaper acknowledged Sammons's appearance with his wife at a high profile wedding at St. George's Cathedral, approving of 'Sam taking particular notice of the Features, and Mrs. Sam of the Dresses.- Oh! what it is to have an invaluable *Sammy Sly* wife...'.<sup>418</sup> Women in the public sphere were welcomed for comments on fashion, but it was only men who could openly discuss politics.

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<sup>416</sup> *SSAJ*, 23 November 1843.

<sup>417</sup> *SSAJ*, 12 December 1844. For an analysis of this and another letter from an 'Old Maid' in the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, see Kirsten McKenzie, 'The *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town', MA thesis, University of Cape Town (1993), pp. 109-112.

<sup>418</sup> *The Shopkeepers' and Tradesmen's Journal*, 1 October 1847.

Sammons's observations on fashionable events were welcomed by his readers. Attending an invitation-only ball at the Commercial Exchange building, William Sammons gave the following account to his readers, one which illustrates many pertinent themes of appropriate gender roles:

Now we descend a few steps and come into the *sanctorum*, or ladies' dressing room. Here let us rest a while on the sofa, near the round table, for the fire looks cozey [sic] and comfortable, and there are no "arrivals" yet, to disrobe, or to disturb us. How many fair faces will be gazing in that mirror to night, to admire and arrange their "*heart breakers*," (ringlets) and to twist and turn them over their shoulders, to see that all is in order? How ominously those books are arranged near the toilet table. Curiously enough behind the glass is '*A Good Match*' and above it are Theodore Hook's "*Sayings and Doings*," and on the right there is "*Pin Money*," also "*Yes and No*,"- those important answers when the "question is popp'd." But what business has the "*Sectarian*" there with his freezing rigidity? he will not be noticed, nor will any work be read to night, except the language of the eyes, or "Ovid's Art of Love." Ah, 'tis a snug room for a cold night, and there are pictures, too. *That* over the fire place represents "The Supreme Court of Judicature at Ceylon," and beneath this is a comfortable looking *Zomersetshire* old gentleman in a small frame, but with a full face. Opposite these- on the other side of the room- is "*La Familie Africane*," all showing their teeth, and laughing at the spectators. What will they think tonight of European Beauty? But hark! there is a sound of wheels, and the ladies are coming. What's to be done! where shall we go!- it's too late to retreat- Ah! we have it, there is a secret closet-"any port in a storm," says the proverb,- and no one will be any the wiser. Here goes for an hour or so. Now we escape- they are all in the ball-room- and dancing has commenced.<sup>419</sup>

Sammons, by playing the role of peeping Tom, provides a humorous and insightful view of the inner world of female sociability. Arriving for the ball, a place seemingly for the enjoyment of dancing 'the waltz and quadrille' but more profoundly an occasion to court future husbands for the desirous goal of matrimony, the women enter their dressing room to prepare their hearts, minds and appearances. They apply their makeup before a mirror, and, in more leisurely moments, will read from the books and periodicals arranged nearby. Sammons nods approvingly at *A Good Match* and *Yes and No*, owing to the obvious instructive allusions to matchmaking, yet is wary of the 'freezing rigidity' of the *Sectarian* with its political content aimed at a male reader and which if read by women might threaten the public/private divide by encouraging female political discussion and possible agitation. Forming a tableau on the walls of the drawing room, an 'audience' of paintings demonstrates the surveillance of female conduct. The Supreme Court of Ceylon speaks of the institutional means of maintaining gender roles throughout the British Empire, whether through the

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<sup>419</sup> SSAJ, 29 May 1845.

defence of female honour or divorce proceedings,<sup>420</sup> the old gentleman the male role in ensuring female civility and moral worth. The most intriguing gaze, however, is from '*La Famille Africaine*', whose laughter threatens (they are 'showing their teeth') the colonial project of maintaining European family and gender norms and more so the possible extension of these familial norms to the indigene, as was an aim of the civilising project of missionary endeavours. The Display of 'European beauty' might intend to be instructive, but any missteps might evoke native laughter thus exposing colonists' 'limited mastery over themselves'.<sup>421</sup> The tensions inherent in ideologies of domesticity in colonial frontier encounters will be explored more fully later in this chapter, but first we need to consider the particular characteristics and shifts in middle class identity in early to mid nineteenth-century Cape Town.

In brief, the most notable changes were embodied in initial tensions between Dutch and emergent English middle class notions of gender and family. For example, the implications of architecture upon gendered interaction resulted in Dutch stoeps, which were uncovered, raised platforms opening onto the street from the front door of homes, being seen as preventing an ease of interaction and mobility desired by the English. For 'Americanus', writing in *Sam Sly's African Journal*, women were 'immured-imprisoned', their demeanour 'isolated and selfish'. This, he suggested, would easily be solved through the replacement of stoeps with walkways. The central motif here is mobility. Walking was advocated as desirable social etiquette in opposition to the slothful associations of Dutch stasis in sitting on their stoeps.<sup>422</sup> Physical movement implied enterprise, the attribute most valued for forging upward social mobility. To succeed in the British Empire one needed to travel or rely on trade networks, with goods travelling between England, the Cape, India, Australasia and elsewhere. The British, unlike the Cape Dutch, forged networks of social ties and economic cooperation beyond the limited opportunities confined within Cape borders. A short story

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<sup>420</sup> For the gender dimensions of the colonial courts and its use to defend the honour of men and women, see Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), pp. 69-117.

<sup>421</sup> Anne Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 103. This point is most affectingly made in George Orwell's essay 'Shooting an Elephant' (1953), where Orwell hunts an elephant but is careful to avoid appearing scared or lacking manly resolve and composure. If fear is shown this would compromise his behaviour as a model of civilisation under native eyes, a slippage that might result in not only his being laughed at but also in turn a diminishing of his power as coloniser. Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 97-102.

<sup>422</sup> SSAJ, 18 April 1844. See Kirsten McKenzie, 'Gender and Honour in Middle Class Cape Town: the Making of Colonial Identities, 1828-1850', D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford (1997), pp. 56-62.

written in 1845 by ‘Umgola’, a Cape Town woman, called ‘The Rose of Rondebosch; or, the Indian’s Bride’ reflects the interaction encouraged between Dutch and British, with many Dutch women marrying British men and in turn integrating the family networks of the mercantile classes in Cape Town. In the story we are introduced to ‘Colonel Wingate’, a British member of the East India Company on leave in Cape Town, who is besotted by a Dutch teenager singing whilst picking flowers in her garden. Charmed by her beauty and ‘pretty jargon of Dutch and English’, when she later comes of age he returns and marries her. His appeal, the reader is told, lies in his being ‘a man of the world, [yet] with all the softer gentleness and sensibility which mark the man of intellect and refinement’. His travelling implies wisdom and manly independence, an itinerancy coupled with a caring temperament desired in a husband. Umgola’s story acts as an allegory for the Cape Colony itself, labelled as ‘an infant colony’ akin to the Dutch young woman. It is her betrothal to him, we are told, which redeems her as she pursues ‘industry’ and a refinement of her manners into that of a ‘lady’. The British similarly, it is implied, have by ‘partnering’ the Dutch at the Cape, facilitated improvements in the sophistication of local gender norms.<sup>423</sup>

As seen in ‘The Gipsy’s Curse’ by ‘Personne’, another female contributor to the *Journal* and a story discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, a common theme in narratives was the declining social position of a middle class Briton as he or she leaves for the colonies to improve their economic circumstances. ‘Miss Southerne’, the protagonist whose guardian and uncle dies leaving her destitute, has her reputation further marred by the discovery that her former fiancé is her half-brother.<sup>424</sup> Tales of ruin as a warning against the potential slippage from a position of honour in the middle class community of the colony were balanced against narratives that emphasised the traits desirable in spouses. Models of instructive womanhood were often located in the figures of Governor’s or official’s wives. Lady Anne Barnard, for example, was still upheld half a century later as a model of selflessness and supportiveness toward her husband in an article written for the *Cape Monthly Magazine* in 1859.<sup>425</sup> In fiction, as in columns in the press prescribing appropriate moral conduct, role models were often most profoundly envisioned if based on true life individuals, as in another tale by Umgola titled ‘The Dangler’ and based on the supposed details of a romance between Lady

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<sup>423</sup> *SSAJ*, 17 April 1845; 8 May 1845; 15 May 1845; 5 June 1845

<sup>424</sup> *SSAJ*, 24 August, 14 September; 5 October 1848.

<sup>425</sup> *Cape Monthly Magazine*, 5 April 1859, p. 223, cited in Edna Bradlow, ‘Women at the Cape in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century’, *South African Historical Journal*, 19 (1987), p. 52.

Adelaide Beaufort and General D'Urban, Governor of the Cape Colony in the 1830s.<sup>426</sup> Initially engaged to George Molyneux, she breaks off the engagement despite their deep love for one another and his anguished protests. For Adelaide Beaufort love and passion are secondary to her 'duty' and 'religion' in marrying a man of good character in the form of D'Urban. Her former fiancé is lectured by her on the profligacy of his caddish ways, as she tells him that 'happiness... [is] still within your reach if you will only shake off the slavish fetters of fashionable folly and dissipation, and become... a man of usefulness rather than of sin'. We are told, in contrast, that D'Urban, like the male protagonist of Umgola's other story 'The Rose of Rondebosch', 'has seen much of the world, and profited by his advantages' in character. The D'Urban's marriage thrives, whilst George Molyneux lives out his life in sad dissipation as a wealthy bachelor.<sup>427</sup> Umgola's narrative was likely inspired by the recent death of Lady D'Urban in 1843, an event that led to the following eulogy by William Sammons being published in his *Journal*: 'the loss of Lady D'Urban will be felt in the Cape, where Refinement is not superabundant, Gracefulness not overflowing, and Intellectuality and the feminine attractions not too prevalent or conspicuous'. For Sammons, the colonial tendency to 'lower, degenerate and depreciate' with 'notions of deference, courtesy, and delicacy, [made] crude and disorderly' was counteracted by the 'influence of any lady of polished manners and intellectual endowments in her domestic sphere, as well as her public example to a Colony'.<sup>428</sup>

### Misogynistic Satire

Misogynistic satires emerged as a popular form in the eighteenth century in reaction to increased female literacy and oratory owing to the revolution in reading practices amongst the general public. Common to these satires was the depiction of women's letters and speeches as 'perverse' and 'meaningless', as going beyond the realms of female propriety and sensibility and lacking rhetorical substance. Women were thus framed as the deserving

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<sup>426</sup> SSAJ, 18 July 1844; 25 July 1844; 8 August 1844; 22 August 1844. The details of the story defy the reality of D'Urban's life. He married Anna Wilcocks in August 1797, not Adelaide Beaufort. It is this Anna who later died in 1843 and was buried in Cape Town. Since D'Urban only married once, it is possible, although strange considering the familiarity to Cape colonists to Benjamin D'Urban, that 'Umgola' was referring to a relative of D'Urban's in Britain. Either this, or a mistaking of the name of his wife, or less plausibly a fictionalised account of his life, are the only possible explanations for this incongruity. See H.M Stephens and John Benyon, 'D'Urban, Sir Benjamin (1777-1849), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 388-390.

