

**STATE SCHOOLING AND THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION
OF TEACHER IDENTITY IN THE CAPE COLONY, 1839-1865**

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Abstract

The central focus of this thesis is the construction of teacher identity in the Cape Colony in the mid-nineteenth century. Central to the work are five case studies of government teachers employed to implement the 'New' or 'Established' System of government education in the Colony between 1839 and 1865. A cultural history approach is used to investigate how, shaped by liberal discourses spreading throughout the British Empire, the teachers performed their identity at diverse colonial locations. The personal world of the teachers is prioritised as the thesis focuses on their subjectivity, but by paying attention to the discourses shaping the performances of identity, the thesis embraces wider and interwoven fields of consciousness. These include school, local community, colony and empire. The notion of respectability is used to engage with issues of class sensitivity and representation, and that of governmentality to engage with education as a key aspect of a wider British colonial project of improvement and regularity. At the same time the thesis provides a new education narrative of an important experiment in free, non-racial government schooling.

Access to the identity and world of the government teacher is gained largely through personal correspondence between teachers and various levels of government officials, as well as correspondence concerning them. This documentary evidence comes largely from the archives of the (Cape) Colonial Office and the Superintendent-General Education located in the Cape Archives. Special investigations - one departmental and one parliamentary - provide additional detailed material on the identities of two of the teachers. A number of parliamentary select committee reports on education provide evidence of state and civic concerns affecting the teachers. Material from the textbooks of the *Chambers's Educational Course*, which was used in every government school, is used to explore the discourses of the classroom.

The thesis shows that teachers, as well as their superiors, constructed their identities as professional, rational, knowledgeable individuals committed to delivering a quality of education which was widely labelled as 'superior'. Their creation of pedagogic space and delivery of a complex liberal curriculum reflected these endeavours. While the colonial state began to penetrate Cape society more effectively, the teachers and the government schools were largely victims to failed governmentality. Teachers had also to negotiate their identities and the role of their schools in the context of local tensions and conflicts related to class, race and denominational alignments. What emerges from the case studies collectively is an account of material, bodily and emotional distress on the part of the teachers and a distancing of significant numbers of the colonial élite from government schooling. Due status and respectability were seldom achieved by either teachers or schools. The New System was widely seen to be a failure which was formally ended in 1865 when the state moved away completely from education provision to aiding education. At the same time the role of the System and its teachers in promoting a greater appreciation for education in the Cape Colony appears to have been significant.

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Abbreviations

CO Colonial Office

SGE Superintendent-General of Education

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Chapter One : Introduction

In 1839, as slave emancipation was becoming a reality, the Cape colonial government introduced what it saw as a new project in education – a ‘New System’ of free schooling open to all its population. The stated intention was to provide an English-medium, liberal education through the provision of secondary as well as elementary schooling. This was to be carried out by well qualified and well supervised teachers.¹ Centralized for the first time under a professional Superintendent-General of Education, state schooling came to be located in twenty-one ‘Established Schools’ in all the regional centres of the Colony.² (See **Appendix A** for full list of schools.) Perceiving teachers then at work in the Cape to be inadequate, the colonial authorities sanctioned the employment of a number of British, mostly Scottish, educators. These arrived at the Cape in 1840 and 1841, providing the core of teachers who ran the schools with minimal assistance.

The introduction of the New System was significant in that it was one of the first large-scale engagements with fully state-run schooling in the British Empire.³ The New System was, however, effectively in place for only just over two decades. From the 1860s it was reviewed and gradually disbanded. Formally ended by the colonial legislature in 1865, state education was totally replaced by the less-costly system of stated-aided schooling. By mid-1874 none of the original government schools existed any longer, although they were widely regarded as having provided an impetus to improved education throughout the Colony.

This thesis focuses on the identity of government teachers working within the New System in a pre-industrial settler Cape (1839-1865). The construction of teacher identity is explored through case studies of the experience of teachers at five Cape towns: Wynberg, Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg, Caledon and Worcester. While also intending to fill some of the gaps in the history of South African education, the main purpose is to use education and the teachers’ subjectivity as the lens through which to examine mid-nineteenth century Cape society more broadly.

¹ *Government Minute*, 23 May 1839, G.24-’63. CGH. *Report of a Commission of Inquiry, in Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to Inquire into the Government Educational System of the Colony* (hereafter *Report of Watermeyer Commission*), Appendix V ; James Rose Innes to Col Sec, 9 August 1841, CO 499.

² G.16-’57. CGH. *Report on Public Education for the Year 1855 and the First Half of 1856*, 43.

³ Ireland appears to have been the first British domain to have fully state-funded schools in the form of model schools used as sites of teacher training: J. Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981), 5.

Three questions should be considered across the case studies. Firstly, what was the nature of the colonial project represented by the New System? Secondly, how did teachers construct themselves within the system and its local context, and how did they perform that identity? Finally, in what ways did the nature and expectations of particular local communities⁴ interact with and modify this project of the colonial order?

New Cultural History and the Cape Colony in the mid-nineteenth century

The contribution of this thesis lies both in its subject matter and its approach. The period under investigation is framed by slave emancipation in the late 1830s and the transformations of the mineral revolution from the mid-1860s, but is itself a period of Cape history that is under-researched. There is a long-standing social history of the establishment of a commercial élite in Cape Town, the move towards representation in the first Cape parliament in 1854, and the ongoing attempts of colonial authorities to pacify the 'eastern frontier'; this played out in the context of a contested liberal ideological framework.⁵ More recently, there has been some important work on shifts in colonial attitudes to race during the nineteenth century by Andrew Bank, on colonial net-working in post-emancipation society by Wayne Dooling and, most recently, on transformations in colonial consciousness by Paul Landau. The use of a cultural history approach by Robert Ross and Kirsten McKenzie on colonial middle class identity, status and reputation has begun to open up new avenues of investigation in mid-nineteenth century Cape history – but there is much still to be done.⁶

This study of government teachers at the Cape adds new dimensions to the history of this period. Focusing mainly on respectable men who were tasked by the state with a significant project of

⁴ Following Bozzoli, the term 'community' is taken to embody ongoing processes which are given a spatial dimension by the particular geographic place with which they are identified. Links are forged by daily contact, family networking and so on over a significant period of time. B. Bozzoli, ed., *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 26, 29-34.

⁵ See for example the latest overview of nineteenth century Cape history in C. Hamilton, B.K. Mbenga and R. Ross, eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa I, From Early Times to 1885* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁶ A. Bank, 'Liberals and their Enemies: Racial Ideology at the Cape of Good Hope, 1820-1850' (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1995); W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2007); P. Landau, 'Transformations in Consciousness,' in Hamilton et al eds., *Cambridge History of South Africa*, 392-448; K. McKenzie, 'The South African Commercial Advertiser and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Town' (MA diss., University of Cape Town, 1993); K. McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney & Cape Town, 1820-1850* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004); R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1700-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999).

improvement, it provides an opportunity to explore notions of knowledge and the world of ideas current at the time. It explores gendered identity and its performance, as well as its intersection with class and race. It examines institutional practices, particularly those of the small town classroom where children were regulated through both physical space and the school curriculum. It offers an opportunity to investigate mid-century social relations in the context of the 'local' as well as the colonial state, and affords a sense of some of the differences and similarities between different sites of teacher performance.

Investigating teacher identity at the Cape within the wider context of the British Empire is important. The days of narrow local and national histories have given way to an investigation of the transnational circulation of ideas. Mass education was a social project in nineteenth century Britain which the state gradually engaged in from the middle of the century but came to own only in its final three decades. The interconnectedness of colonial officials, Cape intelligentsia and humanitarians, and Cape teachers within this project is explored. This history of state schools in the nineteenth century Cape also allows a glimpse into an imperial project which imagined the possibility of a non-racial educational world - for the pupils at least - and probes its failure.

The insights of a cultural history approach have begun to open new ways of understanding Cape society, both in the VOC period⁷ and in the British period. While other aspects of the colonial project - legal practice for example - could have been used, the decision to use education as the lens through which to examine cultural practice at the Cape has proven to be rich. By prioritising teacher identity or subjectivity, the focus narrows to the teachers' personal worlds, but by paying attention to the discourses shaping these performances of identity, we are drawn to wider and interwoven fields of consciousness embracing school, local community, colony and empire.

History of Education

This research also has the potential to reinvigorate the dormant state of the history of education in South Africa.⁸ Writing in 2004, Jonathan Jansen referred to a challenge from his then colleague at the University of Pretoria, social historian Charles van Onselen. Asked to think of one

⁷ N. Worden, 'New Approaches to VOC History in South Africa,' *South African Historical Journal* 59 (2007): 3-18.

⁸ It was Linda Chisholm, then Professor of Education at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, who initially encouraged me to consider writing about the history of education because of the dearth of such work in South Africa.

distinguished, 'single-authored South African monograph' in the field of education, he could not. He refers instead to 'a curious silence in post-apartheid education writings with respect to the history of education. Most academic writings focus on education policy and very little else'. He also notes 'a failure to locate apartheid education in a broad context of colonial and postcolonial education across the world'.⁹ And while education has been written about as a site of contestation in the apartheid era,¹⁰ for the nineteenth century there is very little.

The history of education in Europe, the Americas, Australia and India has, on the other hand, been given new impetus in the last two decades by the impact of cultural and feminist history.¹¹ Education history has become part of mainstream history, as both draw from an interdisciplinary engagement with linguistics, anthropology and cultural studies. Ideas, the link between knowledge and power in forming normative discourses, and the construction and performance of identity, are all as much about education as they are about history. This research is thus an attempt to tackle colonial education using the insights of local and international historians working more widely in social, cultural and gender history.

Historiography and Theoretical Framework

An attempt to locate a study of teachers in the context of literature on nineteenth century Cape education immediately demonstrates the dilemma highlighted by Jansen above. Even if we have become sceptical of grand narratives, it is an indictment of the state of historical writing on education that the only really comprehensive history of schooling, *Education in South Africa*, was written by E.G. Malherbe in 1925.¹² This provides a detailed account of the foundations of colonial education, based on archival research. It provides a useful framework of institutions,

⁹ J. Jansen, Review of *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948–1994: The Doors of Learning Shall Be Opened*, edited by P. Kallaway (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), in *Comparative Education Review* 48, 2 (May 2004): 224–6.

¹⁰ For example, P. Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984); Kallaway, *History of Education under Apartheid*; P. Christie, *The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa* (Johannesburg: SACHED Trust/Ravan Press, 1991).

¹¹ Some examples are T.S. Popkewitz, B.M. Franklin and M.A. Pereyra, eds., *Cultural History and Education: Critical Essays on Knowing and Schooling* (London & New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001); M. Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in Nineteenth-century Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); S. Seth, *Subject Lessons: the Western Education of Colonial India* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007). Part 4: 'Identities and Institutions', compiled by C. Soudien and P. Kallaway, in Kallaway, *History of Education under Apartheid*, 259-355, includes chapters which signify some engagement in South Africa with these paradigms. See, for example, J. Karlsson, 'Looking at Apartheid School Spaces,' 337-55.

¹² E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa 1: 1652-1922* (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Juta, 1925).

policy, legislation and patterns of schooling for the period covered in this thesis. Other general histories add little to Malherbe's insights.¹³

Available texts on the history of education at the Cape largely employ an old-school empiricism fed by an assumption that the spread of schooling was the mark of progress. Cape universities, particularly the University of Stellenbosch, have generated a range of theses and dissertations on individuals, periods and places important in the history of Cape schooling.¹⁴ A SABINET search located only one of relevance to this research written since 1973, however.¹⁵ W.L. Nell's 1973 thesis, 'James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859', examines meticulously the career of the first Superintendent-General of Education (SGE) at the Cape and provides a comprehensive overview of schooling in the period. Concerned to assess the contribution of Innes, Nell shows that quality free schooling was his goal, but does not explore the meaning of this beyond describing the components of the curricula. Nell is interested in the language policy of the Innes superintendency (Dutch was taught and used to facilitate English acquisition), but pays less attention to issues of race and gender. He analyses the constraints on the superintendent who worked to establish more state aided schools and thereby expand opportunities for schooling throughout the Colony. In making use of the correspondence between the government and teachers within the state system, Nell reports on the matters of concern to them – salaries, accommodation, and the need for teaching assistance, for example. The Scottish origins of many teachers are pointed out but not seen as shaping their roles or identities.¹⁶ A thesis in a similar vein is J.I. Janse van Rensburg's 'Die Lewe en Werk van Sir Langham Dale, 1859–1872'.¹⁷ It also examines the issues of superintendency at length, including the shift under the second SGE, Langham Dale, away from fully state funded schooling. It makes extensive use of *De Zuid Afrikaan* as a source, which provides some insight into perceptions of the New System in the eyes of Dutch-speaking colonists.

¹³ For example, M.E. McKerron, *A History of Education in South Africa, 1652–1932* (Pretoria: van Schaik, 1934); E.G. Pells, *300 Years of Education in South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta, 1954).

¹⁴ For example, J.M.L. Franck, 'Onderwys in die Paarl Gedurende die 19de Eeu, 1804-1905' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1964).

¹⁵ S. Howes, 'Tot Nut van het Algemeen' School, Cape Town 1804-1870: a Case Study of a Cape School's Response to Political and Philosophical Changes in the 19th Century' (MEd diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2004) accessed 22 February 2008, <http://blues.sabinet.co.za>. This was a private, state subsidized school.

¹⁶ W.L. Nell, 'James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973).

¹⁷ J.I. Janse van Rensburg, 'Die Lewe en Werk van Sir Langham Dale, 1859–1872' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1943).

Frank Molteno's 'Historical Foundations of the Schooling of Black South Africans',¹⁸ representing a social history approach to education history, seeks to place the origins of nineteenth century African schooling in the context of a class and race analysis, and outlines policy and practice. It is superficial, however, in dealing with the majority of the Western Cape population – the former slaves and coloured population that the New System intended to include in its educational endeavours. The research carried out in this thesis thus fills some of these gaps.

The intention of the thesis is not to provide a history of education but rather to use education as a lens through which to view the nature of nineteenth century Cape society. At the same time, it makes a contribution in providing a narrative of an important, if short-lived, project in state schooling in the middle of the nineteenth century. In seeking to draw upon literature that engages with teacher identity, however, it has been necessary to search outside of work specifically on Cape education.

Richard Elphick points out that the growth of the major religions, Christianity and Islam, in the Cape Colony under the British was intertwined with the extension of schooling,¹⁹ and histories of missions inevitably include schooling in their ambit, although they do not examine the role of the state.²⁰ The work of Jean and John Comaroff on the role of Christian literacy and brokers of Christian identity in nineteenth century southern Africa, provides rich insights applicable to an examination of the consciousness of colonial teachers. They seek to flesh out the identities of nonconformist British missionaries, a dominated group within a privileged order. They consider 'the social heritage, the cultural categories, and the ideological baggage' taken to unfamiliar reaches of southern Africa, and the imagined worlds the missionaries promoted.²¹ These culture brokers drew on a liberal view of the individual as 'an autonomous being with the innate capacity to construct himself'.²² A strong feature of this was a commitment to self-improvement as the outworking of their bourgeois, Protestant identities.²³ Paul Landau argues that the brokers and imbibers of this western consciousness were often unconscious of its assumptions and that it is to be traced in usage or praxis, not just written texts.²⁴

¹⁸ 'The Historical Foundations of the Schooling of Black South Africans', in Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education*, 45-107.

¹⁹ In H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, eds., *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), 101.

²⁰ For example, J. de Gruchy, ed., *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa: Historical Essays In Celebration of the Bicentenary of the LMS in Southern Africa, 1799–1999* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000).

²¹ J. and J. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991).

²² *Ibid*, 61.

²³ *Ibid*, 55.

²⁴ Landau, 'Transformations', in Hamilton et al, *Cambridge History*, 392, 446.

My thesis focuses on the colony of settlement – excluding significant interactions with the frontier ‘native’ populations for reasons to be explained below. It nonetheless invites consideration of a spectrum of positions and practices of teachers, from conscious brokers of evangelical Christianity to those for whom Christian culture informed their identities in taken-for-granted ways. The relationship between different established churches (Dutch Reformed and English), colonial settlers and the teachers creates another significant link in the relationship between forms of knowledge, power and consciousness.

Moving away from a specifically South African focus, there is in Thomas Popkewitz et al’s *Cultural History and Education*, a collection of research into ‘the school’ that conveys a sense of intense engagement with the writing of education history in the USA, Latin America and Europe. This has seen ‘the shift from knowledge as an epiphenomenon in social regulation and control to knowledge as a field of cultural practices and cultural reproduction’.²⁵

Although new cultural history cannot be narrowly defined, there are core ideas informing its practice.²⁶ It has been born within an interdisciplinary engagement - in particular with linguistics, anthropology and cultural studies. It has also been strongly influenced by gender studies. It has gained purchase among historians who recognise the limits in dealing with issues of identity, consciousness and ideology, of social history which valorises class as the explanatory cornerstone. The contribution of Michel Foucault is central, both in prioritising the relation between knowledge and power, and in presenting the notion of ‘discourse’. Ideas are central to cultural history as the historian seeks to interpret the way in which the actors in the world (subjects) try to make sense of it. These ideas are shaped by a normalizing discourse or a number of contending discourses, which arise from the most powerful forms of knowledge. Language plays a central role in mediating meaning and this requires careful deconstruction. Discursive practices are embedded in institutions (schools, prisons, hospitals and so on) and techniques which in turn shape the human ‘subjects’. The cultural historian of education would thus ask the question, what constitutes the ‘educated subject’?²⁷ Leaving little room for human agency, Foucault held that identity or subjectivity was constructed from the repertoire of social and cultural forms offered by the discourse.

²⁵ Popkewitz et al., eds., *Cultural History and Education*, 10.

²⁶ G. Eley, *A Crooked Line: from Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 115-181; L. Hunt, ed., Introduction to *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Popkewitz et al., eds., *Cultural History and Education*, 3-33.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 67.

The devaluing of human agency in cultural history is contentious. So, too, is the dismissal, as historicism, of traditional preoccupations with time and place. Cultural historians who adopt Foucault's notion of the 'genealogy' of practices need to 'consider the present configurations and organization of knowledge through excavating the shifting formations of knowledge over time'.²⁸ Cultural historians place taken-for-granted conceptions, institutions and practices under review. Cultural history also invites the historian to examine the ways in which identity is represented and performed. Identity may be 'social, sexual, political, racial, national' and is forged in a particular context, which Kathleen Wilson defines as 'a set of relations specific to a period'.²⁹ For the cultural historian, social performance becomes a field of investigation, because it is 'a means of stating identity with those with whom one wishes to share status, while distancing oneself from others who lack [what] is required to maintain such status'.³⁰ Identity is displayed or performed in various ways; through the practices (including use of space), traditions, texts, dress, display of objects and so on. It is also shifting because it is contingent.

Some of the issues discussed in *Cultural History and Education* include the origins of the school and classroom and exploration of pedagogic space; school uniforms and the disciplining of bodies; and the 'othering' of the poor and children of colour in teacher discourses. The possibilities for this approach are considerable and my investigation of teacher identity is strongly, though not uncritically, informed by it.

A recent doctoral thesis by Kerryn Dixon applies some of these ideas in a contemporary South African context. She reflects on the way in which young children's bodies are made docile through the regimens of education.³¹ She focuses on time (how it is organised, periodised and compartmentalised); space (which can enclose, partition, rank and so on) and surveillance. These are aspects of schooling with which nineteenth century teachers were concerned, and in looking at teacher identity, it has been important to understand what these elements show about how he (occasionally she) viewed the world and his role as teacher.

Identity is a major theme in some contemporary histories of education emanating from Australia. This work also leads to a consideration of the role of gender in identity construction and

²⁸ *Ibid*, 32.

²⁹ K. Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), 31.

³⁰ Worden, 'New Approaches', 11.

³¹ K. Dixon, 'Literacy, Power and the Embodied Subject' (PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2007).

performance. Concentrating on the period after the introduction of 'free, compulsory and secular' education in the different states of Australia after 1872, Marjorie Theobald and Kay Whitehead, for example, offer careful studies of the gendered world of women teachers, and how teaching became normalised as the work of single women.³² Theobald explicitly theorises her work as a feminist historian who is engaging with the challenges of postmodernism.³³ Her chapter on 'The Administration of Gender: The Case of Victoria's "Lady Teachers", 1850-1900', demonstrates this in the context of the period with which I am concerned:

In the early 1850s ... the dimensions of the elementary school teacher were uncertain. Yet the ubiquitous maleness of head office, which was to endure for over a century, ensured that the identity of the teacher must emerge through layers of masculine subjectivity which were specific to time and place. The creation of a teaching profession cannot be seen in isolation from the mission of middle-class men to create a bailiwick outside the uncertain pursuit of wealth in the marketplace. The invention of the professions; the expansion of the public service; the bestowal of power and civic subjectivities through democratic institutions; and the invention of quasi-public societies like the Royal Society of Victoria – these were the building blocks of middle-class masculinity in the nineteenth century.³⁴

In approaching her topic from the position of identity and subjectivities, Theobald positions herself alongside cultural historians like Popkewitz. Her comments on the teaching profession's connection with 'middle-class men' of commercial interests raise the question of how cultural historians position their studies within broader economic and political 'structures'. I am persuaded by historians who feel that these do not lend themselves to deconstruction in the same way as texts and images. William Sewell, in his consideration of cultural analysis, admits to 'appropriating from deconstruction specific ideas that [he finds] useful rather than adopting a full-scale deconstructionist position' and that he finds it necessary to ascertain how the 'semiotic structures' contained in cultural practice 'are interlocked in practice with other structures – economic, political, social, spatial'.³⁵ It is a position taken by Eley and Hunt as well.³⁶

John Tosh carries out his work on notions of manliness and masculinity in nineteenth century Britain as a social historian who uses the 'cultural historian's subject matter of discourse and representation ... as a means to a more nuanced account of social experience'.³⁷ While recognising the social power of men in patriarchal communities, there is value in historicising

³² Theobald, *Knowing Women*; K. Whitehead, 'The spinster teacher in Australia from the 1870s to the 1960s,' *History of Education Review* (Jan 1, 2007).

³³ Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 5.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 130-1.

³⁵ W. Sewell, *The Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 167.

³⁶ Eley, *Crooked Line*, 201; Hunt, *New Cultural History*, 10.

³⁷ J. Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005), 1-2.

masculinity and engaging with the discourse of manliness in its physical and moral dimensions, and attributes of character. Tosh and others working in the field of masculinity provide a very productive set of ideas for my work on the identity of predominantly male teachers.

An attempt to locate Cape education discourse and practice in the context of empire invites an examination of histories of English and Scottish schooling in the nineteenth century. John McKenzie's recently published *The Scots in South Africa: Ethnicity, Identity, Gender and Race, 1772-1914*³⁸ draws together a vast range of evidence of Scots at work in South Africa. Its introduction raises, although does not develop, interesting questions about Scottish distinctiveness, multiple layers of identity and the extent to which identity may be further solidified in a colonial context. The Scottish influence on Cape education proves to be remarkably strong, and while there is evidence that Scottish patriotism was able to coexist in relative harmony with a broader British national identity,³⁹ this would give a particular flavour to Cape education. R.D. Anderson and T.M. Devine trace the influence of the Reformation and Calvinism on the spread of parochial schooling in Scotland from the sixteenth century.⁴⁰ It was significantly more inclusive than English schooling, and offered, at least theoretically, an opportunity for those of lower rank to go on to a secondary education and eventually to enter one of the four Scottish universities. Devine observes that, 'for Scots in the nineteenth century, education was much more than a matter of learning, instruction and scholarship. It had become a badge of identity, a potent symbol of Scottishness.'⁴¹ Two Superintendents-General of Education at the Cape were Scottish, as were many government teachers after 1821, and ministers of religion who sat on Cape district school commissions. Teaching materials were imported from Scotland, curricula were borrowed from Scotland, and ideals of teacher training were informed by the work of David Stow in Glasgow.

Ian Hunter is a cultural historian who modifies a fairly long tradition of economic determinism in which industrial capitalism is assumed to be the force behind the provision of mass education in Britain.⁴² In *Rethinking the School*, he argues persuasively that the use of bureaucratic and pastoral 'technologies' through state schooling was a strategy to develop in both urban and rural

³⁸ J. MacKenzie, *The Scots in South Africa: Ethnicity, Identity, Gender and Race, 1772-1914* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2007).

³⁹ C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989).

⁴⁰ R.D. Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People, 1750-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2007* (London: Penguin, 2006).

⁴¹ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 389.

⁴² For example, B. Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974).

poor, practices of moral self-regulation and rational subjectivity that would make them productive members of society.⁴³ Pre-industrial Prussia modelled the provision of state education, and David Stow's essentially Christian pastoral work in providing schooling for the Glasgow poor was a major influence throughout Britain and her empire. J. Donald agrees that the key English educational reformer and Stow acolyte, John Kay-Shuttleworth, promoted 'an emerging conception of popular education as a technique of government ... The consistent aim [was] to moralize the working class ...' and responsibility for this was increasingly seen to lie with the state.⁴⁴ This places education within a utilitarian vision of a liberal society; a society that could be reshaped and reformed for the good of the whole by an increasingly interventionist state. The provision of inclusive public education at the Cape Colony may, it will be argued in the thesis, be understood within these discourses.

This takes us to the place of the Cape Colony and the teachers of the New System within empire. While arguing that 'empire was a matter of attitudes, legends, theories and institutions' as much as 'economic determinisms', Christopher Bayly points out that Britain had the military power to enforce 'uniform patterns of rule and uniform notions of law and progress on societies distant from each other'.⁴⁵ The Cape fell under British metropolitan rule at a time when long standing British ideas of good government were being energised by ideas of liberalism and improvement discussed above.⁴⁶ The result was a pervasive worldview in which progress in commerce and free markets in land and labour were taken as markers of a culture's position in the social hierarchy.⁴⁷ Productivity was the defining characteristic of progress. At the Cape, a liberal colonial order would be engaged in a wider project of which education would be a part.

Sanjay Seth notes in the context of India that, 'colonialism itself came to be seen as an essentially pedagogic enterprise'.⁴⁸ Colonial rule entailed coercion which might be overt or hidden, but equally important were the pedagogic effects of its 'beneficial practices' – peace, the rule of law, free press, public works and formal instruction or schooling. The package is familiar at the Cape, especially after permanent British occupation in 1814. With the ending of a slave economy in

⁴³ I. Hunter, *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1994).

⁴⁴ J. Donald, *Sentimental Education: Schooling, Popular Culture and the Regulation of Liberty* (London & New York: Verso, 1992), 29; A. Davidson, *The Invisible State: The Formation of the Australian State 1788-1901* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 16.

⁴⁵ Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 14-15.

⁴⁶ C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 290, 296.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 291.

⁴⁸ Seth, *Subject Lessons*, 2.

1838, the project, argues Wayne Dooling, also entailed reshaping the colonial economy in the interests of liberal capitalism.⁴⁹ This helps us to understand metropolitan support for the Cape colonial authorities' moves to intervene in the provision of education in a post-emancipation but pre-industrial colony. Adding motive force to this was the egalitarian humanist discourse of abolitionists. But although a state project, the New System as it came to be implemented at the Cape may be viewed as an élite rather than a mass form of colonial education; one which drew on the tradition of Scottish parochial schooling under a 'dominie'.⁵⁰

The Foucauldian concept of governmentality is useful in its embrace both of the political discourses or rationalities of an age – 'its ideas, assumptions, presuppositions' - and the role of government. To quote Nikolas Rose,

Government ... is understood as 'the conduct of conduct': programmes, strategies, techniques for acting upon the action of others towards certain ends. From this perspective, the state appears as one element – whose functionality is historically specific and contextually variable – in multiple circuits of power, connecting a diversity of authorities and forces, within a whole variety of complex assemblages.⁵¹

The goal of governmentality in the nineteenth century liberal state was the regulation of the population through various organized practices so as to develop individual capacity for self regulation. This was to replace direct coercion. As Rose shows, however, governmentality is not the province of the state alone. This is important when considering how the colonial state may either increase its direct role in education or surrender aspects of control over education to other agencies of governmentality such as missions or voluntary associations.

Nineteenth century liberalism, argue Barry et al., was both an ethos and 'a form of rationality that sought to govern ... *in toto*, down to the minutiae of existence'.⁵² The appointment of professional civil servants, such as Superintendent-General of Education, James Rose Innes, and the multiple technologies of colonial bureaucracy may be seen in this light – although, as Bayly warns, they may at times have been more symbolic than effective.⁵³ This thesis examines at

⁴⁹ W. Dooling, 'Social Identities and the Making of Private Property: the Cape and Lagos Colony Compared,' in N. Worden, ed., *Contingent Lives: Social Identity and Material Culture in the VOC World* (Cape Town: Historical Studies Department, University of Cape Town, 2007), 266.

⁵⁰ M. Cruickshank, 'David Stow, Scottish Pioneer of Teacher Training in Britain', *British Journal of Educational Studies* XIV, 2 (May 1966): 212.

⁵¹ N. Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self 2ed* (London & New York: Free Association Books, 1999), xxi.

⁵² A. Barry, T. Osborne and N. Rose, eds., *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), 8.

⁵³ Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 282-3.

some length attempts to ensure regularity in education provision – and provides much evidence of failed governmentality.

Bayly, in his wide-ranging *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, argues that world events from the late eighteenth century became ‘more interconnected and interdependent’ and that ‘global uniformities’ were therefore evident; in matters as diverse as religion, political ideologies and ‘bodily practices’.⁵⁴ Books, newspapers and later the telegraph, railway and steamship promoted a circulation of ideas which were not transmitted in one direction alone. As Kathleen Wilson notes, British national identity was shaped as much by empire as empire was by being ‘British’.⁵⁵ These are themes taken up in Saul Dubow’s *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*,⁵⁶ which examines the circulation of ideas between the metropole and Cape colonial ‘knowledge-based institutions’, and E. Collingham’s *Imperial Bodies*.⁵⁷ The latter is a remarkable reconstruction of the physical body as a site of identity of the British subject in India. Collingham shows how the feminised flamboyant bodily practices of the English *nabob* in India were replaced by the manly bureaucratised practices of the *sahib*. Through this, she connects the ‘imperial body’ to the wider socio-political context of the consolidation of British control over India as the nineteenth century progressed. It is work which demonstrates the rich and original insights that a cultural history approach brings to imperial history.

These histories raise important issues for exploring what it meant to be a colonial teacher within the British Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. What ideas were circulating? How were they part of diverse discourses of civilisation, nation and empire? Where did notions of education, liberalism and race fit? How were these ideas internalised and performed by the teachers? What were the inconsistencies and disjunctures in the way in which they understood their worlds? The work of historians of the Cape such as Bank, Ross and McKenzie all provide material on the ideas and identities of the better-off members of society; of a driving concern to attain and protect respectable status in a somewhat precarious colonial environment. This thesis embraces the ‘middling’ men of the educational world, the teachers, within the same concerns.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 1.

⁵⁵ Wilson, *Island Race*, 49-53.

⁵⁶ S. Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility and White South Africa, 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁵⁷ E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001).

An exploration of the identity of teachers engaged in the same project but in different contexts, raises important issues of how local ideas, expectations, socio-economic interests and affordances shape the person and the project. A goal of this thesis is to examine the same project through different teachers in different localities. This allows for a textured examination of a limited number of identities but also for meaningful comparison and some generalisation. It is important to note, however, that in engaging in the case studies, it became apparent that there is a dearth of scholarly local histories attached to Cape towns and villages.

Helen Robinson's published doctoral research on Wynberg and Saul Dubow's honours project on Graaff-Reinet were both very valuable for investigating their political economy and class identity.⁵⁸ Thelma Gutsche's study of Colesberg, *The Microcosm*,⁵⁹ provided extremely useful detail of the people and events linked to my case study but the lack of referencing meant that it needed to be used very tentatively. J.E. Wilson's masters dissertation on nineteenth century Caledon could be usefully mined for details of the history of the town,⁶⁰ as could popular histories of Graaff-Reinet and Caledon.⁶¹ All are short, however, of material linked to identity and consciousness. Worcester is particularly poorly served and I was able to locate only one rather sketchy study in the form of an honours project by R.G. Grebe.⁶² Finally, H. Fransen's visually rich study of the planning and architecture of Cape towns and villages has proved an important resource in trying to imagine the places and spaces in which the teachers and schools were located.⁶³ The field of local Cape historical research awaits further attention, it is clear.

Sources

Access to the identity and world of the government teacher is gained largely through personal correspondence between teachers and various levels of officials, as well as correspondence

⁵⁸ H. Robinson, *Beyond the City Limits: People and Property at Wynberg, 1795-1927* (Kenwyn, Cape: Juta, 1998); S. Dubow, 'Land, Labour and Merchant Capital in the Pre-industrial Rural Economy of the Cape; the experience of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1852-1872' (BA Hons research report, University of Cape Town, 1981).

⁵⁹ T. Gutsche, *The Microcosm* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1968).

⁶⁰ J.E. Wilson, 'A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1811-1884' (MA diss., University of South Africa, 1984).

⁶¹ A. de V. Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet, 1786-1986* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1987); C.G. Henning, *Graaff-Reinet: a Cultural History, 1786-1886* (Cape Town: T.V. Bulpin, 1975); E. Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey: People, Roads and Early Days* (Swellendam: E.H. Burrows, 1994).

⁶² R.G. Grebe, 'Worcester Suid Africa' (BA Hons research report, at Worcester Museum, University unnamed, nd). This appears to have been published as R.G. Grebe, *Worcester 150 Years* (Worcester: Worcester Municipality, 1970).

⁶³ H. Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages of the Cape: A Survey of the Origin and Development of Towns, Villages and Hamlets of the Cape of Good Hope* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2006).

concerning them. This documentary evidence is located in the Cape Archives, Roeland Street, Cape Town. There is a substantial amount of material in the Colonial Office (CO) records as well as the archive of the SGE. The Archives of the District Magistrates and Civil Commissioners also contain correspondence between teachers and local school commissions or later Divisional Councils.

Each case study focuses on an individual male teacher except for Colesberg where a woman assistant teacher shares the pages with the main protagonist. The choice of the five case studies is in the first place directed by the availability of detailed correspondence in the above archives. The teachers about whom I write are those who produced more letters and memorials than their peers, and whose correspondence has survived. It seemed important to begin with case studies of two of the original Scottish teachers, and through them to explore the setting up of the New System. The other cases are chosen for the way in which they engage with a diverse range of issues related to teacher identity, including knowledgeability, health, gender and status.

The teachers were literate and articulate, and their letters are no dry official reports. There is, however, surprisingly little detail in these letters about their pupils, their classroom practice and their life outside of the classroom. What propelled them to write to government was generally some matter of dissatisfaction – and so the correspondence is skewed in the direction of achieving resolution of these complaints. Reading the gaps, the small asides, and piecing this together with other sources has made it possible to reflect on more than day to day complaints, however. The archival record also contains information that lends itself to spatial analysis and a reconstruction of the material world of the classroom.

A second genre used is the official report. The Superintendent-General of Education published an annual report after 1854 and James Rose Innes in particular wrote in great detail of his plans for education as well as what he observed on his tours of inspection. He also conducted a special investigation into the conduct of the Caledon teacher and his unpublished report provides much of the detail for the case study on Caledon. The inauguration of the new colonial Parliament in 1854 resulted in subsequent investigations into education matters by various parliamentary select committees. Verbatim transcriptions of interviews are available as printed Government publications and add to the texture of case studies. This is especially true of Graaff-Reinet, where the government teacher was subject to special investigation.

A third source of archival material has been used to a limited extent to supplement the secondary sources for local histories of towns and villages. This includes the records of the Civil Commissioners in Colesberg and Caledon, municipal records for Caledon and Worcester, and school commission records for Graaff-Reinet and Worcester. For Colesberg, no municipal records survive.

The teachers of the New System were examined on their ability to deliver the *Chambers's Educational Course* published in Edinburgh by William and Robert Chambers. The complete series is located in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, and I have selected certain key texts for an examination of some of the ideas and material delivered in the classrooms of the New System.