<sup>427</sup> SSAJ, 18 July 1844; 25 July 1844; 8 August 1844; 22 August 1844.

<sup>428</sup> SSAJ, 31 August 1843.

victims of the maladies they complained of, as satires of their public speeches were presented as examples of aberrant mindsets and moral transgressions that were sexual or seditious, or as debating issues seen as petty or frivolous; whilst their private speech revealed them as gossiping or scolding wives who were said to threaten harm to the reputation of the community, and the sanity and patience of their husbands.<sup>429</sup>

There are several examples of misogynistic writing in *Sam Sly's African Journal*, whether poems or letters, much of it attributed to a female pseudonym whilst it was likely written by a man owing to the disparaging stereotypes. As Cecily Lockett has noted about early women's writing in South Africa, it was thus difficult to ascertain the sex of an author with the first confirmable women's poems published only in the 1880s.<sup>430</sup> Writing with a *nom de plume* was a strategy employed by women to mask their personal identity and their sex. Women writing under men's names were published in political journals, a ploy by women to enter discursive realms restricted to men, whilst pseudonyms could protect those women unwilling to make their literary endeavours known to their husbands or community.<sup>431</sup>

Common to a certain genre of 'women's poetry' largely written by men was the trope of defending female honour. Thus, when William Sammons wrote several poems about the 'Old Maids' of Cape Town, under his usual penname of 'Sam Sly', these were met by the indignant response of a 'Dorothy Lingerlong'. Sammons both extols 'Old Maids' as models of virtue akin to the virginity of Elizabeth I - 'Independent, majestic, her soul seems her own,/ Her hand is *her* sceptre, her heart is *her* throne' - yet also questions their chastity, with the suggestive 'And don't you imagine because she's a *Miss*,/ She's ne'er had an offer, or never felt a *kiss*'. The resolute refusal of 'Old Maids' to enter into marriage is mockingly referred to as admirable and 'wise', yet her forthrightness is itself dangerously masculine and a breaking with the unassuming confidence and restrained gracefulness desired in women. Further, Sammons advises 'Old Maids' to give in to their naturally-appointed domestic duties- 'trim my jacket, comb my hair' - whilst cautioning that age might build character, but might also '*render women tart*'. Such tartness is reflected in Dorothy Lingerlong's replies in defence of her kind. She is courteous at times in her objections, acknowledging veiled

<sup>429</sup> Stephen Browne, 'Satirizing Women's Speech in Eighteenth-Century England', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 22, 3 (1992), pp. 20-9.

<sup>430</sup> Cecily Lockett, 'South African Women's Poetry: A Gynocritical Perspective', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 11, 1 (1992), pp. 51-61.

<sup>431</sup> Alexis Easley, *First Person Anonymous: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830-70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

compliments, yet is also bitter and threatening- ‘We long’d in a blanket your body to toss’ and ‘I’ve caught you Sammy, now you’re done,/ Revenge is sweet sometimes;/ I’ll end your cruel biting fun,/ *And send your wife your rhymes*’.<sup>432</sup> The flippant homicidal overtones and threats to undermine Sammons’s marriage are employed for obvious comic effect- the content of the poems by ‘Dorothy Lingerlong’ rely on a humorous disjuncture between a tone of appreciative civility and vindictiveness- revealing the dangers to women’s character if they thwart marriage and family life, viewed as the natural expression of femininity, in favour of remaining single.<sup>433</sup> Letters (or in this case, poems) were often employed in the press to defend one’s personal reputation, a recourse also seen in the more costly realm of court action,<sup>434</sup> yet this public recourse if employed by women was more open to ridicule. Women through publicly defending their reputation in the press might evince a tone perceived as too masculine in assertiveness, and hence the satirical value of artificial women’s poems written by men lay in their emphasis on the controversial involvement of women in the public sphere to defend their honour.

The possibility of female participation in public debate was also roundly ridiculed. An account of a Ladies’ Debating Club in London in 1780 published in *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, claimed that debates by women held ‘little serious argument’ and most notably provided ‘matter for mirth’. The main agenda of the meeting, a proposed tax on bachelors and ‘old maids’ for their failure to marry, reflected not only the high importance placed on marriage for respectability, but also the humour generated by depicting women as solely preoccupied by matters of marriage and family.<sup>435</sup> A locally produced satirical account of a fictitious meeting by the ‘Ladies of Simon’s Town’ mocked the frivolous issues that were

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<sup>432</sup> The poetic exchanges between ‘Sam Sly’ and ‘Dorothy Lingerlong’ can be found in *SSAJ*, 16 November 1843; *SSAJ*, 23 November, 1843; *SSAJ*, 30 November, 1843. A similar exchange is made between a bachelor and some (supposed) female correspondents. The poem ‘A Heart to Be Let’, which advertised for a prospective wife, ran the following lines: ‘The ladies, dear ladies, pray do not forget,/ An excellent Bachelor’s heart’s to be let./ The Tenant will have a few taxes to pay,/ *Love, honour*, and (heaviest item) OBEY.’ Responding poems by ‘Dorothy Dubbins and ‘C.Z.A.’ chastised him for his vulgarity in advertising for love, as well as his insistence on female deference akin to contractual servitude. For the bachelor’s poem, see *SSAJ*, 12 October 1843. For the female responses, see *SSAJ*, 19 October and 23 November 1843.

<sup>433</sup> The satirising of women, however, was not restricted to those who were single. A satire written by Sammons shortly before he left for the Cape from England, for example, ridiculed a likely fictitious ‘Mrs. Sarah Toddles’ for being short in stature and ‘thrice married’ to ‘timid men’ owing to her domineering and thus unfeminine character. Sarah, like ‘Dorothy Lingerlong’, responded objecting to her ridicule, although in a letter and not a poem and through communicating her grievances to a ‘Col. Walker’ who wrote the letter on her behalf. Sam Sly, ‘Some Account of the Life and Times of Mrs. Sarah Toddles’, in Laman Blanchard, ed, *George Cruikshank’s Omnibus* (London: Tilt and Bogue, 1842), pp. 231-2. For the letter see pp. 263-4.

<sup>434</sup> The most common recourse for the defence of honour was through the press and courts, see McKenzie, ‘Gender and Honour’, pp. 161-185.

<sup>435</sup> *SSAJ*, 6 July 1843.

assumed to occupy a women's debate. The meeting begins with Mrs. Caudle as chairperson, a clear reference to Douglas Jerrold's popular 'Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lectures', serialised in *Punch* from 1845-6. Cast as a shrew averse to the conventional domestic role placed on her as a wife, Jerrold's Mrs Caudle launches nightly harangues at her husband expressing her desired greater independence. The popularity of the 'Curtain Lectures' lay in its appeal to Victorian tastes in moderate satire. The target for ridicule is not a public official, as in the uncompromising satires of the Georgian era, but an erring wife and the aim is not to seek transformation of the political or social order, but rather to entrench gender roles. The didactic message ridicules Mrs Caudle's vocal outbursts as unwomanly and thus validates established gender norms.<sup>436</sup>

The Cape 'Mrs Caudle' is similarly vocal as she proclaims as 'a very silly impression' that women are 'unfit for the *discharge* of public business', and vouches for their equal competence alongside men. Presenting the petition addressed to Queen Victoria, whom they hoped would sympathise with their grievances being 'of their own sex', to the women in attendance, Mrs. Caudle reads their primary concern: the disruptive effect of the nine o'clock evening gun on the domestic felicity of their households. The ladies' 'nerves... being most delicately strung', are further threatened by the cracking windows and roofs of their houses, the disturbed sleep of their 'dear little ones', and the annoyance of the nursery maids 'who since the abolition of slavery... not only have wills of their own, but take good care to *prove* them'. Furthermore, their concerns lie with the 'poor sick inmates of the Naval Hospital', whose convalescence is threatened by the startling blast nearby.<sup>437</sup> The concerns of Mrs Caudle are confined to the domestic realm, the structural stability of her home, the well-being of her children, and the obedience of her servants. The latter is an interesting reflection of the complexion of labour relations in the home. The newly emancipated nursery maid's outspokenness, however, was not solely the preserve of emboldened ex-slaves, but was also embodied in concerns over domestic servants in Britain. A woman heading the household had to ensure that servants 'knew their place' and were under their direct orders, even though some servants in turn had supervisory power over the mistress's children.<sup>438</sup> One means by which middle class woman at the Cape distanced themselves from domestic servants was

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<sup>436</sup> Frank Palmeri, 'Cruikshank, Thackeray and the Victorian Eclipse of Satire', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 44, 4 (2004), p. 771.

<sup>437</sup> *SSAJ*, 24 December 1846.

<sup>438</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 391-5.

their avoidance of waged work in the public eye, whilst reminding servants that despite being recently emancipated, they were still under the employ and command of the mistress.<sup>439</sup>

Mrs Caudle's one concern that goes beyond the scope of the home is toward the patients of the Naval Hospital. This, however, falls under the ambit of public reform roles that were seen as somewhat respectable for women. At the Cape, as in Britain, middle class women could take a public role in evangelically-minded charities and lobbying groups that championed a politics of care, ranging from educational initiatives to concerns for the sick and indigent. However, although public philanthropy could be seen as a godly duty and a natural extension of domestic feminine concerns, in the colonies women's roles in reform movements were viewed with suspicion. Very few women, almost solely British, took active roles, with the limitation of female public involvement motivated by concerns to reflect a favourable image to the metropole of more stringently-observed gender roles in the colonies, where men could have a disambiguated public role of acting on behalf of women.<sup>440</sup>

### **Confusing Separate Spheres**

There may have been limited scope for female public involvement in charities, yet there was an increasing wariness at the prospect of female employment outside domestic and parental duties. As Davidoff and Hall have argued, 'women's identification with the domestic and moral sphere implied that they would only become active economic agents when forced by necessity'.<sup>441</sup> This British model of appropriate middle class gender roles, with the man as breadwinner and wife as domestic stewardess, was in tension at the Cape with the active participation of Dutch women in the economic life of the colony. Roman Dutch law granted far-reaching rights of succession to widows upon their husband's deaths creating the scope for women's roles as independent business owners. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for even the most prominent of Dutch families to set aside a room of their house to be used to

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<sup>439</sup> McKenzie, 'Gender and Honour', pp. 104-5. For an approach to the family life and gendered identities of (emancipated) slaves at the Cape, see Pamela Scully, *Liberating the Family? Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823-1853* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997).