George Bremner, the Graaff-Reinet teacher, edited *The Midland Province Banner* between 1857 and 1859, and I have used selected articles on education from this publication. Copies are located in the Graaff-Reinet Museum.

Structure of the Thesis

The second chapter of the thesis investigates the origins and purposes of the New System in the context of the Cape Colony of the 1830s, and the dominant discourses informing this. It also outlines the setting up of the New System and introduces the Scottish teachers used to implement the System.

Chapters three and four, the case studies of Wynberg and Graaff-Reinet, are used to show how the New System was implemented in practice and how rapidly this was influenced by class sensibilities in these towns. Wynberg was home to leading members of the Cape military establishment and commercial bourgeoisie, as well as members of a predominantly coloured underclass. The relative success of the Scottish teacher, John McNaughton, is examined in relation to his ability to meet the expectations of the leading residents, in part through his delivery of a classical curriculum and the creation of respectable pedagogic space. George Bremner at Graaff-Reinet, by contrast, was thwarted in his attempt to win the support of an older entrenched predominantly Dutch elite in a time of growing prosperity. His school failed the test of respectability and the status of the teacher was undermined by this failure and his stirring up of controversy in his attempt to defend himself and 'The Herschel Scheme'.

The fifth and seventh chapters examine teachers who were themselves products of the New System and former pupils of the original Scottish masters. Chapter five, the case study of the teacher in Colesberg, provides an engagement with the discourses of the classroom through key texts from the *Chambers's Educational Course* used in all government schools. The chapter also investigates the operation of racial and gendered identities in the relative fluidity of this small farming and trading centre.

The sixth chapter focuses less on the New System itself and more sharply on the reputation of the government teacher, involved in allegations of sexual scandal. The way in which his performance in the private sphere becomes a matter of intense public scrutiny demonstrates how the teacher's identity is constructed for him by the villagers of Caledon.

Chapter seven, which examines the teacher at Worcester, is used as the final case study because Albert Rowan was able to guide his government school through the crises of the New System to a more complex educational enterprise than originally envisaged. This study demonstrates the identity of the teacher as strongly framed by participation in the local Dutch Reformed community. At the same time he survived a failure of governmentality by achieving a relationship of personal patronage with the Colonial Secretary.

The final chapter of the thesis draws conclusions relating to the three themes set up in this introduction – the nature of the colonial project, the identity of the government teachers and the impact of the local on both of these.

Chapter Two : The New System of Education : Grand Conception and/or Improvised Reality?

‘Very comprehensive, and beautiful to contemplate’¹ – this was the view of Thomas Buchanan, teacher of the government school in Cape Town, of the Memorandum on education sent by astronomer Sir John Herschel to Colonial Secretary John Bell on 17 February 1838.² No less impressed was teacher George Bremner, who served at the government schools at Paarl, Graaff-Reinet and Swellendam. He referred to ‘the original scheme’ of ‘that distinguished philosopher Sir John Herschel’ as contemplating a ‘grand object’.³ The object was the establishment of a ‘reorganized’ or ‘New System’ of government schooling for the Cape Colony, launched by a Colonial Government Minute of 23 May, 1839.⁴

Ian Hunter writes of the wrong-sightedness of historians of schooling who decry education systems for failing to live up to their conception. This he likens to lamenting the construction of a ‘humble church’ from the stones honed and set aside for the construction of a cathedral.

What would the school system look like ... if it was not treated as the failed realization of a ‘higher’ or ‘deeper’ educational principle?... How does the humble church appear if we discover that it is not in fact constructed from stones intended for a great cathedral ... but ... an improvised reality, assembled from the available moral and governmental ‘technologies’ as a means of coping with historical contingency?⁵

In adopting this position, Hunter might find himself taken to task by the mid-nineteenth century teachers working within the twenty-one Established or government schools launched after 1839. They appear to have seen themselves as part of something inspirational because of its largeness of vision; and yet they also saw it ultimately as a failed project. Both the vision and this perceived failure will be investigated through the pages of the thesis, as the constitution of teacher identity within the system is set out. A major feature was the dispiritedness that came to characterise

¹ Rev Thomas Buchanan, 11 May 1857, A1SC–1857. *CGH. Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education* (June 1857), 9.

² In W.T. Ferguson and R.F.M. Immelman, comps., *Sir John Herschel and Education at the Cape, 1834-1840* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961), 14-25.

³ ‘The petition of George Bremner, A.M., Master of the Government School of Graaff-Reinet’, 28 April 1857, A1SC-1857. *CGH. Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, (November 1857), 52.

⁴ Government Minute, 23 May 1839, G.24–63. *CGH. Report of a Commission of Inquiry, in Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to Inquire into the Government Educational System* (hereafter *Watermeyer Commission*), Appendix V.

⁵ I. Hunter, *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 2-3.

men (for they were almost entirely male teachers) at the interface between the colonial pedagogic project and the colonial subjects with whom they had to deal, day by day over many years.

For the first two decades of its existence, from 1839-1859, the government school system was superintended by James Rose Innes. Eventually worn out and ill, probably suffering from chronic high blood pressure, this Scot commented that choosing to be a government teacher at the Cape was to engage

on a course of life not only anxious, laborious and exhausting, but, at the same time, devoid of anything like social standing at all commensurate with the qualifications and attainments, which, if rightly discharged, the duties of a teacher require.⁶

All of this makes the initial views of a beautiful and grand scheme a sad loss. If, however, we trace the world of the government teacher and his self conception within it as imagined, then perhaps we can discern from the outset of the scheme its 'improvised reality', and work to unravel the historical contingency that gave birth to the particular experience of education offered by the government system between 1839 and 1865. With a focus on the teachers, we will attempt to understand the ways the actors made sense of their worlds and performed their roles within it. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a context for the case studies of teachers which follow in later chapters and which develop some of the themes outlined here.

Introducing the 'New System', 1838-1841

The New System was a project of the colonial state, located historically in the context of a relatively young British administration attempting to consolidate control over an inherited colonial society. The administration was executive dominated until the 1850s; a form of 'authoritative' colonial rule⁷ led by a succession of military governors. This was balanced to some extent by the achievements of humanitarians and Cape metropolitan liberals in carving a space for discourses of freedom. Education was one facet of a colonial project which embraced both overt military coercion (on the Cape Eastern Frontier) and what may be seen as a potentially

⁶ J. Rose Innes, 8 April, 1857, 'Memorandum submitted to His Excellency the Governor on the subject of the Normal School', A1SC- 1857. *Report of Select Committee on Education*, 23.

⁷ C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989), 8.

more seductive 'pedagogy of benevolent practices'⁸ including judicial and health reform, improved communications and improved education.

Governor Major-General Sir George Napier took office at the Cape at the beginning of 1838 and it was he who sponsored the New System, though probably had little to do with its actual design.⁹ The founding document of the New System, the *Government Minute* of 23 May 1839,¹⁰ stated that it was in the context of

the defective and inefficient state of government schools, that His Excellency lost no time in representing to Her Majesty's Government the necessity of reorganizing the educational establishment of the colony, and of placing the public schools **in charge of men professionally qualified to undertake the important office of public instructors.**

In maturing the plan ... His Excellency received the invaluable assistance of that distinguished philosopher, SIR JOHN HERSCHEL, of whose visit to, and interest in **the moral and intellectual improvement** of this colony, the system of education now about to be introduced will, it is hoped, be a lasting record. His Excellency has also pleasure in acknowledging the important suggestions which were furnished him by other gentlemen resident in the colony. And he feels assured that those who have thus co-operated with him in promoting this important measure, will be gratified to learn that their **sound and enlightened views** on public education have received the sanction of Her Majesty's Government. [My emphases]

A vocabulary of professionalism, morality, enlightenment and intellectual improvement thus counters that of defect and inefficiency in describing the New System.

It is well documented that Napier's educational initiative was prompted by the unhappy findings of Colonial Secretary Col John Bell's investigation into the state of Cape education. His 'Memorandum for his Excellency the Governor, on the state of the Government Free Schools, and generally on the subject of Education in this Colony' was penned in August 1837.¹¹ Perhaps at Bell's instigation, as Bell had in previous years discussed 'the management of the Schools & public instruction in the Colony' with Sir John Herschel,¹² Napier referred this document to the visiting astronomer for comment. Herschel's comments in two memoranda (17 February 1838 and 6 March 1838), a third from John Fairbairn (19 February 1838), and Bell's own contribution in

⁸ S. Seth, *Subject Lessons: the Western Education of Colonial India* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007), 2.

⁹ Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 14.

¹⁰ *Government Minute*, 23 May 1839, in G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, Appendix V.

¹¹ In *ibid.*

¹² Herschel's diary entry, 19 June 1836, in D.S. Evans, T.J. Deeming, B.H. Evans et al., comps., *Herschel at the Cape: Diaries and Correspondence of Sir John Herschel, 1834-1838* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1969), 243.

'lick[ing] the whole scheme into ... shape'¹³ seem to have provided the key organisational and philosophical features of the New System. This contribution is noted in the *Government Minute* above.

The Founding Documents

Popkewitz et al describe 'the social body' as 'conceived and constructed as a heterogeneous whole (scientific theories and systems of reason, philosophical conceptions and multiple rationalities, laws and regulations, governmentality and actor strategies)'.¹⁴ This is useful in reminding us of the complexity of the discourses constructing the actors' world. In conceptualizing a reorganisation of public education at the Cape, Bell, Fairbairn and Herschel presented what appeared to them as 'reasonable, appropriate, and natural solutions'¹⁵ to the challenges involved. Their solutions at the same time represented an 'assemblage' of ideas and 'practices aimed at governing capacity for action'.¹⁶ How these were articulated depended on the discourses of knowledge shaping their own identities as part of 'the social body'.

While there would be different emphases, there were strong commonalities in the vision for public education emerging from these documents. Each of the three men was informed by an assumption that being part of the British Empire was beneficial and that imperial and British identity was tied with a Christian (but avowedly non-sectarian) identity. They also shared a presumption of 'the universality of "western" scientific knowledge'.¹⁷ In shaping the education system, they drew upon conceptions of education moving through Europe and North America in the nineteenth century. These were beginning to construct the role of the state in education provision differently and to envisage strategies of 'governmental rationality' or governmentality¹⁸

¹³ Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 27, Bell to Herschel, 20 February 1838, *ibid*, 25; 'Memorandum, or Suggestions, of Mr John Fairbairn for the Advancement of Education at the Cape, 19 Feb., 1838', in E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa 1: 1652-1922* (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Juta, 1925), 86-87.

¹⁴ T.S. Popkewitz, M.A. Pereyra and B.M. Franklin, 'History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History,' in T.S. Popkewitz, B.M. Franklin and M.A. Pereyra, eds., *Cultural History and Education: Critical Essays on Knowing and Schooling* (London & New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), 30.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 26.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ S. Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility and White South Africa, 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13.

¹⁸ A. Barry, T. Osborne and N. Rose, eds., *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), 9.

which would make education more modern and efficient. In stressing an egalitarian vision for pupils in the system, the authors drew upon discourses of a late phase of evangelical humanitarian liberalism. This also embraced utilitarian convictions that the state could intervene through education to make pupils good and wise.

The focus was on establishing a more effective system and, within it, recruiting better teachers. While Bell presented the problems and ventured some solutions, it was Fairbairn and particularly Herschel who engaged in a more elevated discourse of possibility such as would appear to teachers Buchanan and Bremner as a beautiful and grand project.

Col John Bell: *'Memorandum for his Excellency the Governor, on the state of the Government Free Schools, and generally on the subject of Education in this Colony', August 1837*

Col John Bell was a Scot from a wealthy mercantile family who had chosen a military career over business. He arrived at the Cape in 1822 and, prior to his accession to the office of Secretary to the Government in 1826,¹⁹ Bell would have been witness to the administration of Governor Lord Charles Somerset (1816-26), and its attempts to anglicise the Cape Dutch population through exclusively English-medium 'free' schools. The scheme was starkly unsuccessful²⁰ and this memorandum was a response to the state of these 'English free schools'. Bell's role illustrates the possibility in a colonial state of a particular official 'being able to undertake top-down projects' that would have been impossible at home²¹ and in 1837 he was concerned with solving a problem. This he presented as a deficient education system, characterised by 'ill-attended' schools, inefficient superintendence and 'the difficulty of supplying teachers' because of 'the prejudice against the profession of a schoolmaster, which continued to be the employment of discharged soldiers and others'.²²

In order to understand the heritage of public schooling that Bell was facing, it is useful to turn to the colonial government's overview of the history of Cape education contained in the *Report of*

¹⁹ Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 80; *Dictionary of South African Biography* I (Pretoria: NCSR, 1968), 66.

²⁰ See for example, J.M.L. Franck, 'Onderwys in die Paarl Gedurende die 19de Eeu, 1804-1905' (DEd, University of Stellenbosch, 1964), chapter 2, for an account of the failure of the Paarl Free School.

²¹ Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 146.

²² Bell, 'Memorandum'.

the Watermeyer Commission of 1863.²³ This identifies four levels of public schooling prior to the revisions suggested by Bell in 1837. The first was the tabling in 1804/5 by Commissioner de Mist of the previous Dutch regime of his intention to create 'a regular school system by the authority of the Government'.²⁴ Nothing came of this, however, although a school commission was set up. It was the British governors Caledon, Cradock and Somerset who nudged along the provision of state-assisted education. Caledon's main contribution was, from 1812, to part-fund church clerks or *kosters* as teachers primarily in Dutch Reformed Schools. These schools were judged never to have been efficient nor to have had competent teachers.

The third initiative was Cradock's, in 1813. He reformed the school commission substantially and its replacement, the Bible and School Commission,²⁵ was given the task of supervising the provision of colonial education while administering funds which were collected on a voluntary basis. The task of effective supervision was one that the Bible and School Commission seems singularly to have failed to accomplish. Cradock also established the first 'free school on the monitorial system in Cape Town' for 'the poor and most neglected class of children',²⁶ schools which were later replaced by mission schools. The intention was to establish similar schools in colonial villages, and also to train masters for the elementary schools. These plans, too, came to naught, because of a lack of funds. In 1813 and 1814 there were some half-hearted attempts at levying school funds through the office of the district landdrosts, but the poor quality of teaching seems to have undermined efforts to attract funds that parents would rather spend on private teachers. Thereafter, and until 1827, the central administration undertook to pay teachers of, by now, three Cape Town free schools, as well as teachers at church clerk schools. The medium of instruction up to 1822 was almost wholly Dutch except for the Cape Town free schools which had both Dutch and English teachers.

Somerset's intentions were more ambitious than those of his predecessors. From 1822, and in his words, 'competent and respectable instructors' were to be appointed 'at every principal place throughout the colony for the purpose of facilitating the acquirement of the English language to

²³ 'Report,' G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, xi-xxviii.

²⁴ *Ibid*, xi-xii.

²⁵ From 1834 it comprised three Dutch Reformed, one Lutheran and one Scottish Presbyterian minister and a secretary, although in earlier years some colonial officials had also been represented on it. *Ibid*, xx.

²⁶ *Ibid*. xxi.

all classes of the colonists'.²⁷ Financed by the colonial treasury, the English free schools were increased in number and almost all made single-medium English schools. They were operated on the monitorial system, and masters were permitted to teach 'the higher branches'²⁸ and charge a fee for doing so. These schools and their teachers were immensely unpopular with the Dutch population with the exception of two Scottish teachers, James Rose Innes at Uitenhage (1822-1830) and William Robertson at Graaff-Reinet (1822-27). These men were, it appears, the exception to the rule of 'incompetent' teachers.

It was the seventeen English free schools, with about 750 pupils in toto, that Bell's Memorandum reviewed in 1837. His solution to the many languishing schools and severe shortage of competent teachers was a two-fold proposal, firstly:

the encouragement of properly qualified persons to engage in its duties by opening a road to the colonial churches through a limited number of Government free schools;²⁹

and secondly:

the appointment of a sound clear-headed man, either not belonging to the ministry or so untingered with prejudice in favour of this or that form of the Christian Protestant faith as to constitute him an impartial Director-General of Public Schools in this colony.³⁰

Being 'qualified' to teach is central to all the memoranda and, in the 1830s, generally referred to university graduates. The suggestion that clergymen or prospective clergymen should form the core of qualified teachers could well have been informed by Bell's knowledge of parochial education in his native Scotland. There, popular schooling was largely managed by the Church of Scotland and many young men, intending to go into the ministry, served as parochial schoolmasters during and after their clerical university education.³¹ The dominant role of the Church of England in English education at every level, and the local Cape experience where the Dutch Reformed Church was intimately involved in basic schooling, could well have made him think along the lines of using clergymen as teachers or offer teachers the prospects of clerical appointments. His views on the director of education show that he was well aware of the

²⁷ *Ibid*, xxiv.

²⁸ The 'higher branches' were subjects such as Latin, Greek and Mathematics taken by the equivalent of secondary students.

²⁹ *Ibid*, xxxiii.

³⁰ *Ibid*, xxxiv.

³¹ R.D. Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People, 1750-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 4-5.

denominational competitiveness which unsettled the waters of educational provision – in England, Ireland and locally as evident in a damaging spat between denominations over the provision of catechism at Cape Town’s South African College in 1829-1830.³²

It can be argued that Bell’s concern was that of the colonial state managing what Hunter labels a ‘problematised population’ – and for this an effective education system was needed.³³ The pioneering of state and compulsory elementary education in eighteenth century Prussia (and other German states such as Austria and Bohemia) aimed to make useful subjects of the citizens of a pre-industrial society. Here the expert management by government of the population as a whole (rather than a particular class within it) would be applied to enhance ‘their moral and economic capacities through education’ – for the benefit of the state. The benefits of this ‘statist’ intervention would be ‘good order ... health ... happiness’.³⁴ At the time that the New System was being contemplated at the Cape, Prussia had ‘numerous teacher-training institutions of the Pestalozzi type ... and most universities had a pedagogical seminar’.³⁵ As a result of these state interventions, and while maintaining a conservative and hierarchical social order, Prussia probably had the highest literacy rates in the world.³⁶ Hunter regards the move in the direction of state education in Europe generally to have drawn strongly on the Prussian ‘pedagogic state’, with schooling the means to ‘pursue the social training of [the] entire population’.³⁷ At the same time, argues Hunter, a bureaucratic state (as opposed to a denominationally partisan state) was better able to manage religious factionalism and to claim to embody the general will of the people.³⁸ The intervention of the state through schooling came to be regarded as desirable to manage problem populations – the Irish riven by religious division, the English industrial working class, and Australia’s new colonials.

The population of the Cape Colony in the late 1830s appears to fit the category of a problem population. The largely Dutch-speaking and inadequately educated settler population needed to

³² M. Vaughan and M.S. Archer, *Social Conflict and Educational Change in England and France 1789-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); W.L. Nell, ‘James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859’ (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), 104 ff.

³³ Hunter, *Rethinking the School*, 58.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 33-4.

³⁵ J. Bowen, *A History of Western Education III: The Modern West: Europe and the New World* (London: Methuen, 1981), 323.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 322.

³⁷ Hunter, *Rethinking the School*, 34.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 40-1.

be incorporated into the new order. The legal equality of the Khoisan population (from 1828) and emancipation of slaves (to come into effect from 1838) meant that they, too, were populations to be managed – as ‘free labour’ and as the poorer ‘coloured classes’ of colonial society. Bayly notes that ‘social change and local conflicts in the colonies’ often precipitated government action which itself was often ‘piecemeal’.³⁹ It would appear that Bell was attempting, in the British Cape Colony, a more comprehensive solution than hitherto existed to local needs for improvement, upliftment and training. And this was framed in terms of available discourses. The contingent opportunity to harness the intellectual resources of a prestigious scholar in the person of Sir John Herschel added substance and cachet to his efforts.

There is indeed evidence that Bell, Herschel, Fairbairn and others were perusing Cousin’s 1834 English publication of the *Report on the Condition of Public Instruction in Germany, and particularly Prussia*, made to the French Government. This had a great influence on French and American state education, and E.G. Malherbe suggests it is the common source of the idea of a single executive head of a state system of education emerging in Michigan, Massachusetts and the Cape at almost the same time.⁴⁰ He also suggests that it was John Fairbairn’s particular contribution to the New System to prioritise the need for a professional Superintendent-General of Education, and to set out, in his memorandum of 20 February 1838, the functions of such an individual.

John Fairbairn: ‘*Memorandum, or Suggestions, of Mr John Fairbairn for the Advancement of Education at the Cape, 19 Feb., 1838.*’

The launching of the New System took place as the emancipation of slaves in the British Empire became a reality. The campaign for emancipation had been fought through discourses of humanitarian liberalism which were strongly represented among key elements of the Cape Town elite. In Cape history, John Fairbairn, the Scottish former teacher, editor of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, parliamentarian (after 1854), and businessman, has come to epitomise the ‘small but highly influential and articulate liberal faction at the Cape, an alliance of merchants and missionaries supported by an ascendant humanitarian element in the Colonial Office’, one

³⁹ Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 245-6.

⁴⁰ Malherbe, *Education in South Africa I*, 77-8.

which was committed to 'an optimistic assimilationist programme of social reform'.⁴¹ According to Andrew Bank, the 1840s represented the peak of this optimistic humanitarian liberalism⁴² and the launching of the racially inclusive New System was in step with this phase of liberal thought which stressed 'the potential equality of all people though not societies'.⁴³ One of Fairbairn's criteria for a prospective new superintendent of education was that he should

be able to estimate at their practical value, or rather at their nothingness, with respect to his office, the microscopic differences of colour, Nation, Language, Rank, and the Sectional distinctions of Religion.⁴⁴

Liberals such as Fairbairn regarded education as the means of improving those on a lower level of civilization,⁴⁵ and he wrote in his memorandum of 'Education of the People as the main pillar in the temple of Civilization and good Government'.

The main focus of his memorandum was the nature and functions of the 'Commissioner of Education'. This important office should be occupied by a person who was 'capable of entering fully and zealously into the benevolent views of Government in thus providing for the happiness of the people by making them wiser and better'. As such he should be loyal to Britain, himself well qualified, committed to the high office of the teacher, and committed to 'rendering the System of Instruction more and more comprehensive and complete'. Fairbairn was representative of a civic middle class identity reflected in the establishment of knowledge-based institutions in Cape Town in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ This was evident in Fairbairn's conception of improving the quality of the teachers and the education system through participation in a transnational system of scholarship and expertise. This was something the head of education should promote through dissemination of reports and journals, circulation of books, and establishment of libraries.

Fairbairn's discussion points to education being conducted by a profession that was respected and whose members were able to contribute to its improved status and impact because they loved and promoted knowledge. Teachers should constantly be improving both their knowledge

⁴¹ A. Bank, 'Liberals and their Enemies: Racial Ideology at the Cape of Good Hope, 1820-1850' (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1995), 1.

⁴² *Ibid*, 13-17, 348.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 22.

⁴⁴ All quotations are from Fairbairn's 'Memorandum'.

⁴⁵ Bank, 'Liberals and their Enemies', 94-101.

⁴⁶ Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*.

and their method of instruction. It was a view of the teacher that can be seen as emerging strongly from his Scottish roots.

Fairbairn's liberalism also involved knowing and managing the population through the strategies of governmentality whose tools included archives, maps, censuses, reports and surveys. Its servants were to be trained professionals (such as a Superintendent-General of Education) instead of recipients of patronage; men who were equipped to regulate rather than resort to arbitrary action.⁴⁷ There were, wrote Fairbairn, things the 'Government should always know' and this could be achieved through records of pupil attendance, progress, character, as well as the Commissioner of Education completing 'the Educational Statistics of the Colony and the neighbouring nations'. This statistical knowledge could, he suggested, lead to an expansion of the system.

Sir John Herschel: *'Remarks on the subject of the Government Free Schools & other means of promoting education among all the classes of the inhabitants of this Colony, 17 February 1838,' and 'Further considerations on the working of the Government Free Schools at the Cape of Good Hope, 6 March 1838.'*⁴⁸

The son of German-born astronomer Frederick William Herschel, John Herschel had grown up in modest circumstances in England. He was well educated at the hands of a private Scottish tutor and at 'St John's College, Cambridge, always famous as a nursery of mathematical and scientific prodigies'.⁴⁹ He, too, became an astronomer and in 1834 took his family from their home in Slough for a four-year spell at Claremont, today a suburb of Cape Town. There he proceeded to map the southern skies. His diary not unexpectedly shows him and his family to have been drawn into the social network of the small Cape élite – dining with the Governor and the Colonial Secretary, and drawn into discussions of colonial progress.⁵⁰ Ferguson and Immelman see him as 'a forerunner of the earnest and serious-minded Victorian gentleman' for whom responsibility counted for more than the privileges of birth. With regard to education, they sum up his recommendations thus: 'he advocated an education of sound and broad primary conception,

⁴⁷ C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 274-277, 282.

⁴⁸ All quotes are from these documents unless otherwise specified.

⁴⁹ *The Story of the Herschels* (London: Nelson, 1897) in Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 2-3.

⁵⁰ For example, Herschel diary entries, 19 June 1836, 1 February 1838, in Evans et al., *Herschel at the Cape*, 243, 341.

followed by the academy type of course.⁵¹ Herschel's two memoranda were regarded by Bell, Napier and Colonial Secretary Glenelg as the pivotal documents in the conception of the New System – which was often known as the Herschel System.⁵²

Herschel wrote as a liberal, a scientist and a Christian gentleman. As a Christian, he was voicing an age-old understanding of the importance of schooling in teaching both Christian precepts and morality, and accommodated his science within his Christian worldview. But as a liberal and scientist he appears to have eschewed sectarianism as irrational. As an astronomer, he engaged with an empirical observation of the natural world. By the nineteenth century the empirical studies of Enlightenment observers were '[proceeding] as more ordered forms of useful knowledge' eventually known as science.⁵³ His was a world which was about to give birth to Darwinian evolutionary science; where nature, the human mind and society were increasingly regarded 'as explicable, regular, lawlike', and subject to 'the systematic application of rational, empirical and scientific procedures.'⁵⁴ In a speech at Cape Town's South African College Prize-giving in 1836 or 1837, he said:

If I were to characterise the present age of the world by any single word, it would be by that of a Scientific age – an age of thought carried out into action, an age of the application of inductive philosophy to all the purposes of life and to the improvement of the human condition upon earth. It is not merely to physical science that I now allude. ... it has a wider range that embraces all the practical conditions which tend to promote happiness both of individuals and communities. Great and difficult as well as useful problems have been solved by the efforts of human faculties directed steadily and impartially to the sole discovery of truth.⁵⁵

For Herschel there were physical and moral laws of nature which were to be discovered through 'the broad consideration of an assemblage of facts and circumstances brought under review'.⁵⁶

Education was necessary in order both to understand the world and to contribute to it; indeed to manage it.

⁵¹ Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 6.

⁵² Although termed the 'New System' in early documents, it became more common for the system of government schools to be known by the state as 'the Established System', and popularly it was often known as the 'Herschel System'. I have chosen to keep to the simpler form of the 'New System'.

⁵³ Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 307.

⁵⁴ 'Science in the Scottish Enlightenment' accessed 12 February 2009, <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3731>

⁵⁵ J. Herschel in Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 55-6.

⁵⁶ J. Herschel to Revd Dr J. Adamson, 21 November 1835, in *ibid*, 43.

In his response to Bell's initiative, Herschel adopted the position of liberals since Adam Smith, that education was a legitimate arena for enlightened state intervention.⁵⁷ His recommendations were that the state set up, regulate and finance education, not simply aid its provision. He first of all agreed that 'the Education of the people is ... a branch of the duties of a Government'. To achieve 'progress' in education required 'a well organised system throughout the country', financed by the state (salaries, maintenance of buildings, materials of instruction) and providing 'encouragement & reward of successful exertion as well on the part of the taught as of the teachers'. In recognisably utilitarian tones he wrote of 'the most valuable advantages of Government interference – that of securing the attention of youth to subjects deliberately selected, on general principles, by men of high information, unbiased by local or temporary prejudices'. He advocated a balance between strong centralised control of the system, using state influence to implement well-informed practices, and local involvement which would involve parents and 'the higher classes of the community in general' as well as 'accord with the spirit of our free institutions'.

The supervision of a central official, able to superintend through examination, 'returns, reports & visits' would ensure surveillance and reward or censure of the teachers. (In addition to which he could promote the penetration of education into the outlying areas by arranging the visits of itinerant lecturers.) The strategies of governmental regularity are thus evident, although the impossibility of one man carrying out all of these activities in a large Colony are not debated beyond the comment that he should receive an adequate salary and travelling allowance. How did Herschel construct the teacher of the New System? It was as a respected professional, and no doubt part of the subsequent teachers' appreciation of Herschel was because they were able to appropriate this image for themselves or it had resonance for them. He, like Bell and Fairbairn, clearly gave much thought to the ongoing problem of securing for the colony a 'better class of teacher'. The efficiency of the system would hinge on having 'talented', knowledgeable teachers,⁵⁸ men of sound Christian character; men who would be rewarded for seeking their own improvement. Assuming these to be men, and their pupils boys, Herschel reflected on ways in which to 'command [their] services':

⁵⁷ B. Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974), 138 ff.

⁵⁸ The examination he set to determine the proficiency of a recruit for the New System shows the type of knowledge required; a general academic facility and not a pedagogical knowledge. See Figure 2:2, page 40.

[W]hen service done is fairly paid for ..., when without holding out promises or prospects, it is found by experience, that to fall below the average is speedily visited with dismissal, & to exceed it, with promotion in the line best suited to the talents of the individual, then & only then can we hope to get out of men all the good that is in them.

Good salaries (a minimum of £150 pa), the security of a 'superannuation Fund', promotion to better posts, even the possibilities of state honours for excellence were suggested as enticements. Teachers should feel rewarded for proficiency and respected as members of an independent profession.

In terms of qualifications, Herschel rejected the idea of employing aspirant clergymen as teachers commenting that they might be able to teach the classics, but not 'bring with them a knowledge of Sciences & arts' which men of other professions with a liberal education were more likely to have. What he seems to have in mind were teachers 'competent to teaching of an ordinary grammar school' though 'not the talent of an accomplished lecturer as we understand the term in our Colleges and Universities'. His good teacher was to be epitomised by the graduate of a Scottish university – with a classical or mathematical degree – rather than 'the untrained monitorial manager'⁵⁹ running the Bell and Lancaster type voluntary schools.

Herschel refrained from setting out a curriculum or mode of instruction (a task that Innes was given), focusing more on how the schools could be used to broaden the imagination of educational possibilities. He seems to have envisaged a basic education which could be implemented widely, and that some of the urban centres could see their schools becoming embryonic institutions of higher learning.

While the first memorandum is a little ambiguous about the place of the 'lower orders', the two memoranda together give the following suggestions about the government schooling which would 'diffuse the greatest amount of general information and moral instruction among all classes'. Elementary levels should focus on reading, writing, arithmetic, and the 'perusal of the Scriptures as the foundation of moral instruction'. The system should be informed by Christian principles but avoid anything that would 'perpetuate religious or civil distinctions between members of the same community'. All should be 'taught English grammatically, as the language of their country, and as that in which instruction will be orally conveyed to them in a more

⁵⁹ Hunter, *Rethinking the School*, 73.

advanced state'. Finally Herschel indulges again in a recognisably utilitarian reflection on the reward (a gift or privilege) and punishment (though excessive severity was to be avoided) needed to develop in pupils the habits which, through daily and regular practice, would develop character – habits of 'neatness, order, obedience, attention, industry, honesty and veracity'.

The second memorandum contained the four 'objects of a system of public education' which were subsequently included in the *Government Minute* of 23 May 1839 as:

1. To form in the individual advantageous personal habits.
2. To store the mind with useful knowledge and practical maxims available for the demands of active life.
3. To enlarge the powers and capacities of the mind, and to elevate his propensities, by familiarising him with trains of connected and serious thought, and with high examples of moral and intellectual conduct.
4. To form good citizens and men, by instructing them in the relations of social and civil life: - and to fit them for a higher state of existence, by teaching them those which connect them with their Maker and Redeemer.

That this system was intended for all levels of Cape society is indicated by Herschel's comment that these four objects were common to any system of education for any class, whether public or private, although there might be 'many things additionally requisite or desirable in a higher station'. Elsewhere he wrote,

The finest principles, the correctest knowledge, the soundest maxims and the most developed associations are not too good for the humblest, and the highest can have no better, though they may and ought to ornament them more.⁶⁰

When attached to the curriculum set out in the same *Government Minute* (see **Figure 2.1** below), these point to an education at once moral, civic and practical; but also, in the third object, an education that was intended to improve pupils' intellectual capacities through mathematical, scientific and classical studies.

⁶⁰ Herschel to Adamson, 21 November 1835, in Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 46.

Figure 2.1: The Course of Study outlined in the Government Minute of 1839

PRIMARY OR ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENT

1. Reading, writing, and the principles of abstract and commercial arithmetic.

2. A sound grammatical knowledge of the English language.

This, as it regards Dutch pupils, can only be attained by making a well arranged course of oral and written translation from Dutch into English, and from English into Dutch, an essential part of elementary instruction.

A grammatical knowledge of the Dutch language will be communicated to all pupils who require to join the translation classes.

3. Descriptive geography, - the outlines of general history, chronology.

4. The elements of linear drawing and perspective.

This important branch of elementary education will be applied to the construction of outline maps, - the drawing of geometrical forms, architectural designs, &c, on slates and blackboards, or on paper, at the expense of the pupil.

5. The rudiments of natural history and physical science, - the principles of mechanics.

These departments of elementary knowledge will be embraced in a series of conversational lectures, founded on approved text-books, selected for that purpose.

6. Religious instruction – This will consist in a daily perusal of the Holy Scriptures, at an hour set apart for that purpose.

Every facility will be afforded to the pupils of attending the catechetical instruction of their respective pastors ...

SECONDARY, OR CLASSICAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

1. Languages, - Latin, Greek, French

2. Science. – An elementary course of mathematics, embracing the higher departments of arithmetic, elementary algebra, plane and solid geometry, and the doctrine of the conic sections, plane and spherical trigonometry.

3. The application of the mathematical sciences to mensurations, surveying, navigation, and practical astronomy.

4. Physical and mathematical geography – the outlines of geology.

Governor Napier: Cultivation of the English Language

To the four objects which Herschel had delineated, the Governor added a fifth in the *Government Minute*. This was ‘to render its educational establishments *effective* in diffusing a correct knowledge of the English language among all ranks of the people’. The presumption of the colonial order under the British continued to be ‘Anglicist’ – colonial rule would be shaped by and

through the English language.⁶¹ By 1828 the administrative and judicial structures at the Cape were both reformed and anglicized, with English the only language of the courts (although interpretation of Dutch was permitted). The abolition of the offices of *landdrost* and *heemraden* to a large extent saw the rural Dutch élite replaced with British magistrates and civil commissioners.⁶² English was in fact poised to become ‘the sole public language’,⁶³ for which reason schooling remained crucial. Despite this ‘Anglicist’ orientation, the New System made some provision for Dutch grammar and translation to be taught in the elementary programme, while in due course the role of the Dutch Reformed clergy in supervising its schools allowed room for their influence.

There appears to be a strong convergence between the writers of the foundational documents as to the key elements of the New System. With Bell ‘licking together’ their proposals, the scheme provided for government schools in the major towns of the colony under the centralised supervision of a Superintendent-General of Education. They were to be free for the elementary classes, non-racial and improve on previous educational offerings. In the words of the *Government Minute*,

To attain the important objects ... at several stations in the interior of the colony, provision must be made ... not only for elementary education, but also for instruction in those branches of knowledge which constitute a liberal education. It will therefore form a part of the plan to establish at such stations, as soon as qualified teachers arrive, *first-class* or *principal schools*, in which both a *primary* and *secondary* course of instruction will be instituted.

This scheme was forwarded to the Colonial Office in London for approval.