<sup>440</sup> For women's limited involvement in reform movements at the Cape, see McKenzie, 'Gender and Honour', pp. 128-141. McKenzie gives an interesting account of the gendered dimensions of Boniface's play *De Temperantisten* (1832), where Boniface lampoons the enforced absence of women at temperance meetings, notably in his observations about the need for drunken Khoi woman to attend, and the posturing benevolence of self-important reformist men. As McKenzie notes, for white middle class women 'whilst female philanthropy might indicate the importance of a multiplicity of public spheres, philanthropy played no role in the Cape as a route for women into contemporary political power on masculine terms', pp. 136-138.

<sup>441</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 272.

retail goods to the community, thus blurring the spheres of business and home and providing scope for commercial involvement by women. However, British ideals of separate spheres for home and work put a dampener on female economic involvement, with male-run retail stores separate from homes slowly emerging in the changing urban space of Cape Town.

Emphasising separate spheres also acted as a strategy to delegitimize Dutch conceptions of gender in favour of those held by the British.<sup>442</sup> For Sammons, already prejudiced to the provincial appearance and manners of colonies, the lines between men and work, and women and the home, in early 1840s Cape Town were still worryingly indistinct:

We have frequently seen ladies and gentlemen in Africa,- who would not be thought ungentle on any account- carrying home from their *stores*, in their *carriages*, casks of wine, bundles of besoms, and all kinds of kitchen stuff, and at the same time dressed in such extremes of fashion, and so bejewelled and be-feathered, that with a slight stretch of fancy, you might suppose they were going to the Queen's Levee, or the Court of St. James. The other day we followed a young lady- the very pink of the mode... and expected nothing short of her emanating from Government House, when lo! And behold! on entering a shop for a trifling article, this very *belle* waited upon us, and stated the price in her own emphatic and laconic terms, as being '*one and nine.*' Now there is no particular vice in these things, they are trifles at which we can smile, rather than weep... But coming fresh from European Countries this odd *Display* struck us as very peculiar, and by it we learn, that in all places the Vulgar show off every thing, distinct, and full, and render their possessions, and rapid acquirements, visible to the senses...<sup>443</sup>

Sammons, as has been argued earlier, was an eager commentator on the fashionable gatherings of Cape Town notables, the white middle class who prized sociability and their conspicuous display of fine culture in dance and dress whilst avoiding the trappings of aristocratic excess seen as anathema to the values of restraint and industry held by the middle classes. An entrepreneurial spirit was a sign of active social mobility, yet the evidence of business paraphernalia should be hidden when out in public. As a resident of Bath in the 1830s amongst the social circles of the minor gentry, Sammons would have been sensitive more than most to a strictly-observed delineation between avoiding careless exposure of domestic concerns in the public realm, or hints of a lack of tact in revealing more humble origins through combining high fashion with the clutter of the home in one's carriage. Most shocking for him was the fashionably-dressed young woman whom he encountered later assisting him in a shop. A woman of her stature would be assumed, against Sammons's 'European' model, to either be married and attending to domestic arrangements or single and

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<sup>442</sup> McKenzie, 'Gender and Honour', pp. 79-86.

<sup>443</sup> *SSAJ*, 9 November 1843.

seeking a husband through ‘displaying’ herself in the evenings at subscription balls. Aware of his readership, however, Sammons is careful to dull the edge of his critique through noting his metropolitan prejudice and the charming naivety of colonial manners. This did not, of course, curb Sammons’s often satirical observations of Cape life.

### **Instructive Laughter: Adult Propriety and Children’s Education**

Laughter, as Sammons was often fond to remind his readers, was social currency if utilised correctly. He ran a series of editorials lifted from a treatise written by a Rev. Thomas Monro in 1787 titled ‘Man: A Laughing Animal’, in clear reference to the Aristotelian idea that laughter is unique to mankind and thus, as inferred by later writers, separates human cultural and emotional sophistication from the instincts of animals.<sup>444</sup> In the treatise, warnings are made against the obtrusively loud guffaw of the ‘horse laugh’, expressing a ‘headstrong vulgarity’ of manners rather than displaying good taste and polite restraint. The ‘tee-hee’, a subdued laughter at witty remarks might too extend beyond its social value amongst respectable company, for the sniggers shared secretively around a ‘scandalising tea-table’ might harm rather than sustain good social relations.<sup>445</sup> Further possibilities for understanding the effect of laughter on social relations have also recently been explored by Alecia Simmonds in the context of colonial Australia, where she examines an account of convict women laughing whilst baring their bare backsides to the respectable company of the Governor of Van Diemen’s Land, his wife and a parson. By going beyond the Bakhtinian model of laughter as a form of subversive resistance against authority, Simmonds notes the responding laughter of the visiting dignitaries, which acted to coercively shame the convict women for their outburst.<sup>446</sup> Similarly, laughter could also express unease at the strain upon colonists to preserve their ‘perfected civility’ in the presence of what would have been seen as the immodest dress and manners of the colonised.<sup>447</sup> As Vic Gatrell notes, ‘Western notions of civility were in good part constructed around the deepest suspicion of laughter’s

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<sup>444</sup> ‘No animal but man ever laughs’: Lane Cooper, ed, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy* (BiblioBazaar, 2009), p.163.

<sup>445</sup> *SSAJ*, 22 January 1846; *SSAJ*, 29 January 1846.

<sup>446</sup> Alecia Simmonds, ‘Rebellious bodies and subversive sniggers? Embodying Women’s Humour and Laughter in Colonial Australia’, *History Australia*, 6, 2 (2009), pp. 39.1-39.16. Laughter remains under-explored in Cape historiography, particularly its correlative function as resistance or coercion in relations between black labour and white colonists.

<sup>447</sup> Penny Russell, ‘The Brash Colonial: Class and Comportment in Nineteenth Century Australia’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6, 12 (2002), pp. 431-453.

propriety',<sup>448</sup> but it too could help forge sociability and be utilised to chastise improper behaviour.

Laughter, as an advertisement for *The Book of Fun for Boys and Girls* expressed it, was instrumental for childhood development, with children 'as effectively taught through "broad grins" as through the "narrow compasses" of mechanical philosophy'.<sup>449</sup> Laughter thus played an integral part in childhood development, a part of family life that took increasing prominence from the late eighteenth century onwards. The parental role toward the child was expressed in the Romantic emphasis on the loss of innocence from childhood to adulthood, which might be regained partially through the joys of their company. Children needed to be cherished and nurtured, to be allowed the freedom of imaginative play. This was tempered by increased stress on the disciplinary regimen influenced by evangelicalism, for there was an insistence that children be taught restraint and godly devotion to prevent them straying naively into sin. This resulted in the rigour of allotted separate times for family devotions, educative study, and leisure. As much as Romantic ideals of childhood freedom might appear at ideological odds with Evangelical discipline, in practice many homes successfully combined tender nurturing with the stern hand of parental authority.<sup>450</sup> Mothers balanced recreation with an awareness of the ideas instilled in their children, the contributor to *Sam Sly's African Journal* 'Umgola' writing that 'the mind of childhood is little more than a *tabula rasa* adopting, unconsciously, every impression of good and ill, even to receiving the dictates of impiety, injustice, and villainy as the solemn and sacred principles of truth and virtue'.<sup>451</sup> This concern for children was mirrored in Sammons's worried observation that the youth of Cape Town were occasionally 'surly, rude, rough, and uncouth, and extremely obstinate', a trait remedied by education and the reading of literary works 'to mould their minds into a state of sensitiveness, delicacy and feeling'.<sup>452</sup> Not surprisingly for Sammons, who advocated strongly the instructive compliment of childhood games such as '*Hide and Seek*', 'hop scotch' and 'blind man's bluff', the degeneration in childhood manners was a racially-inflected concern. It was *white* colonists whom he seems to have concerns for,

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<sup>448</sup> Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), p. 165.

<sup>449</sup> *SSAJ*, 6 July 1843.

<sup>450</sup> Tosh, *A Man's Place*, pp. 39-43.

<sup>451</sup> *SSAJ*, 3 July 1845.

<sup>452</sup> *SSAJ*, 3 Aug 1843.

bemoaning the effect of a ‘mixed society’ on the attainments of ‘civilised’ conduct.<sup>453</sup> Black colonists, in his eyes, had a degenerating effect on white children.

As a central component of family life, reading matter also catered for the growing realm of children’s literature, with much of this seeking to balance didacticism with mirth. Alongside more adult books, Sammons ensured to review the latest children’s books newly available in Cape Town bookstores, for example the *Comic Nursery Tales* of F. Bayley, that adapted stories such as ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ and ‘Sleeping Beauty’, the latter described in the book as ‘Of British rusticity,/ Of very angelic/ Pure, tender simplicity’.<sup>454</sup> Evidently, children should laugh, but also be taught the manners and character expected of them in adulthood. Efforts for childhood amusement were also made by Sammons himself, notably in the form of a series of doggerel, titled ‘Sam Sly’s Alphabet’, intended ‘for the use of schools’ and to provide ‘a laugh for dull boys’. Surprisingly, the opening lines are: ‘This *F* is a fellow both funny and frisky,/ And does not object to a flagon of whisky’. The seeming encouragement of tomfoolery in children is soon corrected by the observation that ‘*F*’ is a ‘thief’, is fussy, and disrespects his mother, thus being a model of what a child should *not* be.<sup>455</sup> Sammons’s apparent carelessness at dallying into adult content, in referring to whisky, in a children’s poem is demonstrative of the tenuous lines between satire and tales for children in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Marcus Wood has argued, a central component of satires such as Anne Taylor’s *Signor Topsy Turvey’s Magic Lantern* (1807) and William Hone’s *The Political House That Jack Built* (1819) was the use of nursery rhymes to express radical satirical messages, the latter a critique of Lord Castlereagh and the Prince Regent in the aftermath of the Peterloo massacre. Whilst Hone used nursery rhymes for comic effect, Taylor, like others, used the broadside ballad and genre of satire to forge a new genre of children’s literature. Early successes, for example, were adaptations of Jonathan Swift’s satire *Gulliver’s Travels* into abridged ‘child-friendly’ versions from the late eighteenth century. Reliance on satire for children’s entertainment, and vice versa, is redolent in the surviving archive of children’s stories and nursery rhymes. However, the radical inflections would gradually be shorn by Victorian sensibilities that avoided the profane.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> *SSAJ*, 16 May 1844.