Securing approval of and support for implementation from the Home government

Shortly after submitting his memoranda to Bell, Herschel’s four years at the Cape ended, and he returned to England. There he was used as an intermediary in seeking the Whig government’s support for the implementation of the scheme and, once this was secured, in recruiting teachers.⁶⁴

⁶¹ A. Pennycook, *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* (London & New York: Longman, 1984), 73 ff.

⁶² H. Giliomee, in H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, eds., *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), 111.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 96.

⁶⁴ Herschel to Lord Normanby, 23 February 1839, to Lord Russell, 10 December 1839, 2 February 1840, in Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 59, 60, 64.

In December 1838, Colonial Secretary Glenelg notified Napier that he was 'happy in being able to convey to you the sanction of Her Majesty's Government to the expenditure requisite for its immediate commencement'.⁶⁵ Glenelg budgeted for twelve teachers to be recruited for the New System, but failed to provide for the financing of additional expenditure needed to run it. This necessitated cost-cutting from the outset, crucially undermining the possibility of translating a 'grand conception' into practice.⁶⁶ Much will be heard about this in the case studies of individual teachers working in the New System. Shortly thereafter Glenelg (whose own roots were Scottish) was replaced at the Colonial Office by Lord John Russell (a graduate of Edinburgh University) who was at the same time engaging with matters of state provision of education at home.

When deciding on their response to the Cape colonial government's scheme, Glenelg and Russell could see it in the context of reform initiatives at home and in Ireland. Bayly regards the programme of the Whig government in the post-Napoleonic period as an attempt to detach itself from old, aristocratic regimes, and to gain legitimacy through reforms that placated the [evangelical] middleclass – the abolition of slavery, 1832 Reform Act and Catholic emancipation among them.⁶⁷ At the same time there was a 'changing mood' regarding the role of the state in education in Britain.⁶⁸

It was an age of free enterprise and industrialisation in which a decentralised state generally supported *laissez faire* policies. This had applied to education for the first decades of the nineteenth century, and Eric Midwinter notes that up to then, 'to have spent public money on education or to have forced children to attend schools would have been regarded as infringements of liberty'.⁶⁹ He cites the Lord Chancellor, Lord Brougham, at an 1834 parliamentary inquiry into education:

I think that it [a system of primary education, established by law] is wholly inapplicable to the present condition of the country and the actual state of education. Those who recommend it on account of its successful adoption on the Continent, do not reflect on the funds which it would require and upon the exertions already made in this country by individual benefice.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Glenelg to Napier, 22 December 1838, 20 January 1839, in *ibid*, 27.

⁶⁶ Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, 80, f. 4: The budget '*in toto*: £3 460, which was constituted as follows: £500 for the Superintendent's salary, plus £60. Four teachers at £300 p.a. each; 4 teachers at £200 p.a. plus £30 for house rent; 4 teachers at £150 p.a. Letter [Glenelg to Bell?], 27 July, 1838, Public Record Office, London'. On the need to modify plans, Innes, 8 October 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Educational Commission,' G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 3-5.

⁶⁷ Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 140.

⁶⁸ E. Midwinter, *Nineteenth Century Education* (London: Longman, 1970), 31.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 79.

Britain (excluding Scotland) lacked any administrative structures to implement a system of state education and any suggestions that state education was desirable was hugely contested by the established church in particular. By the 1830s, however, it was becoming expedient to engage in educational reform rather than face extreme social upheaval. After 1832, radical agitation in parliament for such reform was given impetus by the evidence of the degradation of Manchester's working class in Kay's *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Class in Manchester in 1832*. The Edinburgh University educated Dr John Kay (later Kay-Shuttleworth) who produced the survey stated: 'The radical remedy for these evils is such an education as shall teach the people what constitutes their true happiness, and how their interests may best be promoted.'⁷¹

Very gradually, at home and in its wider domains, the state began to shift towards playing a greater role in managing problems through education. Having brought Ireland directly under Westminster by the 1800 Act of Union, Britain initiated a programme of state education there in 1831 – the first in a British possession. Coolahan points out that 'Ireland was frequently used as a social laboratory where various policy initiatives were tried out which might be less acceptable in England'.⁷² A state-supported, non-denominational primary education system was introduced under the management of a National Board of Education. The goal was greater cultural assimilation to Britain, to break down strong denominational animosities and to promote the numeracy and literacy essential to industrial progress. What was novel was not the financial aid given to these schools, but the full financing by the state of a multi-denominational teachers' training college in Marlborough Street, Dublin, with model schools attached; and from the late 1840s district model schools with boarding facilities for pupil-teachers.⁷³

The approval in late 1838 of the introduction of state-funded and managed education in the Cape Colony accorded with wider views of the need for statist action. While the New System was launched in 1839, the Privy Council took a step along the longer road to state education in England and Wales by setting up a committee on education. It was 'for the consideration of all

⁷¹ J. Kay, 'The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Class in Manchester in 1832,' in Simon, *Two Nations*, 108.

⁷² J. Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981), 3-5.

⁷³ *Ibid.* By 1838, when the New System was suggested for the Cape, there was only one model school operating in Ireland. They grew to 28 by 1850 by which time their ability to embrace both Roman Catholic and Protestant children was under severe pressure. S. Farren, 'Irish model schools 1833-70: models of what?' *History of Education* 24, 1 (1995): 45-60.

matters affecting the education of the people' and 'to superintend the application of any sums voted by parliament'.⁷⁴ As such it initially administered grants to the voluntary societies using the Bell and Lancaster system of mass education. After 1847 the grants were extended to other initiatives.

Although it was 1870 before the state legislated for compulsory education in England, Kay-Shuttleworth, secretary of the committee of the Privy Council, pioneered a system of pupil-teachers from 1846. Facets of this were used to modify practice at the Cape. Kay-Shuttleworth also modelled his ideas on teacher training on the work of David Stow. He was the founder in 1838 of the Glasgow Normal School based on what Hunter refers to as Christian pastoral technologies of self-regulation.⁷⁵ Developments in the training of the 'pastoral teacher' by Stow in Glasgow, Kay-Shuttleworth at Battersea and their followers would in due course see a number of 'trained' teachers arrive at the Cape. Throughout the years of the New System, its Superintendents-General paid careful attention to developments in education in Britain, while at times judging their own initiatives at the Cape to be superior to those at home.⁷⁶

Setting the System in Place

The publication of the two-page *Government Minute* on 23 May 1839 announced to the public that the New System was in place. It was, however, fairly sketchy and the details of implementation were worked out between Colonial Secretary Bell and the newly appointed Superintendent-General of Education, James Rose Innes. Innes had also examined Bell's, Herschel's and Fairbairn's memoranda and been consulted on the curriculum of the New System before taking office. He pronounced himself to concur fully

in the sound and enlightened views exhibited in these Documents both as regards the important duty of educating the people and the nature and extent of the Instruction which our Public Schools should be qualified to diffuse throughout the whole body of people ...⁷⁷

The details of the 'course of Instruction' should be credited to him. The decision to base it on the Edinburgh-published *Educational Course* of the Chambers brothers was probably his, too.

⁷⁴ Midwinter, *Nineteenth Century Education*, 34.

⁷⁵ Hunter, *Rethinking the School*, 27-8; 37 ff.

⁷⁶ See e.g. Innes on equal spending of capitation grant for girls and boys at the Cape, unlike England, and for a longer period, G.16-'57. *CGH.Report on Public Education for the Year 1855, and the First Half of 1866*, xv; and the Cape's use of pupil-teachers before they were common in England, A15C-1857. *Report of Select Committee on Education*, 23.

⁷⁷ Innes to Col Sec, 4 April 1839, CO 481.

Having accepted the position of SGE in May, Innes set off on 20 July 1839 for 'a thorough inspection of the existing Schools and minute inquiry into the State of Education throughout the Colony'. An account of his journey comes from a letter to 'My dear Friend', John Herschel.⁷⁸ Innes's departure was delayed by the time it took to organise his own 'travelling Waggon' – his struggles to move about the colony a *leitmotif* of his superintendency. He reported to Herschel that, among such pupils as remained in the [unpopular English free] schools, evidence of ability to read was poor and that

... I am sorry to say that low as my expectations were on setting out on this task of inquiry, I was not prepared to find things in a state so hopeless. This cannot wholly be ascribed either to the indifference of the people or their prejudices and I think, that the simple fact, that of the whole body of Teachers now in charge of the Government Schools, only *one* has qualified himself to continue in charge, by passing our Examination on the Elementary Course of the New System, will satisfy most minds as to where the fault mainly rests.

The only teacher to pass muster was Richard Collins at Swellendam, and he alone would be permitted a direct transfer to the position of first-class government teacher after 1839.⁷⁹ Throughout his superintendency, Innes would emphasise the need for teachers to be properly qualified for government school posts and, as we shall see, would put them through rigorous examination to ensure that this was evident. In the meantime, as Innes moved from village to village, he met with residents to speak to them about education generally, and the New System more particularly. He was encouraged by the interest shown. At each meeting the non-racial nature of the system was also communicated:

I endeavoured indirectly to impress on them the truth, that now that bondage was at an end, Govt could not *justly* subject any man to any civil disqualification on account of the color of his skin or on any other account of a skin-deep character. And I was happy to find that but very few indeed are prepared to oppose the admission of coloured children into the Public Schools on such a plea – the grounds of objection generally addressed were filthy & immoral habits and improper language – On these grounds I was prepared to reason with them and assured them that my first duty would ever be to maintain the purity of the Schools in every respect, but it would be without the least reference to colour or to class.

As the 1839 tour of inspection took place, and Innes confirmed for himself the failure of the existing schools, the way was being cleared for the re-establishment of government schools at the leading towns and villages of the Colony – this under the firmer purview of the Superintendent-General of Education. At the outset of his superintendency Innes had recommended finding teachers 'from Home ... to take charge of a Normal School in Cape Town

⁷⁸ Innes to Herschel, 30 January 1840, in Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 70-77.

⁷⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 1 June 1841, CO 499.

and the other three to establish first class Schools at Grahams Town, Graaff Reinet, Uitenhage (or Port Elizabeth) in the Eastern Province'.⁸⁰ In the same letter he made his well-known comment, that it would be a good idea to select as teachers

where the majority of the Inhabitants are of Dutch extraction, ... Students from the Scottish universities – this I strongly recommend ... both on account of the readiness with which they have been known to assimilate to the customs and usages of that people and the comparative ease with which they acquire a knowledge of their language.

He was speaking from experience as one such Scottish teacher, having been regarded as a success in the predominantly Dutch-speaking community of Uitenhage between 1822 and 1830.⁸¹ Both at its inception and throughout his superintendency, Innes reinforced the Scottish influence on the Cape education system by seeking to engage Scottish teachers and to follow a Scottish curriculum.

The Teachers of the New System

Innes awaited the first teachers to be selected in Britain by Herschel, but improvisation was soon required. The complexity of communicating via colonial authorities to Home authorities meant that the arrival of the first Herschel recruits was delayed. Innes thus set off to look into the matter of overseas recruitment himself. In his absence, five teachers selected through the efforts of Sir John Herschel arrived in Cape Town in the middle of 1840. This was one more than Innes had budgeted for, and annual salaries of £200 promised to them by Herschel also upset his financial arrangements from the outset.

An insight into the mathematical, scientific, philosophical and classical knowledge which Herschel was looking for in a teacher for the New System can be gained from the examination paper he set for a candidate (Mr McBain, who did not take up a post).⁸²

⁸⁰ Innes to Col Sec, 11 May 1841, *ibid*.

⁸¹ James Rose Innes had been recruited in 1822 as one of six Scottish teachers and (an eventual) six ministers, for the new free schools and to fill the empty Dutch Reformed Church pulpits in many small towns. A number of the clergy, such as Andrew Murray, would subsequently serve on school commissions overseeing government schools in their towns. E. Bull, 'Rattray and Black: Two Scottish Schoolmasters,' *Familia* XXVII, 3 (1990): 54-62.

⁸² John Herschel had returned to England in 1838 and recruited five teachers who arrived in the Cape in 1840. James Rose Innes went to Scotland to select a further seven in 1840. Innes to Col Sec, 13 March, 1841, CO 499.

Figure 2.2: Examination set by Sir John Herschel to test the suitability of a candidate for the New System⁸³

Abstract Science

1. Given two sides of a plane triangle and the included angle – to find the third side.
2. Euclid Book 1.
3. How to find the center of Gravity of a body or system of bodies.
4. To resolve the equation

$$\frac{x}{x + 60} = \frac{7}{3x - 5}$$

5. To find by a table of logarithms the numerical value of

$$253 \frac{\sqrt[3]{7,165}}{\sqrt{2}}$$

6. By what process of reasoning does it appear that the planets are retained in their orbits about the Sun by forces inversely as the square of the distances, and what is the relation between their distances from the Sun and periods.
-

Political Economy

By what arguments is it shown that the division of labour is beneficial. What circumstances limit the application of these arguments – to what chapter of labour are they least applicable – How do they apply to intellectual labour.

Latin

Cicero. Catil oration. P.9. p.443. 'O dii immortales!pollicerentur'
a very close and literal translation into English.

Spectator. Vol. 1 p. 222 'When a Government magnificence..... and pleasure' -
a free translation into Latin.

Greek

Oedipus Tyrannus line 16

Having copied these lines out without the contractions, to mark their scanning and the quantities of the syllables.

Write down from memory some passage in a Greek poet or prose writer - or some verses in the Greek testament.

⁸³ In Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 68-70.

German

Schiller – 30 years war. Page 924

the first paragraph on the page beginning 'Friedrich nahm etc' Free, but exact translation.

History

Sketch (very brief) the reign of Henry VIII of England.

Principal events of Roman history from the Wars of Marius and Sulla to the first Triumvirate.

Geography

A map of Africa – inserting as near as can be recollected the parallels of latitude.

It is likely that all of Herschel's recruits were Scots, although there is no biographical information on Francis Tudhope, the teacher sent to Graham's Town. Humphrey MacLachlan was studying divinity at Edinburgh University when recruited.⁸⁴ Towards the end of his career, MacLachlan commented that it had been hinted to his group by Sir John Herschel that the Cape civil service would offer openings for promotion – or even a future role as SGE. Perhaps he was writing from a position of later disillusionment, but he stated this had been

personally expressed to me by Sir J. Herschell at Slough as an additional inducement to prevail on the five first Class Teachers to accept of a situation which they did not much relish more especially as most of them were just about entering the Ministry in the Church of Scotland after a University curriculum of between four & seven years ...⁸⁵

Three of his fellow travellers certainly were ordained; Revd Thomas Buchanan, Revd Thomas Jones Paterson and Revd John Gibson who was Government Teacher at Uitenhage from 1840-1864.⁸⁶ It is striking that four of these five men spent their whole careers at the Cape in the same schools, and when they retired the schools were closed or vice versa. Theirs were the better paid positions – an issue which was to niggle with the other teachers. Little more is known about these men other than is revealed in the archival records of their correspondence or official reports.

⁸⁴ J. Herschel to Lord Normanby, 23 February 1839 in Ferguson and Immelman, *Sir John Herschel*, 60.

⁸⁵ H.M. McLachlan to Col Sec Rawson, 5 November 1859, CO 741.

⁸⁶ A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee on Education*, 6; A7SC-1858. CGH. *Report of the Select Committee Appointed for the Purpose of Inquiring into and Reporting upon the Present Condition of the First-class School at Graaff-Reinet*, 31; J.R. Innes, *James Rose Innes: Chief Justice of South Africa, 1914-1927* (Cape Town, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 5-6.

Meanwhile, in London Innes was informed that the new Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, had authorised up to [a further] eight teachers being recruited, provided the salaries remained within the limits set. He then set off for Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow both to select teachers and to inspect 'the most distinguished Seminaries in their cities'.⁸⁷ Innes was aided in his recruitment, as he was to be throughout his superintendency, by colleagues at the universities in these cities. He selected seven men, five returning to the Cape with him in March 1841, and the sixth following a couple of months later. A seventh, Mr Miller of the University of Glasgow, failed to turn up.

The Innes recruits were unmarried, with the exception of John McNaughton, a graduate of Glasgow University, who travelled to the Cape with his wife and two children. Revd Patrick Black came from Musselburgh near Edinburgh and was a graduate of Edinburgh University. The other four teachers came from Innes's native Aberdeen. From Kings' College came George Bremner aged twenty-one, nineteen year-old John Paterson⁸⁸ and Joseph Reid. The fourth Aberdonian was George Cromar of Marischal College, teaching at the Anderson Institution, Forres, at the time of his recruitment.⁸⁹ Of this group, McNaughton, Bremner and Reid would stay within the Established System from start to finish, while Black died in 1847 and Cromar entered the Cape civil service. John Paterson completed six and a half years as teacher at Port Elizabeth before becoming the best-known of the teachers; as founder of the *Eastern Province Herald*, leading civic personage in and Member of Parliament for Port Elizabeth, and wealthy businessman.⁹⁰

R.D. Anderson, in the most comprehensive recent study of Scottish education, makes the point that, 'there is a large literature on the Scottish Enlightenment, but Scottish educational thinking remains unexplored'.⁹¹ His study does, however, help us to understand the educational ideas and practices that shaped the men who came from Scotland to the Cape, as well as many in positions of influence at 'home'.

At the time of the recruitment of teachers for the Cape, Scottish education was still firmly in the hands of the Church of Scotland which provided an educational bureaucracy which the state

⁸⁷ Innes to Col Sec Bell, 13 March 1841, CO 499.

⁸⁸ P.Ffolliott and E.L.H. Croft, *One Titan at a Time: the Story of John Paterson of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and his Times* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1960), 3.

⁸⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 13 March 1841.

⁹⁰ Ffolliott and Croft, *One Titan, passim*.

⁹¹ Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People*, 320.

lacked, even after Union in 1707. The church 'was able both to formulate a national programme of cultural and religious uniformity and to enforce it through its parochial organization'.⁹² The lowland parochial schools, in place since the Reformation in the sixteenth century, provided an important model of education for all classes of society.

The schools were established out of the legislated stipulation that the 'heritors' or landowners finance a schoolhouse and a small salary for a parish schoolmaster, who they would also appoint. At the same time the schoolmaster would be subject to the minister and session of the local kirk for inspection and approval of his qualifications. These schools were to continue over the centuries to provide opportunities for children of all classes, although Anderson calls it a 'democratic myth' that many humble villagers were able to rise in society as a result of parochial schooling.⁹³

The purpose of education was to 'promote religion, morality and civilization'.⁹⁴ The curriculum involved learning to read (the Bible) and write, arithmetic; possibly some grammar and geography; and occupational applications of arithmetic such as book-keeping and navigation. The teacher was entitled to charge a small fee, and where Latin at least, and sometimes Greek, was taught, provided a route for the parochial pupil to one of the Scottish universities. These took youngsters at the age of about fourteen. Many students were funded by church bursaries and were eventually recruited for the ministry, a minister having access to a higher status and salary than a teacher. It is conceivable that some of the Herschel recruits had followed this pattern of education before being lured to the Cape by his vision and prospects for advancement. George Bremner, too, is identified as having been part of the parochial system before moving to the Cape.⁹⁵

While training, if a parish was unavailable, it was always a possibility to return to the schoolroom as a teacher. Anderson points out that in many ways the teacher 'acted as a minister's assistant' and 'often as clerk to the kirk session'⁹⁶ – a close relationship between education and the reformed church that would be well understood by many Dutch colonists at the Cape.

⁹² *Ibid*, 3.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 11.

⁹⁵ Innes, 'Report', 29 March 1858, in A75C-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 51.

⁹⁶ Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People*, 4.

Schooling was more haphazard in the sparsely populated highlands, where many of the landlords were absent and their involvement in education less likely to involve patronage of able poor. For the highland and urban poor, education was largely left to charitable initiatives or small private operations requiring low fees. At the same time, in Scotland as a whole, 'schools of some kind were within the reach of most families'.⁹⁷ Town councils were not legally obliged to provide schooling though they usually supported burgh schools. These varied from small operations similar to parish schools, to grammar schools specialising in the classics needed to enter university, and the more expensive academies patronised mostly by middle class boys. Of the new government teachers, John Paterson, son of an Aberdeen labourer, had for example gained access to a quality classical grammar school education in that town after starting in a small monitorial establishment.⁹⁸

'The burgh schools, academies and universities were regenerated by Enlightenment ideas, science and the demands of commerce' while an 'alliance of clergy, landowners and urban intellectuals' promoting education financially and practically meant that it was probable that:

The model of literate culture was becoming rooted in the popular mentality. For many Scots, education had become a point of pride as one of the features which distinguished their nation from England.⁹⁹

Anderson seeks to moderate a well-entrenched myth of Scottish educational exceptionalism by pointing out that there was a close relationship between English and Scottish education, and that Scotland was much like a number of other European countries in terms of literacy levels.¹⁰⁰ The perception of coming from one of the best educated countries in Europe would, nonetheless, shape the identity of our Scottish teachers, whose status was also greater than in most countries 'where elementary teaching was seen as a last resort for men who could find no other profession ... something to which anyone literate could turn their hand'.¹⁰¹ Anderson concludes that there was a good supply of relatively highly qualified and professional teachers in Scotland until the 1830s – precisely the time when recruits were being sought for the Cape Colony's 'grand design'.

⁹⁷ R. Houston in *ibid*, 15.

⁹⁸ Ffolliott and Croft, *One Titan*, 4-16, give an account of Paterson's rise through Aberdeen's educational institutions before becoming a teacher at the Cape.

⁹⁹ Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People*, 22-3.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 6.

Placing the Teachers

On his return to Cape Town in March 1841, Innes set about placing his new teachers. Having prioritised these schools before his departure, Innes sent Tudhope to Graham's Town, McLachlan to Stellenbosch, John Gibson to Uitenhage and Thomas Buchanan to Graaff-Reinet. The unexpected presence of a fifth teacher, Thomas Jones Paterson, left Innes in a quandary and he was installed at George, not initially selected for a new government post.¹⁰² Innes was keen to start a Normal School in Cape Town so as immediately to begin to provide the Cape with locally trained teachers; Paterson was however, unwilling to undertake such an operation.

Prior to taking up their positions, the Innes teachers were given lessons in Dutch and then subjected to an intense examination or 'competitive trial' to determine their placement. In a later petition, John McNaughton, who was always resentful that the Herschel teachers had escaped this classification yet were sent to the highest ranked schools, described the experience of his group thus:

[O]n our arrival in Capetown, we were subjected to a competitive trial, which occupied twenty days for three hours a day & ... this examination, which extended to all branches specified in Sir John Herschel's memorandum, was the severest any of us had ever undergone ... the Memorialist wrote 78 pages of closely written foolscap, and ... with the exception of the Mathematical papers of Mr Paterson of Port Elizabeth which placed him at the head of the list, the Memorialist's papers were considered the best, and consequently entitled him to the Second choice of the vacant situations, which he obtained; he selected Wynberg.¹⁰³

Unlike the later arrivals from various British normal colleges, these first teachers were recognised as qualified on the basis of being university graduates. Their capability was reinforced by Innes's examination of their knowledge of the curriculum of the first-class schools; on their subject knowledge rather than their pedagogy, although some like McNaughton had come with experience in teaching.

Their examination results led to a hierarchical allocation of schools, with the level of salary determined by the status of the school. John Paterson and John McNaughton were sent to Port Elizabeth and Wynberg respectively, George Bremner to the Paarl, Patrick Black to Worcester and Joseph Reid to Somerset East. On his later arrival, George Cromar replaced Paterson at George,

¹⁰² Innes to Secretary to Government, 31 May 1841, CO 499.

¹⁰³ Memorial of J. McNaughton, 31 August 1857, CO 695.

and Paterson headed off to Graaff-Reinet. In another act of improvisation, a rather reluctant and consciously ill-equipped Thomas Buchanan was brought to Cape Town for a doomed career as head of a Normal School and its related model school.¹⁰⁴

The first teachers of the New System of Established Schools thus took up their posts between 1840 and 1841, to be joined by Richard Collins at Swellendam and over the period to 1846 by new colleagues at nine further sites of government education. (See **Appendix B** for a list of teachers.) Their department was headed by Superintendent-General of Education, Dr James Rose Innes, whose office comprised him and one clerk. He in turn was responsible to the Governor through the Colonial Secretary, without whose sanction he was permitted to make only limited decisions.

Each teacher was provided with a government salary and allowance for house rent. Those at the first-class schools were permitted to charge a fee of £1 per quarter from any pupil in the higher branches.¹⁰⁵ Furnished schoolrooms were financed by the state, some 'less convenient than others', and some fitted out only 'to a limited extent'.¹⁰⁶ Innes also brought certain supplies for the new schools back with him from Britain:

Classroom maps on a large scale, diagrams, and Chambers Educational Course (to the amount of £500) ... It was not the intention of Government to supply the pupils in its schools with class-books. The teachers, therefore, on receiving supplies were instructed to sell them at publishing price and remit the proceeds to the civil commissioner of the division.¹⁰⁷

The Scottish influence on Cape schooling was further promoted through the reliance on the *Chambers's Educational Course* as the course of education for the new government schools. It is not clear how Innes was led to make this choice, but there is a striking convergence of thinking between Herschel, Innes and the editors of the series. The broad outlines of the curriculum were those of a liberal grammar school – a combination of training in rational thinking provided by the classics and mathematics, and more useful 'sciences' required by an industrialised world. The

¹⁰⁴ The annual salaries for the Herschel teachers' schools were £200; for Port Elizabeth, Wynberg and Paarl, £150; for Worcester and Somerset East, £130 and £100 for Somerset East. Innes to Sec to Govt, 22 May and 31 May 1841, CO 499.

¹⁰⁵ There were to be only four second-class government schools, which offered only an elementary education. See Appendix A.

¹⁰⁶ Innes, 8 October 1861, 'Evidence Before Educational Commission', G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 8.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

fifth chapter of the thesis will attempt to explore the specifics of the curriculum as implemented in a village classroom.

Did the New System represent a grand design or an improvised reality? Inasmuch as the teachers were furnished with a plan for education that was elevated in its intention to uplift all classes and at the same time embraced a superior form of secondary education, it did represent a noble vision. In order to implement this, it had been ensured that the newly recruited teachers met exacting levels of academic qualification. But from the first, the New System was shackled by the unwillingness of the colonial authorities at home and at the Cape to make the necessary financial investment for it to succeed. Improvisation occurred thereafter on many levels including the shuffling of the teachers from one post to the other, the attachment of salaries to posts rather than persons, and the continued employment of an inadequately trained head of the Cape Town Normal School.

The effective implementation of the New System was also hindered by the uncertain environment into which it was introduced, by problems with preceding schools and the fact that most of the new teachers were outsiders to the locations in which they were to teach. The ways in which the teachers of the New System, nonetheless, tried to carry out their duties is investigated in the next chapters. In these efforts we are able to reflect on the identity constructed for them within the New System and that which they constructed for themselves.

Chapter Three : Wynberg – the Government Teacher who ‘resolved to do what I could myself’

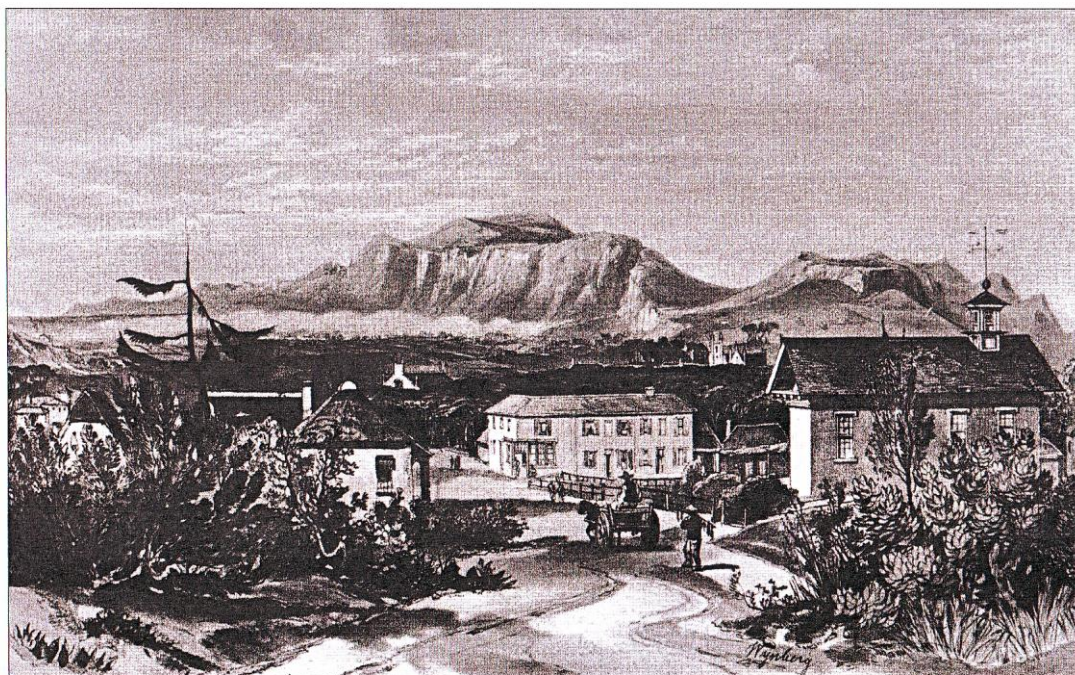
His School has probably done more for the Education of the Cape Youth than any other Established School. (Langham Dale, Superintendent-General of Education, 8 May 1860)¹

I consider my success as a teacher, may be attributed in a great measure to the comfortable, well-furnished school-room, as to anything else.

(John McNaughton, 11 May, 1857)²

The Wynberg Teacher

The central figure in this first case study is a teacher who was perceived both by himself and by others to be a success. For the Scot John McNaughton, for twenty-two years government teacher at Wynberg (1841-1863), his handsome school building most symbolised this success. It stands on the right of the illustration below, strong and solid, a place of superior learning for the boys of an attractive and prosperous Cape village. Here, too, boys from most districts of the Colony came for an education from McNaughton and access to social mobility. He was to boast that many left to take up ‘responsible and lucrative situations’ in towns throughout the country.³



The Wynberg Government School in Aliwal Road, 1847⁴

¹ Note on J. McNaughton to Col Sec, 3 May 1860, CO 767.

² J. McNaughton to Chairman, Committee on Education, 11 May 1857, in A1SC-1857, CGH. *Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, June 1857, 41.

³ McNaughton to Col Sec, 2 January 1863, CO 809.

⁴ Cape Archives, M541.

John McNaughton was an experienced teacher when he arrived at the Cape in March 1841. He claimed to possess knowledge of the Scottish highlands and an 'ability to speak the Vernacular Language', so may have grown up or taught there. He was a graduate of Glasgow University, had tutored the children of 'a gentleman's family' for three years, and taught in a Scottish public school for nine years.⁵ Aged thirty-two on arrival, he was married and the father of two. Adding to his experience and qualification, McNaughton was able to demonstrate his knowledge to his new superintendent-general in a 'long and searching examination'. His success in this resulted in his 'being appointed to a most important station'⁶ on the other side of the mountain from Cape Town, at semi-rural Wynberg.

McNaughton prioritised the teaching of the higher branches and by 1855 possibly had more senior pupils than anyone else in the Cape Colony, private establishments included. This invites comparison with the school which was regarded as the yardstick for the others with any academic pretensions, the South African College (SAC), situated in the centre of Cape Town. The SAC was staffed by two or three professors who specialised to a great extent in classics or mathematics. It was established in 1829 as a private college or secondary institution run by a board of trustees, but from 1834 was awarded a government grant on condition that a number of free scholars was admitted (poor but able boys).⁷ In 1839, the year that Innes left the SAC to take up his post as SGE, it had 35 pupils. This number dropped to 16 the following year, reached 46 in 1841 and in 1845 numbered 34.⁸ In 1843 McNaughton had only 8 pupils in the higher branches⁹ but by 1855 he was teaching 50.¹⁰

⁵ Memorial of John McNaughton, 28 April 1857, CO 695.

⁶ Memorial of John McNaughton, April 1842, CO 510.

⁷ W.T. Ferguson and R.F.M. Immelman. comps., *Sir John Herschel and Education at the Cape, 1834-1840* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961), 13; Tho Wylde to Col Sec, 12 May 1845, CO 540.

⁸ Tho Wylde to Col Sec, *ibid.*

⁹ Innes to Acting Col Sec, 9 March 1843, CO 518.

¹⁰ G.16-'57. CGH. *Report on Public Education for the year 1855, and the First Half of 1856*, xix.

Table 3.1 : Pupils at Wynberg Government School, 1842-1859

| | December 1842 ¹¹ | December 1855 ¹² | December 1859 ¹³ |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Total enrolled in Wynberg School | 89 | 97 | 101 |
| Average daily attendance | | 65 | 84 |
| Elementary Course | | | |
| Junior Division: | 64 | | 53 |
| Senior Division: | 17 | | 41 |
| Secondary Dept 'Higher Branches' | 8 | 50 | 47 Latin 26 Geometry, Algebra, Physical Science |

Of the seventeen government first-class schools, only three were teaching a significant number of secondary pupils by the mid-1850s. These were conducted by McNaughton and his fellow Scots, Humphrey McLachlan at Stellenbosch and John Gibson at Uitenhage.

Table 3.2 : Government Schools with Highest Number of Pupils in 'Higher Branches' in 1855/56 (The higher branches were often taught after school hours, so should not be deducted from the average daily attendance)

| 1855/1856 ¹⁴ | Wynberg (boys) | Stellenbosch (boys) | Uitenhage (mixed) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Total enrolment | 97 | 85 | 125 (111 boys, 14 girls) |
| Average daily attendance | 65 | 48 | 108 |
| Elementary Course | | | |
| Junior Division: | Not specified | 30 | Not specified |
| Senior Division: | | 37 | |
| Secondary Dept 'Higher Branches' | 50 | 19 | 18 |

It is evident that in terms of senior pupils taught, John McNaughton at Wynberg could rightly be seen as the Colony's most successful teacher in the 1850s. It was success that was hard won, however. Although the New System created a regulatory framework which included local élites in revised school commissions, McNaughton was to be gravely disappointed with that at Wynberg. He did not experience its neglect as a freedom, rather as lack of support for an important project and demeaning of him as the agent of this enterprise. Reporting to the 1857 Parliamentary Select Committee on Education he complained:

¹¹ Innes to Acting Col Sec, 9 March 1843, CO 518.

¹² G.16-'57. *Report on Public Education for 1855 and Half of 1856*, xix.

¹³ G.15-'60. *Report on Public Education for the Year 1859*, Table I, 10-11.

¹⁴ G.16-'57. *Report on Public Education for 1855 and Half of 1856*, xix.

When my school was opened in 1841, a school commission was appointed consisting of gentlemen fully qualified for the office. The commission consisted of the magistrate, the clergyman of the place, and three other gentlemen, equal in respectability and intelligence to any in the colony; but during fourteen years, they never did anything beyond visiting the school three or four times, and, on these occasions, reporting on what they had seen.¹⁵

The Divisional Council, appointed in 1855, was no better, and McNaughton's approach to his teaching can probably best be interpreted in light of his own words: 'I resolved to do what I could myself'.¹⁶ It is thus within this frame that I will outline McNaughton's career at Wynberg, the ways in which he constructed his identity as a 'superior' teacher, and the ways in which this was constructed for him. Cultural historian Tom Popkewitz is committed to understanding individuals as socially constructed, but asks, 'what fabricates the actors who are agents of change?'¹⁷ He answers this in part by pointing to the Enlightenment as 'invent[ing] people as purposive actors to replace transcendental forces'.¹⁸ The self-concept of being capable, resourceful and to some extent loyal to the vision of the New System saw certain teachers exercise a great degree of initiative, despite their setbacks. John McNaughton of Wynberg was the epitome of such a teacher.