<sup>454</sup> *SSAJ*, 15 June 1843. This was recently available for sale, or so Sammons claimed, at Collard stationers in Heerengracht street.

<sup>455</sup> *SSAJ*, 16 April 1846.

<sup>456</sup> Marcus Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture, 1790-1822* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 215-263.

## Gender, Satire and the Frontier

This chapter now moves eastwards to a discussion of gender on the Cape frontier. This remains an underexplored topic. Despite both settler and Xhosa homesteads and families being affected by frontier conflict, little analysis has been done on the gendered construction of this conflict. There are areas of gender relations that fall outside the scope of this chapter, especially an examination of how the Xhosa conceived of their own gender roles, yet this was not discussed within a newspaper that focussed almost exclusively on the concerns of white middle class colonists. If anything, it was the white colonists who were upheld as the models of family virtue in opposition to the Xhosa, the latter viewed as antithetical to civilised gendered conduct with a contemptible attitude to domestic stability.<sup>457</sup> This section looks very briefly at how the Xhosa was vilified, infantilised and satirised in *Sam Sly's African Journal*, and, through an examination of misogynistic writing submitted under the name of 'Kitty Veller', how racial stereotypes were often projected through a sexist lens.

Within the framework of the British Empire as a metaphoric family, with Britain bearing parental responsibility toward her colonial subjects, indigenous peoples were often belittled as children. Nicholas Thomas, for example, has noted the use of such a metaphor by missionaries and evangelically-minded colonists in their civilising endeavours to 'school' their followers in Christianity, literacy and European manners and customs.<sup>458</sup> Richard Price, however, has recently observed that the metaphor of childhood was particularly apparent in British descriptions of the Xhosa from around the mid-nineteenth century. Whereas the Zulu, like the Sikhs in India, were readily cast in the masculine mould of martial races, and the Bengalis depicted as overly-feminine to delegitimize their masculine right to rule, the Xhosa were not gender stereotyped. It was their supposed stubborn resolve and guerrilla tactics in war, the latter particularly disruptive of settler homesteads and families, which led further to their depiction as rebellious children. Their chiefs might appear noble when meeting the British for negotiations, yet their military tactics belied the potential for either innocence or

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<sup>457</sup> For a brief discussion of gender amongst the Xhosa in critique of a leading scholar on the Xhosa in the nineteenth century, see Bradford, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism', pp. 360-368. Bradford responds particularly to the work of Jeff Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1989); as well as his *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1981).

<sup>458</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology Travel and Government* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 133-6.

evil inherent in British notions of childhood.<sup>459</sup> As William Sammons observed in his frequent editorials during the Seventh Frontier War,

Kaffirs have been treated as warriors, who ought to have been treated as children. The good might have been treated with a sugar plumb, and the naughty have been ‘*horsed*’ and well whipped- as in better colleges. *If* still refractory, they might have been sent to bed without their treacle, and if this were of no avail, they might have been thrust into “*Rogies hole.*” Instead of which they have been honored with Royal Proclamations, that they never understood- Treaties too profound for *their* wisdom, and Codes only suitable for polished nations and honourable natures.<sup>460</sup>

The refractory conduct of the Xhosa in Sammons’s eyes should be met with a beating, itself a justification for military intervention. The Xhosa, for Sammons were not only childish, but had also ‘proved themselves as dogs to worry our children now’.<sup>461</sup> Dehumanised as well as infantilised, the Xhosa were noted in particular for the murder of women and children, as with accounts of frontier violence elsewhere in the British Empire, to bolster settler discourses of native savagery.

Depictions of savagery can be seen for example in the hysterical view of beast-like natives awaiting the British settlers of 1820 to the Cape, satirised in George Cruikshank’s illustration *All among the Hottentots Capering Ashore* (1820) [Figure 12], conflating early modern depictions of Khoikhoi cannibalism with Xhosa aggression. Notably, the conflict is set not on the all-male battlefield of formal regimentation, but in the chaotic African bush with Xhosa men, women and children literally devouring the British family with their jagged teeth whilst beasts of prey (a crocodile, lion and snake), join in the slaughter. In the background settler homestead are burnt down as a jubilant woman celebrates with her infant seated serenely on her corpulent backside as a man spears a British woman and her child. In Cruikshank’s satiric depiction of settler anxieties, this was not the Promised Land or a welcoming Eden, but a hell unfit for family settlement. As Sammons’s had been a friend of Cruikshank’s whilst in Britain and shared many ideological and personal affinities, we can see in both a virulently

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<sup>459</sup> Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 174-179. Despite the wider geographical scope suggested by the title, Price’s book deals solely with British encounters with the Xhosa on the Cape’s eastern frontier. In the more specific case of his infantilised Xhosa argument, he contends that the metaphor of childhood was not part of early missionary descriptions, but gained ground from mid century as British frustration at the effectiveness of frontier policy eroded humanitarian belief in the trustworthiness of the Xhosa. For a classic text on the gendering of colonial subjects, see Mrinalini Sinha, *The “Effeminate” Bengali and the “Manly” Englishman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>460</sup> *SSAJ*, 26 February 1846.

<sup>461</sup> *SSAJ*, 3 December 1846.



Figure 12, George Cruikshank, *All among the Hottentots Capering Ashore* (1820),

Accessed from:

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cruikshank\\_All\\_among\\_the\\_Hottentots\\_capering\\_to\\_shore\\_1820.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cruikshank_All_among_the_Hottentots_capering_to_shore_1820.jpg)

racist viewpoint. Cruikshank exaggerated for effect, as he lampooned the deceptive promises of a peaceful and fertile land advertised by the Colonial Office. His satire disparages both Xhosa characteristics and the (purportedly working class) would-be-settlers' naivety and perceived propensity for hyperbolic descriptions of the savage frontier awaiting them.

This exaggerated foreshadowing of the effect of frontier conflict on family life is a recurrent theme in satirical accounts. Particularly notable are the letters of complaint by 'Kitty Veller' contributed to the editor of *Sam Sly's African Journal*, and which were argued in the previous chapter to have likely been the female persona of a misogynistic male contributor. In the following long quote, notable for its hysterical tone and contrived grammatical mistakes, 'Kitty Veller' complains about the threat to the family posed by Xhosa hostility:

...The tother day I were awfully fritened at the selveges the Kaffirs, they tould us as how they was a commin, not to take Kattle, but lives and munny; and wud carry all we weemings to be wives to themselves. Oh! how shokin the thought of sich a thing; I'm shure I'd die if I was won o' them black beastes wives;- shurely you could say sumut to that good old sole, the guvernor, to purteck us from them naked villings, what will sum day ransac the countree entirely;... think of them fine young men, the farmers, what daily loses their Kattle... what will become of their combustibles, their dearest sweet Hinfants, their wives, and their pruperty. Oh, it is most hurried to contemplificate it; they will be developed in ruin, the ole countree will be turnd topsy-turvy. Blud shed, ravin, and construction will persecute the land; we shall all be undun and rinated for ever... keep them horrid black beastes away from Kristing men and weeming, We kumd here to be purteckted, not skarified to naked selveges, not to be larfed at and bused with Blakc Varmint; no! We're Brittinners what luv our guvermint, and looks to it for purteckshun, as much as a babby does to its pairent; we is no redicules, we is Royal subjects, luving our Quien and countree, and disolved to stand by all to the last... the Kaffirs will eat hus all up, is the daily talk... and while I says "purteck the Black," I says also, "not at the expense of the white"... I speaks as a man would do, but I is pheemail, weak but willin, and I knows the mails would back me in all I says or dus, for we only want pease and quietness, to make us a kumfortable and amicable people... The farmers here is very fine people,- I nos sum young men as fine in Southwark, they is uncumin good, and fit to be marrid to any pheemail;... they has no pease, no certainty of life or pruperty, no hoame, and if so be as they build un, they fears the Kaffirs will burn it; so we yung virguns cannot get husbands. Pray do, my dear Sir Sammivel, speak to the guverner pon this subject, for it be a very soar won to wee;- how can the countree purseed, if so be the pheemails cant get husbands; it is impossible.<sup>462</sup>

The letter of 'Kitty Veller' is redolent with the language of a world upside down. By complaining that 'the ole countree will be turnd topsy-turvy', Veller's pronunciation renders

<sup>462</sup> Kitty Veller to the Editor, 26 July 1845 in *SSAJ*, 21 August 1845. Another noteworthy correspondent to *Sam Sly's African Journal* who wrote in vernacular spelling with frequent malapropisms (and who was also likely a fictitious character) was 'Sam Switch', a cockney soldier or settler on the frontier. See *SSAJ*, 25 June 1846.

‘whole country’ closer to ‘old country’, reflecting anxieties at the inversion of domestic circumstances, with the certitude of British models of the family in the north, threatened on the Cape frontier of the south. Her confusion is rendered through the linguistic inversion of malapropisms. ‘Savages’ become ‘salveges’, suggesting that the Xhosa are not ‘irredeemable’, as she would argue, but ‘salvageable’. The present and future destruction of homesteads, the bringing of progress through cultivating an ‘England in miniature’,<sup>463</sup> is decried with ‘construction will persecute the land’, instead of the land being ‘enveloped’ with disaster it is ‘developed in ruin’. Such contradictions are reminiscent of the literary ploy used by John Reynolds and Thomas Hood in their *Odes and Addresses to Great People* (1825). In one letter/ poem written in the voice of the washerwoman ‘Bridget Jones’, her complaints are rendered the subject of ridicule through her poor orthography, for ‘whereas... [Reynolds and Hood] *compose* puns, their washerwoman merely stumbles into them’.<sup>464</sup> Participation in the public sphere through delivering speeches or writing petitions was a key target of misogynistic writing. Women were assumed to lack the rationality of men and to possess a ‘natural volubility’ whose public utterances resulted in ‘a form of verbal brutality, where not only men, but language itself suffered’.<sup>465</sup> Similarly the poor literacy of ‘Kitty Veller’ turns against her, ridiculing her own sex and class as ignorant whilst also lampooning the Xhosa in the process.