Wynberg and the World of the Schoolroom

The Schoolroom

John McNaughton's arrival in Wynberg coincided with a period in which the village and community was becoming 'established and stable'.¹⁹ The special magistracy established to oversee slave emancipation had become a permanent magistracy, presided over by Major George Longmore (1839-1846) and Major Richard Wolfe from 1847-1856.²⁰ Wynberg's function as service point on the wagon route between Cape Town and the naval base at Simon's Town, and as military camp, had expanded. Its population was diverse – ex-slaves, artisans of all races (Khoisan, free black, slave, immigrant European), and in the neighbourhood, Dutch farmers

¹⁵ McNaughton to Chairman, Committee on Education, 11 May 1857, in A1SC-1857. *Report of the Select Committee*, 40.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ T. Popkewitz, 'The Production of Reason and Power: Curriculum History and Intellectual Tradition,' in T. Popkewitz, et al., eds., *Cultural History and Education: Critical Essays on Knowing and Schooling* (London & New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), 158.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 157-8.

¹⁹ H. Robinson, *Beyond the City Limits: People and Property at Wynberg, 1795-1927* (Kenwyn, Cape: Juta, 1998), 56.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 50-1.

affluent and poor. They came to be joined by a significant number of middle and upper class British residents. By the time that the government school was launched, Wynberg was regarded as a desirable rural seat for Cape merchants, retired Anglo-Indians, and as good real estate for property speculation. Its combination of 'rustic beauty' and 'profitability' was a potent one.²¹ In due course McNaughton's school would add to the status of the area.

Ross stresses the acquiescence of the Cape Dutch élite in the new British administration because they were offered the rewards of participation in colonial public life.²² They were also cultivated by colonial liberals like Fairbairn seeking to advance the cause of representative government by promoting a colonial identity which was inclusive of Dutch and English.²³ Wynberg residents appear to have been strongly representative of this emerging colonial bourgeoisie which came to play a significant role in municipal and colonial politics,²⁴ and for whom education, like property, would be an important marker of social status.²⁵ It appears that parents at Wynberg, being closely linked to the anglicised centre of business and government, were more willing to accept the New System's longer term liberal education for their sons than at most other western Cape localities. Such an education bolstered claims to be part of a civilized literary culture and lent weight to arguments for political representation within this British colony. Such an education would also provide access to material benefits in line with social aspirations. (See **Appendix C** for the occupations assumed by former pupil-teachers at Wynberg Government School.)

As with the other government schools of the New System, that at Wynberg was preceded by a free school, now defunct. The Wynberg Government School was launched on 1 June 1841²⁶ in a room in 'Glebe Cottage' hired from the Ordnance Department. This building was shared with a School of Industry for poor girls.²⁷

²¹ *Ibid*, 32.

²² R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 46-51.

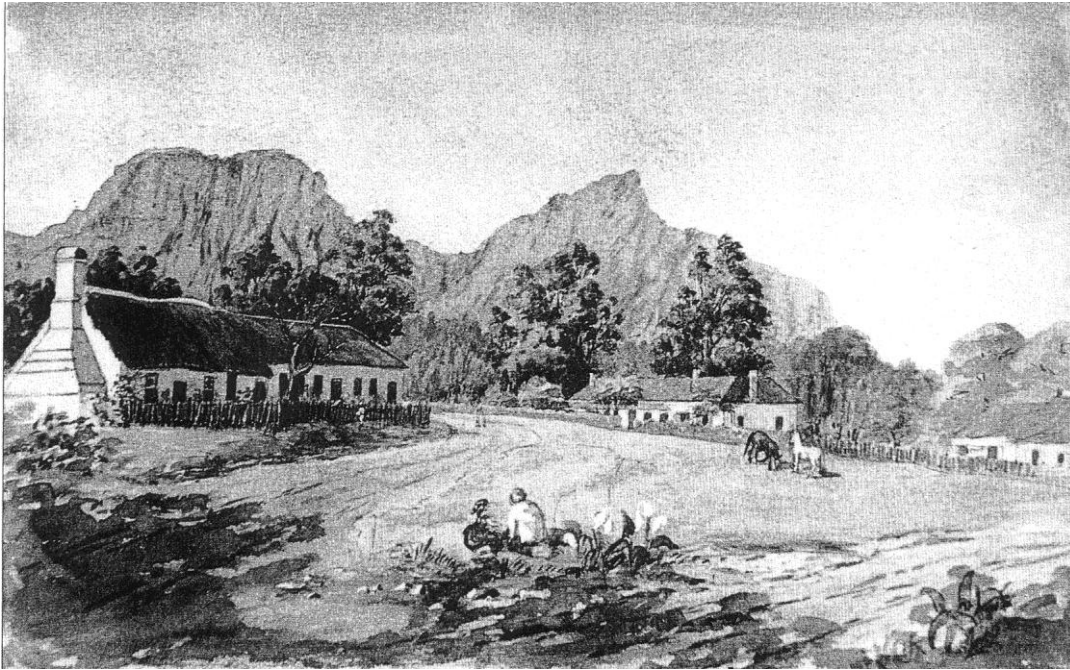
²³ K. McKenzie, 'The South African Commercial Advertiser and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Town' (M.A. diss., University of Cape Town, 1993), 183 ff.

²⁴ D. Warren, 'Merchants, Commissioners and Ward-masters: Municipal politics in Cape Town, 1840-1854' (M.A. diss., University of Cape Town, 1986).

²⁵ J. Habermas cited by McKenzie, 'South African Commercial Advertiser', 17.

²⁶ Robinson, *Beyond the City Limits*, 53.

²⁷ Innes to Col Sec, 6 July 1844, CO 528.



Glebe Cottage and Waterloo Green²⁸

That his self-concept as an experienced and superior Scottish teacher was violated by the impoverished beginnings of his enterprise is clear from McNaughton's own description:

The school was opened and kept for six years [sic], in an old, damp, ruinous building, very ill-furnished, and entirely destitute of proper school apparatus. During the first few months, I had only some two dozen of pupils, not one-fourth of whom could read or write a simple sentence from dictation. I was utterly discouraged ... I was almost in a state of despondency at the prospect before me and bitterly regretting having left my native country ...²⁹

McNaughton was dissuaded from heading for home by the knowledge that he would have to refund the cost of his passage out and himself pay for the return trip. At the same time he was encouraged to persevere by 'a kind friend who knew the colony better than I did then'. Within six months his educational enterprise began to take a turn for the good:

Pupils of a different class began to flock in, and I began to think that if I had the comfortable and well-furnished school-room I had in Scotland, I could make something of the school. In a couple of years, the school became so large that I found it necessary to have an assistant ...³⁰

²⁸ Unnamed artist, c1870. Photograph 13, H. Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages of the Cape: A Survey of the Origin and Development of Towns, Villages, and Hamlets of the Cape of Good Hope* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2006), 251.

²⁹ McNaughton to Chairman, 11 May 1857, in A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 40-2. He seems to have been at Glebe cottage 1841-5, so for only four years.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Perhaps more than anything else, the schoolroom represented for McNaughton the status and viability of his enterprise. The space (place and territory) in which the teacher was situated, and which he personally sought to shape, is key to understanding his role. 'Academic space is neither a "container" nor a "setting", but rather "a kind of discourse which institutes in its materiality a system of values ..."'³¹ 'It is education.'³² So strongly did McNaughton feel that his room would ruin or make his school, that he took matters into his own hands. This pedagogic space he regarded as the salvation of the school itself. While it resulted from his determination to provide an alternative to Glebe Cottage, whose message was pedagogic pauperism, it was also made possible because of the spurt of property speculation taking place in the post-emancipation period. John Higgs was developing a new section of Wynberg, known as Sunninghill, constructing premises for rent for tradesmen and residents.³³ Using a 'standard design used in India for schools and railway stations,'³⁴ he built the 'comfortable, well-ventilated, handsome building'³⁵ on the corner of Aliwal and Tennant Roads that was after 1845 the Wynberg schoolroom. Higgs agreed to build the school on condition that McNaughton rent a house from him as well. Innes supported this plan, advocating a 20-25 year lease on the part of government.³⁶

McNaughton thus exchanged premises which lacked a 'necessary convenience for retiring' and whose soft red brick floors covered pupils in dust³⁷ for a room of which he was proud. Improvement in the schoolroom resulted in retention of pupils and the teacher stated, 'I consider my success as a teacher may be attributed in a great measure to the comfortable, well-furnished school-room, as to anything else.'³⁸

At a time when no particular consideration was given by authorities to the positioning of a school, its location was fortuitously respectable, though not among central civic buildings as in Graaff-Reinet.³⁹ It was clearly better situated than the Port Elizabeth school whose progress was seen to have been blighted by its 'objectionable' site.⁴⁰ It was certainly more auspicious than that of McNaughton's fellow Scot George Bremner, who began his new career in a backyard

³¹ A. Viñao, quoting A. Escolano, 'History of Education and Cultural History', in Popkewitz et al., *Cultural History and Education*, 132.

³² Viñao, *ibid.*

³³ Robinson, *Beyond the City Limits*, 40-1.

³⁴ A.R. Goodwin, *A School Reflects: A Brief Account of the Wynberg Boys' High and Junior Schools to mark their 150th Anniversary* (S.1: s.n., 1991), 2.

³⁵ McNaughton to Fairbairn, 11 May 1857, in A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 40-2.

³⁶ Innes to Col Sec Montagu, 6 July 1844, CO 528.

³⁷ McNaughton to Fairbairn, 11 May 1857 in A1SC-1857, *Report of Select Committee*, 40-2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ See Chapter Four.

school at the Paarl, where ‘the operations of the butcher [were] weekly performed before the eyes of the children’ and the prison yard was in close proximity.⁴¹ The illustration on the first page of the chapter shows Wynberg Government School to have stood tall (6 metres tall⁴²), with its ‘projecting pediment’⁴³ and bell tower setting it apart as a significant and specialized structure.

In his discussion of pedagogic space, Viñao points out the relationship between prevailing pedagogy and the organization of this space. A school’s space can be seen to perform three functions – productive, symbolic and disciplinary.⁴⁴ By the time McNaughton was teaching, the monitorial system which had been employed in the free schools was no longer in favour. It was seen to have sacrificed real learning to mindless discipline. Instead the teachers of the government schools engaged essentially in class teaching – ‘classification’ resulting in five elementary classes, though there was no ascription of age to a particular level or rate of proceeding from one to the next. The Wynberg School nevertheless only had one room, and continued the practice in preindustrial settings of placing all pupils in one space.⁴⁵ There was an integrated organisation of time and space where time was categorised as ‘Time under the Master’, ‘Time under the Assistant or Monitor’ and ‘Preparing at the Desk.’⁴⁶ Activity would shift around the room in relation to this categorisation.

The inclusion of exterior pedagogic space in the form of playgrounds was to be emphasised by David Stow, the pioneer of Scottish teacher education.⁴⁷ This spread to the Cape and the Report on the state of education in 1859 notes Wynberg as having an ‘excellent’ playground [and ‘tolerable offices’].⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Joseph Reid, ‘Teachers’ Answers’ in G.24–’63. *CGH. Report of a Commission Appointed, in Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to Inquire into and Report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony* (hereafter *Watermeyer Commission*), 16.

⁴¹ George Bremner, in Innes to His Excellency, 28 July 1843, CO 518.

⁴² Table I, G.15–’60. *Report on Public Education for the Year 1859*, 10.

⁴³ Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages*, 247.

⁴⁴ Viñao, applying Foucault’s three functions of work to a school, ‘History of Education’ in Popkewitz et al., *Cultural History*, 132.

⁴⁵ D. Tyack and W. Tobin, ‘The “Grammar” of Schooling: Why Has it Been so Hard to Change?’ *American Educational Research Journal* 31, 3 (1994): 458.

⁴⁶ See layout of ‘Report of the School established by GOVERNMENT at Colesberg for the Quarter ending 30 September 1851’ in SGE 1/4, Letters received by the Superintendent-General of Education, Humansdorp, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth, Bathurst, Grahamstown, Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg & c, 1851-1859.

⁴⁷ I. Hunter, *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 73.

⁴⁸ Table 1 ,G.15 –’60. *Report on Public Education for the year 1859*, 10.

While some of the other government schoolrooms were to be described as damp and dangerous (Malmesbury), damaged (Graaff-Reinet) and unfit for use (Cradock), Wynberg seems to have been among the best after a shaky start. It was well-ventilated and solid. It was clean, after the introduction in 1849 of a £4 per quarter allowance for having the schoolroom cleaned.⁴⁹ It was also specialised, unlike that of Mr Bruce at Fort Beaufort which doubled regularly as a Sunday School and had its desks 'dragged about'. Bruce also had to put up with other interruptions in the course of the year, 'as the circuit court is held in it, and for bazaars and tea-drinking by the Wesleyans, who rent the building to Government'.⁵⁰

In its productive and disciplinary or regulatory function, the organisation of the classroom's interior was important. Mr Bruce's school illustrates the hazards of poor resources:

The present desks are unsteady, the legs being unequal, and a great impediment to writing, from the constant shaking. There being so few desks, and being obliged to put the children on both sides of them, thus facing each other, instead of facing the teacher, causes more fighting and quarrelling than they otherwise would. The scholars being so closely seated, writing, knock each others' elbows, which leads to frequent annoyance, as well as blots.⁵¹

Piecing together information from reports by McNaughton and a couple of the other new government teachers, one can get some idea of the layout of his schoolroom.⁵² The room was whitewashed except for the lower parts of the walls which were painted. Long sloping writing desks would be fixed to the walls, with attached forms for seating. Above them would be rows of pegs for hats and caps, and beneath them shelves for slates and books. Movable forms would be used in the rest of the room, with the possible addition of separate 'reading desks'. The teacher would be provided with a table and chair, and one or two blackboards provided. These were probably free standing, in frames and on horizontal swivels.⁵³ McNaughton's schoolroom also had shelves for books.

One of the complaints of the Scottish teachers was the lack of provision of promised apparatus. Humphrey McLachlan at Stellenbosch was like John McNaughton in lamenting that school apparatus was 'woefully deficient' and representations to the authorities, useless. It was the lack

⁴⁹ Innes to Col Sec Rawson, 25 January 1855, CO 656.

⁵⁰ Edward Bruce, 'Teachers' Answers' in G.24 – '63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 32.

⁵¹ Bruce cited by Innes to Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, in A15C-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 19.

⁵² Bremner in Innes to Acting Col Sec, 30 Dec 1841, CO 499; George Cromar to Innes, 16 April 1842, CO 510; Borchers in Innes to Acting Col Sec, 23 September 1842, CO 510; McNaughton in Res Magistrate to Acting Col Sec, 11 May 1854, CO 637.

⁵³ According to provision for Paarl schoolroom, Innes to Acting Col Sec, 30 Dec 1841, CO 499.

of support from the School commission and SGE in equipping his schoolroom that led McNaughton to purchase a good deal of equipment himself. The list below shows what he prioritised and paid for.⁵⁴

| | | |
|---|--------|--------------|
| 1. <i>An additional blackboard,</i> | | £1 0 0 |
| 2. <i>A large chart of natural history</i> | | 1 1 0 |
| 3. <i>Johnson's illustrations of natural history,</i> | ... | 1 11 6 |
| 4. <i>Chart of the histories of Rome, France, and Britain,</i> | | 0 7 6 |
| 5. <i>Sovereigns of England,</i> | | 0 5 0 |
| 6. <i>Map of the British Islands,</i> | | 0 10 0 |
| 7. <i>Diagram of mountains and rivers,</i> | | 0 7 6 |
| 8. <i>Diagrams of Euclid, geology and chronology, made by the senior pupils, paper and canvas supplied by me,</i> | | 0 10 6 |
| 9. <i>A pair of two feet globes,</i> | | <u>9 0 0</u> |
| <i>Also:</i> | | |
| 10. <i>Map of the colony,</i> | | £0 5 0 |
| 11. <i>Time-piece,</i> | | 1 5 0 |

The importance of visual aids – charts, maps, globes and diagrams – supports the view that learning was meant to be accompanied by observation and reasoning, not rote memorization. The time-piece, like the school bell, was to regulate learners appropriately.

McNaughton also felt that his school (or village) should have a library, an indication of how a reputable school was one that participated in a literary culture. Looking in vain to the authorities for assistance in getting it started, he again resolved to do what he could, and reported in 1857:

With the assistance of my pupils, I got up a library of upwards of 200 volumes, several years ago, but they are now worn to rags, as they consisted chiefly of the cheap shilling volumes, our funds not admitting of more expensive works.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ McNaughton to Fairbairn, 11 May 1857 in A1SC–1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 40-2; H. McLachlan 'Stellenbosch School' in A1SC-1857. *CGH. Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* By 1859, Innes had managed to get Parliament to vote an amount for the establishment of school libraries and he, himself chose a selection of books for these. See for example, Innes to Col Sec Rawson, 20 April 1859, CO 741.

Teaching those of a 'better class'

In probing how and why McNaughton's school was a 'success', it becomes evident that he quietly shaped it in a way that accorded with his own (British/Scottish) conception of what a successful school was and did. This also cohered with the practices of the leading members of his local community. Despite an 'agenda of social incorporation' middle-class identity was built on 'methods of social separation'.⁵⁶ McNaughton did not attempt to fulfil the broad humanitarian agenda of improving the lower orders – those who formed the coloured community at least. Innocuous as he may have seemed, McNaughton was powerfully constructing who might and who might not benefit from his school. He saw these 'others' as excluding themselves but the power relations at Wynberg were aligned with his goals for a superior school. McNaughton was no missionary.

When in 1863, at the end of his career, the Watermeyer Commission's *Report on the Government Schools* was presented, it was noted that McNaughton's school had

proved a valuable institution, particularly to the inhabitants of Wynberg and the neighbourhood for the last twenty-two years, but the maintenance of an efficient elementary school ... is far more needful to the bulk of the people.

It added the teacher's observation:

The coloured classes furnish no pupils to this school; no coloured child, however, has been refused admission; but with the exception of a few individuals, many years ago, they failed to appreciate the value of the gratuitous instruction offered to them.⁵⁷

McNaughton's dismay at the difference in class of his initial intake of pupils indicates that the stated purpose of the government schools as providing free education for all was not to be realised in Wynberg. While T.J. Paterson at Graaff-Reinet, later a London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary, would antagonise respectable residents by cultivating the coloured community of that town and the George government school was both co-educational and multi-racial,⁵⁸ McNaughton's school seems from early on to have focused on white boys and aimed at providing them a thorough academic education. Revd Dr Philip Faure was minister at the Wynberg Dutch Reformed Church throughout McNaughton's career and a member of the school commission for

⁵⁶ McKenzie, *'South African Commercial Advertiser'*, 198.