Her claim that ‘I speaks as a man would do’ only further underlines her female incompetence. It is woman more than men who are shown as hysterical, as she repeats a old superstitious fears that she may be made ‘won o’ them black beastes wives’ or, worse, her relaying of local gossip, reminiscent of George Cruikshank’s visual print mentioned earlier, that ‘the Kaffirs will eat hus all up’.<sup>466</sup> Her petition presents the contradictory face of settler politics in the voice of perceived female irrationality. She assumes savagery in what she calls the ‘blak niggers’<sup>467</sup> of the frontier, yet also favours missionaries to ‘convert em’<sup>468</sup>. Women,

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<sup>463</sup> Clifton Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992), p. 88.

<sup>464</sup> Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 166. The full title of the poem is ‘Letter of Remonstrance from Bridget Jones to the Noblemen and Gentlemen Forming the Washing Committee’. Some similar orthographical puns to that of ‘Kitty Veller’ are ‘Ann Sisters’ instead of ‘Ancestors’, and ‘steam Indians’ instead of ‘steam engines’. The poem rode on the topicality of the earlier Luddite campaigns of textile workers who destroyed machines that threatened their job security.

<sup>465</sup> Brown, ‘Satirising Women’s Speech’, 27.

<sup>466</sup> Kitty Veller to the Editor, 26 July 1845 in *SSAJ*, 21 August 1845.

<sup>467</sup> *SSAJ*, 10 April 1845.

<sup>468</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 May 1845.

by entering the debate on frontier policy, are viewed as muddled in their views. There are traces of calls for humanitarian intervention and protection of the Xhosa, yet an overwhelming condemnation of their threatening and destructive backwardness.

Veller herself is afraid of being labelled as a fomentor of trouble, claiming that 'I isn't no vitch'.<sup>469</sup> Her language by advocating propriety and family values on the frontier renders innocent language corrupt. She claims that settlers will be 'left prostitute'<sup>470</sup> by the Xhosa, not destitute. This sexualised language is even seen in her appeals for Sammons to approach the Governor, whom she wrongly identifies as John Montagu, the colonial secretary. She renders his name as 'Mr. Mountafew', inferring promiscuity, in the same sentence that she asks Sammons whether he is 'a marrid man', itself an improper question to pose in a public letter.<sup>471</sup> This returns us to comparisons between Kaatje Kekkelbek and 'Kitty Veller', discussed in the previous chapter. The former, as the female Khoikhoi protagonist of Andrew Geddes Bain's play of the same name, also made sexually suggestive overtures, boasting of her drunken promiscuity whilst also turning words imbued with the male sanctity of authority into sexualised, and thus feminised and discredited, spellings (Kaatje pronounces the meeting place for British philanthropists as the suggestive 'Extra Hole', instead of 'Exeter Hall')<sup>472</sup>. Both 'Kitty Veller' and Kaatje Kekkelbek, with their similarly feline names, exemplify the tendency for women, especially black women, to be derided as the exemplar of moral and civilisational degeneration.<sup>473</sup> On the frontier, itself both a physical and ideological site of instability, it is women who are most easily identified as humorous targets for projecting anxieties about the breakdown of societal order. The satirical utterances of 'Kitty Veller', a woman of lower class station, evoke scornful laughter because she is the antithesis of the desired representative of settler rhetoric: the middle class male held in community esteem. It is not the substance of her protests that are trivialised, as the threat of Xhosa hostility to the stability of settler homesteads was a concern taken very seriously by many of Sammons's readers, but the fact of the marginality of 'Kitty Veller' as a settler spokesperson.

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<sup>469</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 May 1845.

<sup>470</sup> *SSAJ*, 1 May 1845.

<sup>471</sup> *SSAJ*, 10 April 1845.

<sup>472</sup> Klip Springer [Andrew Geddes Bain], 'Kaatje Kekkelbek, or Life Among the Hottentots', *SSAJ*, 20 August 1846.

<sup>473</sup> On this, see especially Sander Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies: Towards an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine and Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1985), pp. 204-242.

If one looks beyond Kitty Veller's lack of awareness at transgressing rhetorical conventions of propriety, her main concern is for the formation of stable family units on the frontier. Emigration policy from England to the colonies favoured the migration of complete family groups or the physically fit, young single man desirous of starting a family and forging his economic independence on his own piece of land. Manly vigour needed to be balanced with domestic responsibility, women and children helping to foster an environment for the replication of middle class values on the frontier.<sup>474</sup> Ideals of domesticity were also the concern of frontier women. Kitty Veller's complaint in one letter that 'I has no sarvands, and only think of a jentelwumman having to peel taties, bile pumpkins, rost beaf, bak braid...',<sup>475</sup> is likely a fair reflection of the hardships of domestic chores that presented women on the isolated stretches of frontier land. However, it is her *lack* of gentility that is being ridiculed as delegitimizing her right to complain of the harrowing circumstances threatening domestic stability. Uneducated poor women, it is assumed, suffer pretensions of advocating the values of the middle class home, whilst vocalising naive transgressions of the very codes of proper gendered conduct they claim to espouse. Many settler wives did face adversity on the frontier. Concern for the safety of frontier households, as Natasha Erlank has shown, is reflected in the letters of settler wives who frequently complained to relatives back in England of their 'calamity' and 'affliction', with financial hardships and the ever-present threat of the Xhosa stealing cattle and pillaging farms. These settler wives viewed the Xhosa as inferior because of their challenge to the 'natural' order of British domesticity in attacking the foundations of their settler livelihood, putting a wife's role as mother and her husband's role as breadwinner under strain.<sup>476</sup> These letters were, however, written and circulated in private, and it is part of the satirical function of Kitty Veller's letters that she (as the persona of a male contributor) writes *publicly* to a newspaper to express her concerns. Public letters to the press were common, as the role of editors was viewed not as the mere reportage of fact, but, as one earnest correspondent wrote, also to 'uphold the character of our metropolis, and afford protection to the oppressed'.<sup>477</sup> Several letters of appeal like the one from 'Kitty Veller' would have been received by the colonial press, although not all published.<sup>478</sup> Such

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<sup>474</sup> John Tosh, 'All the masculine virtues: English emigration to the colonies, 1815-1852', in John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Pearson Education, 2005), pp. 173-197.

<sup>475</sup> *SSAJ*, 10 April 1845.

<sup>476</sup> Natasha Erlank, "'Thinking it Wrong to Remain Unemployed in the Pressing Times": The Experiences of Two English Settler Wives', *South African Historical Journal*, 33 (1995), pp. 62-82.

<sup>477</sup> *SSAJ*, 19 June 1845.

<sup>478</sup> One should be careful not to discount all letters written with a vernacular spelling and published in the press as forged vehicles for satire or ridicule. For example, one letter from 'Rigumwel Stevenson', a servant from

letters often took on the tone of memorials and petitions addressed to the Governor or Queen that, in the words of Natalie Zemon Davis, are ‘one of the best sources of relatively uninterrupted narrative form from the lips of the lower orders’.<sup>479</sup> Yet such petitions, by reflecting female outspokenness, were open to being imitated in a male hand for satiric effect, as has been shown in the Cape version of ‘Mrs Caudle’s Curtain Lectures’ or the poems of the spinster ‘Dorothy Lingerlong’.

## Conclusion

The Cape Colony in the nineteenth century was shaped in part by the ideological assumptions brought by middle class British colonists regarding appropriate gender roles. The home was viewed increasingly as the central place for fostering civilised and respectable conduct, with notions of separate gendered spheres, with women’s private role in the home as mother and domestic caretaker, and men’s public role in the workforce becoming the ideal models of behaviour. The printed word, in newspapers, periodicals and advice manuals, were read by men and women who identified themselves as middle class, or who were aspirant of upward social mobility, who internalised and discussed their expected roles in society. In the Cape of Good Hope, as in other colonies, attitudes to gender were not uniform. Yet, as a vocal proponent of middle class values, *Sam Sly’s African Journal* was most notable for its didactic approaches to discussions of gender, itself a common trait of nineteenth century journals. This didacticism took the form of social commentary and literary contributions, but also, as was a major focus of the journal, satire. Rather than challenge the gender roles prescribed by the dictates of evangelical sensibilities and moral conservatism, the use of humour and the satirising of women most often reinforced accepted gender paradigms and in turn its patriarchal order. Misogynistic writing ridiculed women who thwarted marriage, entered into the public realm through political debate or grievances, or who demonstrated sexual or moral deviance. Through the ridicule of satire, the aberrant behaviour of women was exposed and scorned. Humour, too, was seen to hold the benefit of aiding the effective education of children, and was believed to facilitate smooth social interaction of colonists in leisure

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Wynberg, published in *SSAJ*, 8 November 1849, addressed to the anti-convict association explains her master’s anger at the boycott measures against supplying the government with goods, with fears that she might be beaten. A manuscript of this letter, written in a shaky hand, can in fact be found amongst the papers of the anti-convict association, Cape Archives, Accession Papers (A), 535, vol 1, dated 21 October 1849. Despite the petitioner’s request of ‘plese doent tel master i rote this’, the letter must have been forwarded to Sammons, who published it. Whether the motive of publishing was ridicule or to genuinely illustrate the petitioner’s concerns, is hard to tell.

<sup>479</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 5.

pursuits. The ideals of domesticity and the influence of evangelically-minded middle class values, endorsed by the *Journal's* readership, ensured that satire and entertaining material strove not only in their minds to be morally responsible in content, but also instructive.

## Conclusion

*Sam Sly's African Journal* was published in the context of the 1840s in the Cape Colony, a period of consolidation between the abolition of slavery in 1838 and the granting of a Cape Constitution in 1853. Positioning itself within a discourse of British cultural advancement, one that was implicitly subscribed to by Dutch colonists, it spoke mainly of leisure and literary endeavour as an expression of British identity. A central component of this was satire, which not only functioned to entertain and encourage patriotism, but also to preserve and police the boundaries of white middle class identity in the Cape Colony. Satire was employed not as a subversive challenge to authority, but as a propriety-conscious means to ensure models of domesticity, gender roles and appropriate conduct were abided to by colonists. Through ridicule, satire in the *Journal* shamed behaviour seen as aberrant, such as middle class woman entering into public political discourse, whilst entrenching the increasingly racialised viewpoints of colonists by perpetuating comic stereotypes of the Khoikhoi, ex-slaves or Xhosa as irredeemable savages. Satire thus functioned to valorise the hegemonic script of white, middle class propriety through ridiculing the conduct of white colonists seen as deviant, as well as perpetuating the myth of black inhabitants as a barbarous counterpoint to white civilisation.

It is easy for historians to resort to simplified and neat arguments about the shift in societal attitudes and manners from the Regency era in England to that of the Victorian, strong traces of which dictated the 'tragedy of manners' enacted in the colonies.<sup>480</sup> It took a long time for Victorian moralism to effectively banish the perceived unsavoury traces of earlier times. 'There was a flavour of the Regency long after the Prince Regent had given way to the Prince Consort', Asa Briggs reminds us in *The Age of Improvement*, where the diminishing presence of dandies, duels and street theatre existed in the 1830s and 1840s alongside the emergence of the sanitised and sternly moralising traits of Victorianism.<sup>481</sup> These were 'old and new predilections [that] overlapped in nineteenth-century society as much as in nineteenth-century

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<sup>480</sup> The memorable phrase of Robert Ross in his book *Status and Respectability*.

<sup>481</sup> Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement 1783-1867* (London and New York: Longman, 1979), originally published 1959, pp. 449-453. For a further warning against perceiving neat watersheds in the change of manners from Georgian to Victorian England, see Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p. 424.

politics,<sup>482</sup> and these sensibilities were not isolated solely to the metropole, for they infiltrated beyond the borders of England and into the wider empire.

The middle class in the nineteenth century, it is to be remembered, had once belonged to the lower orders, or at least their recent forefathers had. Nostalgic attachment to the spirit of Georgian leisure and print culture permeated later cultural attachments, although distanced from its more vulgar forms. Satire was celebrated, but this was a more polite and less provocative humour that blurred the lines with entertaining comedy. The rising middle class, in the words of Vic Gatrell, ‘were discovering the rewards of good manners and the purchasing power to express them’ in rejecting radical forms of satire.<sup>483</sup>

Humorous print culture was a vital part of British (and British colonial) social life, and remained so despite its increasingly subdued and family-friendly expressions as the nineteenth-century progressed. The satirical aims of *Sam Sly’s African Journal* at first threatened to be an affront to the dignity and respectability of the colony’s inhabitants. Yet, Sammons traversed this peril with relative success. His *Journal* had outlasted many of his contemporaries in running for eight years from 1843 to 1851, and had garnered some enthusiastic readers. ‘Where is *Sam Sly*,’ one reader asks eagerly in a scene communicated to the *Natal Witness* in 1847 and quoted in a Cape Town newspaper,

I like to see the fun and frolic of the day. It does one good if it is only to know there is some life in the world.... Besides, there’s not a man who moves his little finger in anything like a public way but Samivel has a word to say about him, so the great chance is that some of our good friends or foes will be mentioned for good or for evil.<sup>484</sup>

In his comment, the colonist voices a hint of reserve at the potential opprobrium that might be placed on the reputations of his friends. However, predominating is a sense of familiarity and trust in Sammons’s wit and a fervent desire to read the latest issue of *Sam Sly’s African Journal* to entertain him in his moments of leisure. At the heart of this, was that many colonial Britons felt that the national character required a balancing of industry, sombreness and religion with merriment and laughter. By the late nineteenth century the differences between Georgian and Victorian popular culture had been ironed out, and there was less anxiety over the potential for humour to be overly-personal, scatological or sexually explicit.

<sup>482</sup> Briggs, *The Age of Improvement 1783-1867*, p. 452.

<sup>483</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p. 580.

<sup>484</sup> *Natal Witness*, 19 March 1847, quoted in *The Shopkeepers’ and Tradesmen’s Journal*, 14 May 1847.

This change in attitudes seems to have affected William Sammons to a degree. In July 1849, he rejected the title of *Sam Sly* he had proudly used in previous years renaming his publication *The African Journal*, commenting that ‘it is not deemed requisite to continue further the capricious and facetious title with which... [it] commenced’.<sup>485</sup> He maintained the witty commentary and content, yet the newspaper seemed to lack the vitality it had held in the first few years of publication. He hoped that readers’ support would remain with the ‘onward and upward movement’<sup>486</sup> of his editorial endeavours. He replaced the royal coat of arms on the old frontispiece of the newspaper, an emblem utilised by many other journals including the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. In its stead, he placed a woodcut of a crown and sceptre resting atop a book, presumably the Bible [See Figures 13 and 14]. The simplicity of title and front page speaks to some degree of Victorian restraint, although Sammons never fully surrendered his role as resident wit as he continued to contribute comic verse to the periodical press long after his *Journal* ceased publication until his death in 1882. The anti-convict agitation of 1848-50 had taken its toll on Sammons, who struggled to adapt his conservative outlook to a threshold period where many colonists were prepared to use extreme measures of boycotts and political protest to object to the landing of convicts. Through publishing satires targeted at the leaders of the Anti-Convict Movement, especially John Fairbairn, and refusing to support measures he saw as a betrayal of British liberty and loyalty to the British home government and Queen, his readership and number of contributors suffered. He suspended publication of *Sam Sly’s African Journal* in September 1851, following a period of ill health.

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<sup>485</sup> *The African Journal*, 5 July 1849.

<sup>486</sup> *The African Journal*, 5 July 1849.

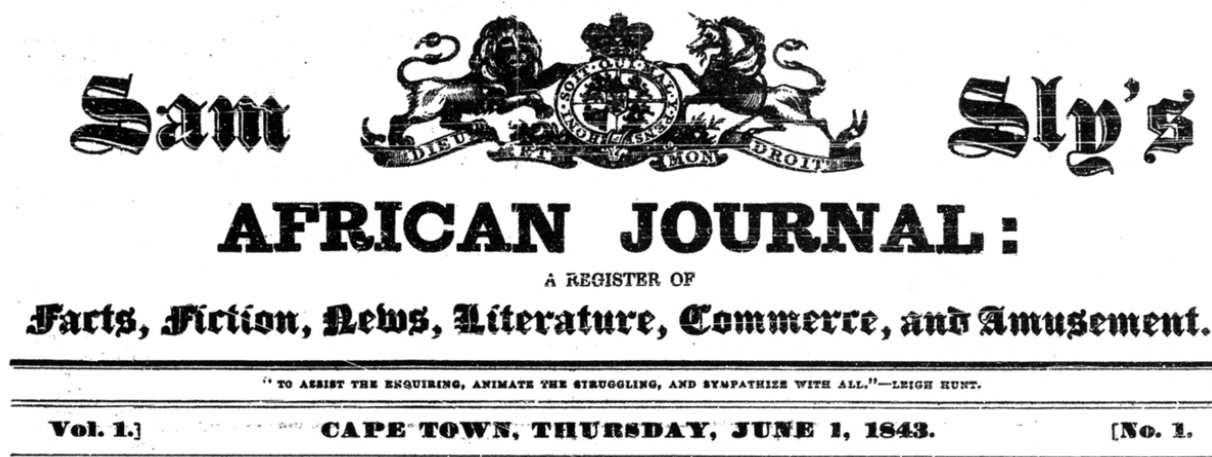


Figure 13, Old Frontispiece, *Sam Sly's African Journal*, 1 June 1843



Figure 14, New Frontispiece, *The African Journal*, 5 July 1849

Upon ending publication of his *Journal* in 1851, Sammons opened up a bookshop in Cape Town. In 1853 he hosted William Rabone on his arrival in Cape Town, offering his printing press, one that had previously belonged to J.S. de Lima, for Rabone to use for his future founding and editorship of the *Graaf Reinet Herald*. Rabone gives a colourful sketch of Sammons:

None have more individuality of character, or are better worth a sketch than *Sam Sly* (Mr Sammons)... Imagine if you can a middle-aged gentleman, having somewhat of a military air about him, with dark moustachios, and white hair, which sticks out at the sides rather wildly; of an excitable temperament, and using the most expressive action with every sentence. Imagine, what is the most difficult to imagine, the volubility and satire of Mr Church united with the minute description and refined manners wh belonged to Mr Clover, and add to that a relish for the humorous which our friend Mr Pamplin can supply.... All his descriptions of things were complete pictures- a little caricatured- dashed off with a few hasty touches, and leaving you just sufficient scope for the play of the imagination... He is a rhymer to a great extent and pines for the introduction of the fine arts in the colony. He sketches in pen and ink and has tried to introduce cuts in his paper; but found it impossible to excite the least interest or to get anything engraved in the colony... at the time of the Convict question, Sam Sly lost his popularity, and was so annoyed in printing his paper that his health was breaking up with constant labour and vexation. The paper was given up, and from a mere love of books, Sam Sly began business as a bookseller, without any experience whatever. It was like a scene at the Adelphi Theatre to hear him describe his first timid efforts at “pushing”- his diffidence- his hesitation his blunders. But now he introduces something new as a “lovely work” “highly spoken of” and says “my dear” to little boys and girls over the counter with all the graces of a London Shopkeeper...<sup>487</sup>

Sammons’s contribution left a legacy for the future of satirical periodicals in the Cape Colony. Upon his death, a portrait of Sammons by the accomplished Cape caricaturist W.H. Schröder embellished the pages of the *Lantern* newspaper. Below, the caption read ‘The Father of South African Journalism,’ a noticeable snub of John Fairbairn since this title was usually employed to describe the Scotsman’s more prominent efforts with the *South African Commercial Advertiser*.<sup>488</sup> The restrained comic vein that characterised Victorian satire, with appeal to family tastes and moral decorum persisted in Cape print culture as elsewhere in the world. The *Zingari* (1870-4), the first illustrated comic weekly in South Africa, claimed ‘to be playful without being spiteful, humorous without being vicious’.<sup>489</sup> This seems to have

<sup>487</sup> William Rabone, entry for 1 October 1853, in Essex, A., Rabone, W. and Rabone, H., *Records of a Pioneer Family*, ed. A. Rabone (Cape Town: Struik, 1966), pp. 88-90.

<sup>488</sup> *Lantern*, 9 September 1882. It is also possible that this caption implied that Sammons was *one of* the fathers of South African Journalism, alongside the likes of Fairbairn.

<sup>489</sup> Quoted in Brian Cheadle, ‘Southern Africa’, in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. Van Arsdell, eds, *Periodicals of Queen Victoria’s Empire: An Exploration* (Toronto, 1996), p. 270.

been a common mantra of satirical publications of the time, for the American magazine *Judge*, formed in 1881, claimed similarly to be ‘satirical without being malicious, and humorous without being vulgar’, whilst remaining a ‘paper for family and fireside’.<sup>490</sup> *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, it seems, managed to respect these newly forged criteria for respectable publication during its presence in the 1840s.

His approach, nevertheless, was one imbued with the conservative bourgeois values of white colonists at the Cape. His newspaper was successful precisely because it utilised satire to bolster the hegemonic standing of middle class sensibility. Behind the charming veil of Sammons’s rhetoric were patriarchal and racist assumptions about the colonial order. Satire may have been entertaining and forged a sense of British cultural affinity, but it also policed the boundaries of middle class power. An examination of satire in the mid nineteenth-century Cape, as shown in this thesis, reveals how humour needs to be taken seriously in explaining ideologies of white ascendancy in early South African history. Satire was therefore an important component of the cultural politics that sustained white supremacy, a feature that worked alongside the institutional manifestations of a white intelligentsia and civic culture.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> Quoted in John Lowe, ‘Theories of Ethnic Humor: How to Enter, Laughing’, *American Quarterly*, 38, 3 (1986), p. 446.

<sup>491</sup> Saul Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*.

## Appendix

### 66 "SAM SLY'S" PROSPECTUS.

On THURSDAY, June 1st, 1843, L. P.—Laws Permitting—it is intended that another Weekly Paper should be published, and labelled "SAM SLY'S AFRICAN JOURNAL." But, as everybody knows, or ought to know, what a Journal is, the Proprietor will spare himself the trouble of an explanation; besides, he despises trouble as he does every thing that is low and mean, and holds the man who would incur it unnecessarily as an object worthy his highest pity and contempt. On the same principle, not to put himself out of the way and for the greater ease of his head and hands for the future, he now appropriates, "WITHOUT PERMISSION," an introduction of his elegant friend Washington Irving, in a recent work, bearing a title that would be quite as applicable to this—namely, SALMAGUNDI.—(For a definition consult Johnson.)

As with him, so with the Proprietor of *The Journal*—his intention in taking the necessary trouble to write and publish this excellent Miscellany, is simply to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age.—This is an arduous task, and therefore he undertakes it with confidence. He intends for this purpose to present a striking picture of the Cape; and, as every body is anxious to see his own phiz on canvas, however stupid or ugly it may be, he has no doubt but the whole town will flock to see his exhibition. His picture will necessarily include a vast variety of figures, and should any lady or gentleman be displeased with the inveterate truth of their likenesses, they may ease their spleen by laughing at those of their neighbours.

The Publisher intends particularly to notice the conduct of the frivolous and the fashionable world; nor in this will he be governed by that carping spirit with which narrow-minded-book-worm cynics squint at the little extravagancies of the town, but with that liberal toleration which actuates every man of fashion. Whilst he keeps more than a Cerberus watch over the golden rules of female delicacy and decorum, he will not discourage any little sprightliness of demeanour or innocent vivacity of character.

But, before he advances one line further, he must let it be understood as his firm opinion, void of all prejudice or partiality, that the ladies of Cape Town are the fairest, the finest, the most accomplished, the most bewitching, the most ineffable beings, that walk, creep, crawl, swim, fly, float, or vegetate in any or all of the four elements: and that they only want to be cured of certain whims, eccentricities, and unseemly conceits, by his superintending care, to render them absolutely perfect. They will, therefore, receive a large portion of those attentions directed usually to the fashionable world; nor will the gentlemen who doze away their time in the circles of the *haut ton* escape currying—by which is meant those silly fellows who sit stock still upon their chairs, without saying a word, and then complain how intolerably stupid it was at the Governor's ball and at Miss ——'s party. This department will be under the peculiar direction and controul of "Sam Sly," gent.; whilst in the territory of the *heavy* business, such as commerce, facts, and moral criticisms, "Sam Sober-sides" will preside.

Like all true and able editors, the author of "*Sam Sly's African Journal*" considers himself infallible, and therefore, with the customary diffidence of his brethren of the quill, he will take the liberty of interfering in all matters either of a public or private nature. They are critics, amateurs, dilettanti, and cognoscenti, and as they know "by the pricking of their thumbs" that every opinion which they may advance in either of those characters will be correct, they are determined, though it may be questioned, contradicted, or even controverted, that it shall never be revoked.

The Proprietor of "*Sam Sly's Journal*" begs the public particularly to understand that he solicits no patronage. He is determined, on the contrary, that the patronage shall be entirely on his own side. He has nothing to do with the pecuniary concerns of the Journal, its success will yield him neither pride nor profit, nor will its failure occasion to him either loss or mortification. He advises the public, therefore, to purchase his numbers merely for their own sakes; if they do not, let them settle the affair with their consciences and posterity.

Is there any one who wishes to know more about the Editor?—let him or her read *The Journal*, and grow wise apace. Thus much he will say—there are three in it: "*Bardolph, Feto, and I*;" all *John Bulls*, and *Cockneys* good and true. Many a time and oft have these three amused the town, without its knowing to whom it was indebted; and many a time have they seen the midnight lamp twinkle fairly on their studious phizzes, and heard the morning salutation of "past 3 o'clock," before they sought their pillows. The result of these midnight studies is now offered to the public, and little as the Publisher cares for the opinion of this exceedingly dull and stupid world, he will take care, as far as lies in his careless nature, to fulfil the promises made in this Prospectus;—if he does not, he will have so many examples to justify him, that he feels little solicitude on that account.

The favor of one copy of this very important Work will be 8d.—but if the privilege should be requested to extend to a Quarter, the confidence and compliment will be so far appreciated as to be answered by an equivalent, in the reduction of the insignificant price to *Four Rix-dollars*—paper being given for silver—a fair exchange—and guaranteed, or the money returned. Should Advertisers wish to have the honor of a corner, it is possible the accommodation may be contrived, but they "*must be in time*." Further promises will be seen by consulting local Papers.

Cape Town, May 20, 1843.

## PROSPECTUS VAN "SAM SLY."

Op Donderdag den 1 Juny 1843, wetten toelattende, is men voornemens een ander Weekblad uit te geven, onder de benaming van "SAM SLY'S AFRIKAANSCH JOURNAAL;"—dan daar ieder een weet, of dient te weten, wat een Journaal is, zal de Eigenaar zich de moeite sparen, om daarvan eene uitlegging te geven; buitendien veracht hy alle moeyelykheid, even als al hetgeen dat laag en gemeen is, en beschouwt den man, die zich zulks noodeloos op den hals haalt, als een allerbeklagenswaardig voorwerp.

Volgens hetzelfde grondbeginsel, om zich niet te vermoeyelyken, en tot grooter gemak van hoofd en hand in het vervolg, bedient hy zich nu, "zonder verlof," van eene voordragt van zynen voortreffelyken Vriend Washington Irving, in een onlangs uitgekomen werk, een titel veroerende even toepasselyk als deze, n-melyk "Salmaguudi," (of Mengelmoes); voor eene verklaring van dit woord raadplege men Johnson's Woordenboek.

Wat hem betreft, even eens ook de Eigenaar van dit Journaal, is zyn voornemen in het ondernemen van het schryven en uitgeven van dit uitmuntend Mengelwerk eenig en alleen om de jongeren te onderrigten, de ouderen te hervormen, de stad te verbeteren, en de tyden te berispen;—dit is voorwaar eene hevige taak, en daarom onderneemt hy zulks met vertrouwen.—Tot dat einde is hy voornemens eene treffende schildering van de Kaap te malen; en daar elk een nieuwsgierig is om zyn eigen beeld op het doek te zien, hoe stom of leelyk de man ook zy, twyfelt hy geenszins of de gansche stad zal zich rondom hem scharen om die voorstelling te aanschouwen. Zyne schildery zal noodwendiglyk eene groote verscheidenheid van figuren in zich bevatten; en byaldien eenige dame of heer ontevreden zy over hunne treffende gelykenis, zoo kunnen zy zich van hunnen kwaden luim ontdoen, door slechts over die van hunne bureu te lagchen.

De Uitgever zal voornamelyk aanmerkingen maken op het gedrag van de beguichelende en modische wereld, doch hy zal hierin niet worden weggesleept door den bedilzicken geest, waarmede boekwormen van bekrompene geestvermogens de kleine buitensporigheden van de *beau monde* beglinsteren, maar met die grootmoedige verdraagzaamheid welke den man van smaak aanduidt. En daar hy meer dan eenen Cerberus waken zal over de gulden regels van vrouwelyke ingetogenheid en welvoegelykheid, zal hy geenszins eenig vrolyk uitstapje of onschuldige levendigheid van karakter ontmoedigen.

Doch alvorens hy een regel verder voortgaat, moet hy het doen begrypen als zyn vast denkbeeld, ontbloomt van alle vooroordeel of partydigheid, dat de Dames aan de Kaapstad de schoonste, de fraaiste, de beschaafdst, de meest begoochelandste en de bekoorlykste wezens zyn die in of op de vier elementen wandelen, kruipen, zwemmen, zweven, vliegen, of wassen; en dat zy slechts dienen genezen te worden van zekere kuren, grillen, of onpassende trotschheden, door zyne toezienende voorzorg, om hen gansch en al volmaakt te maken. Men zal hen dien ten gevolge een groot aandeel van die oplettendheid wyden welke aan de smaakvolle wereld wordt besteed; noch zullen de Heeren onaangeroerd blyven, die hun tyd verspillen in de kringen der groote wereld, waarmede men bedoelt die dwaaskoppen, die stokstyf op hunne plaatsen blyven zonder een woord te spreken, en naderhand over de styfheid klagen welke op het bal van den Gouverneur of op het partytje van Jufvr. heerschte.—Dit oordeel zal onder het onmiddelyk oppertoevoorzigt en bestier van *Sam Sly, Gentleman*, wezen; terwyl in het grondgebied van belangryke zaken, zoo als koophandel, staatszaken en zedelyke kritiek, *Sam Sobersides* het voorzitterschap zal bekleeden.

Even als alle opregte en bekwame Editeuren, beschouwt de Schryver van "SAM SLY'S AFRIKAANSCH JOURNAAL" zich als onfeilbaar, en derhalve zal hy ook, met de gewone schroomvalligheid van zyne medeschryvers, de vryheid nemen zich te bemoeien met alle zaken, zoo van publieken als byzonderen aard,—zy mogen kritieken, liefhebbers, kunst-vrienden, of kenners zyn; en daar zy "by elken opslag van de hand" weten, dat elk gevoel door hen omhelsd by eenige dier karakters naauwkeurig zy, zy echter onwrikbaar blyven, hoezeer ook betwist, tegengesproken, of wederlegd, ja, pal by hunne stukken.

De Eigenaar van "SAM SLY'S JOURNAAL" wenscht het Publiek wel te begrypen, dat hy geene patronagie of bescherming verzoekt, daar hy integendeel zich bepaalt dat die bescherming geheel en al van hem zal afhangen. Hy heeft niets te doen met de geldelyke zaken van het Journaal,—deszelfs beantwoording zal hem noch trotsch maken, noch voordeel verschaffen; noch zal ook de niet beantwoording hem verlies of naargeestigheid aanbrengen. Hy raadt derhalve de Ingezetenen over het algemeen, om zyne nommers te koop en om eigen wil; verzuimen zy zulks, dan moeten zy de zaak zelve met hunne gewetens en nakomelingschap afmaken.

Indien er iemand is, die nog iets nader aangaande den Editeur weten wil, hy leze het Journaal, en worde van lieverlede wys; zoo veel kan hy zeggen, dat er drie aan verbonden zyn, namelyk "*Bardolph, Peto, and I*," alle *John Bulls* en ware geboren Londenaars. Meer dan eens hebben deze drie de stad vervrolykt, zonder te weten aan wien men zulks verschuldigd was, en meermalen hebben zy de middernacht lamp op hunne peinzende gelaten zien flikkeren, en den morgengroet van half vier ure gehoord, alvorens zy zich ter ruste begaven.—De uitslag van deze middernacht beoefeningen wordt thans het Publiek aangeboden; en hoe weinig de Schryver ook geve voor het gevoel van deze buitengewone vervelende en domme wereld, zal hy zorg dragen, zoo veel in zyne gevoellooze natuur ligt, aan de beloften in dit Prospectus gegeven, te voldoen. Indien hy hieraan niet beantwoordt, zal hy zoo vele voorbeelden bybrengen om zich te regtvaardigen, dat hy weinig geestkwelling dienaangaande gevoelt.

De prys van een Exemplaer van dit belangryk werk zal 8d. zyn; doch indien het voorregt uitgestrekt wordt tot een kwartaal, zal het vrouwen en toegenegenheid zoozeer worden gewaardeerd, met te worden beantwoord door eene evenredigheid in de vermindering van den prys tot de geringe som van Rds. 4, ruilende papier voor zilver,—eene eerlyke verwisseling, en gewaarborgd, of het geld teruggegeven.

Indien Adverteerders de eer verlangen om een hoekje te beslaan, zal het mogelyk zyn om hen te kunnen gerieven, maar zy moeten "by tyds komen."—Verdere beloften kunnen vernomen worden byaldien men de plaatselyke Nieuwspapieren raadplege.

Kaapstad, 20 Mei 1843.

## NEWSPAPER NOVELTIES.

ON

*Thursday, June 1st, 1843,*

(L. P.)—laws permitting,

WILL BE PUBLISHED, AND CONTINUED

According to the caprice of the writer, and the humour of the reader,

**No. 1,**

OF A NEW WEEKLY PERIODICAL, ENTITLED

# Sam Sly's African JOURNAL;

A REGISTER OF FACTS AND FICTION,

NEWS, LITERATURE, COMMERCE, AND  
AMUSEMENT.

This *Journal* will run into a different channel from any Paper now extant in the Colony, by taking a more literary and amusing form. And, in the absence at present of all life, spirit, and diversion, endeavour to bleed an original and cheerful vein, for the improvement and entertainment of a dull and a "work-a-day" world.

The *Journal* will be a faithful mirror of the Cape, and will contain full intelligence of LOCAL AFFAIRS—of the "Sayings and Doings"—and give occasional *Sketches*, from time to time, of its present position and most striking features. But it will be entirely free from objectionable personalities, or any article obnoxious to readers of the most fastidious taste—with any pretensions to a correct judgment and a healthful state of mind.

The *Journal* will encourage and foster the efforts of young heads, and prove a vehicle for Native Talent, by publishing such effusions, when indicative of mental growth or original genius; and will give occasional Rewards, as a stimulus for study and application. It will, also, be open to Controversy of all shades, so long as conducted with a proper spirit, and an aim to the Good and the True, and the happiness of all.

The *Journal* will pay less respect to *persons* than to *principles*, and have an inferior regard for *money* than for manners; and, being neither restricted nor fettered by any party, clique, sect, committee, or shareholders, it will be perfectly independent to speak the Truth unequivocally and boldly.

It is possible, as the work progresses, that the *Journal* may be mixed occasionally with a few "*Dutch-Drops*," for the benefit of those whose palates may not yet be thoroughly English, and who may never have heard of those old-fashioned gentlemen "*Lindley Murray*" and "*Vyse's new London, &c.*"

In short, "SAM SLY'S AFRICAN JOURNAL" will be a Family Paper, and a mental recreation "*For the Million*"—the doings of one who has nothing to do, and nobody to help him—and will be placed on such a respectable footing as to insure elegance and correctness of typography, with regularity of dispatch. And it is presumed, from the extent of ground it may travel, and the variety of channels, nooks, and corners it may enter, that it will prove an admirable medium for the display of ADVERTISEMENTS, that will have a more abiding fate than ordinary.

Friends and Subscribers, favorable to these views, will be kind enough to forward their Names, Notices, and Communications,—in order, somewhat to regulate the number of copies to be printed—at present to Mr. W. L. SAMMONS, sole proprietor, at Messrs. *Richert, Pike, & Co.'s* Printing-Office, 59, St. George's-stræet, Cape Town, POST PAID.

The price will be 8d. each, or 4 Rix-dollars per quarter, in advance, and will be guaranteed, or the money refunded, for papers not received from any omission on the part of the publisher.

CAPE TOWN, May 23d, 1843.

# NIEUWSPAPIER NIEUWIGHEDEN.

—00—

Op Donderdag, 1 Juny 1843,

Met toestemming der Wetten,

ZAL WORDEN UITGEGEVEN,

En voortgezet volgens de grilligheid van den Schryver  
en het verlangen der Lezers,

**No. 1**

Van een nieuw Weekblad genoemd

## Sam Sly's African JOURNAL,

Eene verzameling van Daadzaken en Verdichtsel,

NIEUWS, LETTERKUNDE, HANDEL EN

**UITSPANNING.**

Dit Weekblad zal verschillend zyn van 'eenige Couranten in deze Kolonie bestaande, door het aannemen van eenen meer letterkundigen en vermakeenden vorm. En in het tegenwoordig afzyn van alle levendigheid, geest en uitspanning, trachten eene oorspronkelyke en vervrolykende ader te openen tot het veraangeamen en vervrolyken van eene druilige werkende wereld.

Het *Journal* zal een trouwe spiegel zyn van de Kaap, en zal volle berigten bevatten van deszelfs plaatselyke Zaken, —van het praten en doen—en van tyd tot tyd *schetsen* geven van deszelfs tegenwoordigen stand en in het oogloopendste trekken. Maar het zal geheel vry zyn van hinderlyke personaliteiten, of van eenig artikel aanstootelyk voor den teedersten smaak,—met eenige aanspraak op gezond oordeel en eenen gezonden staat van geest.

Het *Journal* zal alle pogingen van jonge hoofden aanmoedigen en koesteren, en een voertuig zyn voor Inlandsch talent, door het publiek maken van zoodanige uitvloeselen, welke verstands aanwas of oorspronkelyke genie aanduiden, en zal somwylen belooningen geven als eenen spoorslag van studie en toelegging. Het zal mede open zyn voor alle soorten van controversie, zoo lang als dezelve worden voortgezet in eenen gepasten geest, en het goede en ware en het geluk van allen beoogen.

Het *Journal* zal minder acht geven op *personen* dan op *grondbeginselen*, en geringer waarde hechten aan *geld* dan aan *manieren*, en niet beperkt of geboeid zynde door eenige party, —klike, —secte, —committee, —of deelhebbers,—zal het onafhankelyk zyn in de waarheid stoutmoedig en ondubbelzinnig te spreken.

Het is mogelyk dat het werk in deszelfs voortgang zal worden vermengd met eenige *Hollandsche droppen*, ten voordeele van diegenen wier smaak nog niet volkomen Engelsch is, en die nooit hebben gehoord van dien ouderwetschen Heer *Lindley Murray* of *Vyse's New London*, enz.

In het kort *Sam Sly's African Journal* zal een familieblad zyn, eene verstandelyke uitspanning voor de menigte, en zal op zoodanigen respectabelen voet worden gesteld om sierlykheid en naauwkeurigheid van uitgave te vereenigen. En men veronderstelt, van wege het uitgestrekte veld dat voor hetzelfde open is, en de verscheidenheid kapzelen, hoeken en gaten waar het kan inkomen, dat het een wenschelyk middel zal zyn voor het vertoon van Advertentien, welke een duurzamer lot dan elders zullen hebben.

De Vrienden en Inteckenaars, die gunstig zyn voor dit plan, worden verzocht hunne Namen, Kennisgevingen en Mededeelingen, (ten einde het getal Exemplaren te kunnen regelen,) voor het tegenwoordige in te zenden aan den Hr. W. L. SAMMONS, de eenige Eigenaar, aan de Boekdrukkery van de Heeren RICHERT, PIKE & Co. in de St. Georgerstraat, No. 59, franco.

De prys zal zyn 8d. per Exemplaar, of Rds. 1 per Kwartal, vooruit te betalen, gewaarborgd, of het geld terugbetaald voor Papieren nietontvangen door eenig verzuim van den Eigenaar.

Kaapstad, 23 Mei 1843.

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