⁵⁷ G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, xliv.

⁵⁸ See chapter 4 on Graaff-Reinet; Answer from G. Cromar, 'Circular of Questions', G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 11.

much of it. He reported in December 1861 that the Wynberg Government School was 'a very efficient school' serving a population of 'a very different class' to those at his aided mission school in the same area. Asked by the Commission: 'Does the Government School in truth offer education to the poorer classes', his answer was:

Why, it is open to everyone; and in the beginning there were many of the lower classes who attended, but they afterwards left. I think it was because the parents were not sufficiently interested and would not take the trouble to keep the children clean and decently dressed, so that now it is all Europeans; you seldom see a coloured child in that school.⁵⁹

Faure was pressed to say more about the reasons for coloured children leaving the school:

At first it was attended by a number of coloured children, boys and girls, and I know that Mr McNaughton insisted upon their coming properly dressed and clean, and so on; and by insisting on that rule they vanished. I know well that Mr McNaughton did not make a distinction to colour.

'Would there be any objection on the part of the parents?' asked a commissioner. 'No', was Faure's response.⁶⁰

The Watermeyer Commission was aware that Cape schools fell into two major divisions by the 1860s: the free Government schools catered for white pupils, while the subsidised mission schools provided education for black children. The racial division was perceived as a class division.⁶¹ Early in his superintendency, Innes came to feel that far more needed to be done to promote education among the poor, but that the free schools of the New System were generally too expensive.⁶² The practice from 1843, then, was to grant aid to 'third-class schools' (second-class schools being the aided church clerk schools). The third-class schools, he explained in 1857,

have their origin chiefly in the prejudice which prevails more or less in most districts on the subject of colour ... Hence in all the large towns there are to be found "first-class Government schools", open to all, but attended almost exclusively by children of European descent; whilst the coloured children attend in preference, the schools attached to the mission churches to which their parents belong.⁶³

The experience at Wynberg gives a local complexion to a colony-wide practice. The case studies of Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg and Worcester will be used to develop our understanding of this issue more fully, as there is more explicit information on the matter. What McNaughton's Wynberg

⁵⁹ Rev Dr P.E. Faure, 11 December 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence' in *ibid*, 146.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 151. The exclusion of girls from the government school elicited no comment at all.

⁶¹ Langham Dale, *ibid*, 152.

⁶² Innes to Col Sec, 27 April 1841, CO 499.

⁶³ Innes to Select Committee, in A1SC-1857. *Report of the Select Committee*, 3-4; Innes to Acting Col Sec, 18 Jan 1843, CO 518.

school illustrates is that the teacher's understanding of a good government school was one that promoted the higher branches – and he worked hard to achieve this. (It also earned him £1 per quarter from each pupil engaged in the higher branches, though many government teachers waived the fee.) But it came at a cost to the poorer community in Wynberg. The assertion that coloured parents lacked an interest in education can be challenged, however, if the one piece of evidence specifically relating to their views is accepted.

In a letter written by Innes to the Colonial Secretary, John Montagu, on 2 March 1844 he demonstrated the absent-mindedness (or lack of concern) that caused great frustration to both his superiors and his charges.⁶⁴ He wrote that Montagu had relayed to him the contents of 'an interview' between the Governor and Revd Mr Fry. Having just been reminded of it, he wanted to clarify the content of 'certain complaints which were prevalent at Wynberg respecting the manner in which the Government School of that village was conducted'. Was he correct to inform the teacher that this was the issue?

That the Junior classes made little or no progress, being neglected by the Teacher, who devotes his time and labours to the upper Classes, for which he received fees from the Parents, exclusive of his fixed Salary from the Government – and that in consequence the education of the lower orders was sacrificed for the personal interests of the Teacher and the instruction, at a cheap rate, of the children of the wealthy.

Revd Fry was chaplain at the Rondebosch Chapel (renamed St Paul's Church in 1845), and had shared responsibility for the Rondebosch and Wynberg English churches with Revd Holt Okes since the late 1830s.⁶⁵ A mission school was operated at Rondebosch Chapel from 1843, and it is likely that Fry and his colleague at Wynberg, Holt Okes, were well acquainted with the poorer members of Wynberg society amongst whom some were their congregants. A random sampling of the social notices of the *South African Commercial Advertiser (SACA)* in 1847 supports this.⁶⁶

In rejecting a racialised analysis of society, the emancipation discourse of the time, argues Robert Ross, nevertheless embraced 'a class ideology' clothed outwardly in a performance of respectability. Individual transformation was imaginable and could be demonstrated by

⁶⁴ Innes to Col Sec, 2 March 1844, CO 528.

⁶⁵ 'St Paul's Church Rondebosch' accessed 2 January 2010, <http://www.stpaulsrondebosch.co.za/buildings.htm>.

⁶⁶ Revd Holt Okes at St Johns, Wynberg, married Michiel Janand to Jane Marie Gavah, both 'Natives of Africa', 20 January 1847, SACA 16 Feb 1847; baptised two adults, 'native[s] of Mozambique', John Peter and Susan, 2 May 1847, SACA 14 July 1847; baptised 'an adult liberated African', John, 18 July 1847, SACA 25 August 1847.

‘appropriate behaviour and outward signs’ – the ‘symbolic markers’ of status.⁶⁷ This was a very difficult transformation, however, given the way in which the colonial bourgeoisie had, in the words of Stallybrass and White,

encoded in its manners, morals, ... writings, in its body, bearing and taste, a subliminal elitism that was constitutive of its historical being ... it had engraved in its subjective identity all the marks by which it felt itself to be a different, distinctive, superior class.⁶⁸

At Wynberg there does not appear to have been much of an opportunity to acquire an education and its trappings that might have helped coloured residents to attain middle class respectability. The coloured pupils may not have been explicitly excluded but it appears that little was done to cultivate their attendance. ‘Car[ing] nothing about it’ and allowing their children to be ‘idle all day’⁶⁹ is at odds with Fry’s complaint. One can imagine barriers to access at every point, not least of which was English-language instruction from a teacher with a Scots accent and sharp eye for respectably (and by implication, morally) clad pupils. The cost of purchasing textbooks would have made schooling less than free. With an education that was perhaps not evidently all that useful to the poorer members of the community, Scottish texts whose cultural context was alien and a dress code that they probably could not afford, it is not surprising that few entered the school and of those who did, few stayed; especially if little real effort was made to assist them. The perception among some was that McNaughton cared only about the wealthier pupils and his own pocket.

Those who began to swell the ranks at Wynberg Government School included children of ‘highly respectable’ parents in ‘straightened circumstances’⁷⁰ and others who could not have afforded to pay fees. They were saved from the indignity of ‘belong[ing] to a lower scale of society’, by ‘having received that instruction which can be obtained in the Government schools’.⁷¹ On the whole, though, where Wynberg School would differ from many of the government schools was in its very respectability and acceptance among the social élite of its area. At the same hearing of the Watermeyer Commission, Revd Dr Robertson of Swellendam, for example, noted that ‘generally, the people prefer to send their children to their own [proprietary] schools,’⁷² rather than to the government school.

⁶⁷ Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 2-5.

⁶⁸ In McKenzie, ‘*South African Commercial Advertiser*’, 198.

⁶⁹ McNaughton, 9 December 1861, ‘*Teachers’ Answers*,’ G.24-’63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 4.

⁷⁰ McNaughton to Col Sec, 18 June 1859, CO 741.

⁷¹ Faure, 11 December 1861, G.24-’63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 155.

⁷² Robertson, 8 November 1861, *ibid*, 71.

Delivering the Curriculum

It must be admitted that McNaughton, while seen widely as epitomising the ‘good teacher’, does not immediately intrigue the historian through complexity of character as do some of the other teachers. He is to be found labouring assiduously over a period of twenty-two years, maintaining a school of around eighty pupils for most of this period. Unlike his colleague George Bremner, whose career at Graaff-Reinet is traced in chapter four, McNaughton was not troubled, except in its absence, by his school commission. His quarterly examinations attracted no special comment and both Innes and Dale commented only favourably on the ‘high character’ and ‘efficiency’ of the school.⁷³ The schoolroom presented a discourse of stability and orderliness but lack of specialisation; the curriculum a more obviously complex set of discourses (which will be discussed in chapter five). Generally, the subjects taught would follow the outline set out in the Government Minute of 1839 (see page 33).

Starting school at the age of about eight, pupils at Wynberg were older when they started than at many of the other government schools, and stayed there longer. At Wynberg pupils could be expected to attend school until the age of sixteen, even eighteen if from families ‘in good circumstances ... who wish to give their sons a superior education’. A good idea of what was covered in the course of a school career at Wynberg can be obtained from McNaughton’s response to a government survey at the end of his tenure.

During these eight years of school attendance, a boy of average abilities might learn to read and write well, and acquire a good knowledge of English grammar and of arithmetic, and some skill in composition, as well as a knowledge of business or mercantile forms. There is also ample time for going through a course of general geography, and a concise history of the British Empire. A good knowledge of the more striking phenomena of nature might also be communicated in the course of reading pursued. Some knowledge of Latin grammar and vocables might be acquired from twelve to fourteen years of age; for even the necessarily limited knowledge of this language, which can be taught in a school in which one master has so many other branches to attend to, I consider very useful, as enabling youths to understand English better from their acquaintance with the principal Latin and Greek roots, which enter into the composition of the English language. About one third of the cleverer boys might learn three books of Euclid and algebra, as far as quadratic equations. Arrangements could also be made for enabling those pupils who might be desirous of learning Dutch to receive instruction in that language, and the same with regard to drawing. Those pupils who continue their attendance at school for two years longer would extend their knowledge of Latin and mathematics, go through a course of physical geography, and read a school history of Greece or Rome.⁷⁴

⁷³ E.g. Innes, G.16-’57. *Report on Public Education for the Year 1855 and the First Half of 1856*, xix; Innes, 8 October 1861, ‘Minutes of Evidence’, G.24-’63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 11; Dale’s note on J. McNaughton to Col Sec, 3 May 1860, CO 767.

⁷⁴ J. McNaughton, ‘Teachers’ Answers’, G.24-’63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 3.

We have a more detailed outline of what Humphrey McLachlan covered in his higher branches, and it is included to indicate how these teachers translated their scholarship into the practice of overwhelming busyness:

The course of reading in [the Higher Branches] has embraced Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, abstract and practical. In Greek, there was read the eighth book of Homer's Iliad, the third book of the Anabasis, and Dunbar's Exercises. In Latin, the third book of Horace, the first of Caesar's Commentaries, Delectus, and Mair's Introduction. In Mathematics, Algebra, as far as Quadratic Equations, in Geometry, the second book of Euclid, exercises in practical mathematics. French. – Grammar, with exercises in translation.⁷⁵

With the assistance of a couple of pupil teachers or an assistant, McNaughton, McLachlan and other first-class teachers were teaching 'ABC' to beginners through to this advanced curriculum. This made the kind of demands that led Innes to describe the work of his government teachers as 'anxious, laborious, and exhausting'.⁷⁶ It is not surprising, then, that one of the issues that caused the methodical McNaughton great anxiety was his initial failure to obtain suitable assistance for his teaching. Once the matter had been dealt with he was able to use pupil-teachers to teach the junior classes. McNaughton commented that he preferred to work with pupil-teachers who had studied with him as they knew his methods. 'I can now obtain good assistants from among the lads of my senior class', he wrote in 1861, 'and so long as there is but one school-room, I find it answers better to have as assistants, youths trained by myself, than to have a stranger'.⁷⁷

Confrontations with the authorities

While sensitive, as we shall see, to slight in the form of perceived better treatment of his colleagues, there were few flashpoints in McNaughton's teaching career. Two bear attention, the first occurring early on in his career, in 1843, in the form of an official reprimand. This was in response to his letter to Innes accompanying a Memorial of complaint to government, when he used 'language too strong for official etiquette'. The cause was his frustration over the delay in appointment and payment of a teaching assistant.⁷⁸ The second flashpoint occurred in the heat of the Anti-Convict agitation of 1849 and created a moment at which his whole enterprise appears to have been imperilled. The correspondence in the form of his letters and memorials occasioned by these flashpoints can be seen as literary performances of the teacher's identity.

⁷⁵ Innes, 'Stellenbosch', G.16-'57 *Report on Public Education for 1855 and Half of 1856*, xvii.

⁷⁶ Innes, Memorandum on the subject of the Normal School, 8 April 1857, in A1SC-1857, *Report of Select Committee*, 25.

⁷⁷ McNaughton, 'Teachers' Answers', G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 4.

⁷⁸ McNaughton to Chairman of Committee on Education, 11 May 1857, A1SC – 1857, *Report of the Select Committee*, 40-42.

The Matter of Assistance

[S]ome parents ... told me they would as soon have their children at home idle as under the charge of monitors.

(John McNaughton, 8 November 1843)

McNaughton noted that in the early period of his career, he had to bear 'many annoyances and vexations'.⁷⁹ The matter of acquiring assistance for his burgeoning school illustrates one moment of temper, and also of the inefficiency of the system. Concerns about receiving assistance also illustrate the class nature of his school.

Before the first year was out, McNaughton had sufficient pupils to warrant some assistance. From July 1842 he employed an usher or pupil-teacher, hoping to raise an amount by subscription for his support.⁸⁰ With a verbal assurance from Innes⁸¹ and the School commission that they supported the appointment of an assistant, he took one of his senior pupils 'into my house to prepare him as soon as possible to be of service'.⁸² Many months and many unacknowledged letters on the subject went by before the governor finally sanctioned payment of Mr Adams in February 1843. With official permission to employ Adams at £15 pa, and retrospective funding from January 1843, McNaughton found him unwilling to remain for longer than the three months he had been contracted at this 'trifling sum'.⁸³ He replaced him with another senior pupil, Jaspur Loxton, probably son of Thomas Loxton, sometime operator of a coach service in Wynberg,⁸⁴ at an assistant teacher's rate of £40 pa.⁸⁵ Because, however, McNaughton had informed the SGE of his replacement of Adams with Loxton, but had not made a formal request to the governor for him to be appointed and his name to be placed on the official estimates for payment, it had not been possible to pay Loxton. As a result McNaughton was out of pocket and fuming.⁸⁶ The number of pupils had grown to 89 in March 1843, and the range of subjects and ages taught was extensive.⁸⁷ In his October 1843 Memorial McNaughton concluded that unless he was compensated, he would be obliged 'to dispense with his [the usher's] services & either to exclude a certain class of pupils or limit the routine of instruction,

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Memorial of J. McNaughton to His Excellency Sir Geo T. Napier, 14 October 1843, CO 518.

⁸¹ Innes stated that he had always envisaged aid being given to teachers and promoted the practice of using senior pupils over the age of 15 in the junior classes for lessons in reading, ciphering and writing. A1SC-1857. *Select Committee on Education*, 5-6.

⁸² McNaughton to Chairman of Committee on Education, 11 May 1857.

⁸³ McNaughton to Innes, 8 November 1843, CO 518.

⁸⁴ Robinson, *Beyond the City Limits*, 34.

⁸⁵ Memorial of J. McNaughton, 14 October 1843.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*; Innes to McNaughton, 8 November 1843.

⁸⁷ Innes to Acting Col Sec, 9 March 1843, CO 518.

either alternative of which he would much regret in the present very flourishing state of the School'.⁸⁸ The matter of assistance had become crucial to the retention of the class of pupils whose parents would 'as soon have their children at home idle as under the charge of monitors'.

Innes felt that he had clarified issues sufficiently for McNaughton to withdraw his Memorial (which had to be submitted through the SGE), but instead received a letter from the teacher dated 8 November, 1843. An extract from this captures the intent and tone of his address to his Superintendent:

... I am sorry to say that I feel aggrieved in regard to the allowance for an Usher in my school. I have repeatedly written to you, and to the Civil Commissioners on the subject, and yet I find no step has been taken towards arranging what to me, appears a very simple matter, either to obtain the authority of his Excellency for paying to me the small allowance already sanctioned, or a refusal. The latter alternative I can scarcely anticipate, if the case be properly laid before his Excellency, as it would be doing me an injustice ...⁸⁹

Innes's margin note adjacent to the last sentence reads, 'I do not think any such assumption is called for, nor is it courteous'. The Governor, Sir George Napier, agreed: 'I concur with Dr Innes, and also think it necessary that Mr McNaughton should be reprimanded for the stile [sic] of his letter to the Superintendent Genl as subordination must be kept up with the master as well as the Pupils.'⁹⁰ In the same letter McNaughton again put forward the requirements of a superior school while touching on a theme that would recur in later correspondence: the inequity of treatment of government schools.⁹¹

I shall consider it very strange if the allowance is withheld from me, while it is granted in a school where the Teacher has a larger salary, where living and rent is cheaper, while the number attending the school are smaller, and the branches required to be taught, less numerous, and where moreover the Teacher has got a youth, who acts for the Govt allowance.

With seventy-two pupils 'in every stage of progress and where lessons are given in four languages', he felt 'entitled' to an assistant.

It was for this correspondence that McNaughton received 'a reprimand for using language too strong for official etiquette'.⁹² As the Governor said, it was not the teacher's place to become

⁸⁸ McNaughton to Innes, 8 November 1843.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid*; margin note on letter Innes to Col Sec, 28 November 1843, CO 518.

⁹¹ The Port Elizabeth and George schools were given ushers within months of that at Wynberg. Acting Col Sec Craig's margin note on Innes to Craig, 9 March 1843, CO 518.

⁹² McNaughton to Chairman of Committee on Education, 11 May, 1857.

insubordinate and thereafter McNaughton's correspondence was more limited and generally more restrained. Nonetheless, he always had assistants of some sort, underpaid though they were. Initially he had one pupil-teacher; someone who was currently engaged in his own study of the higher branches but who received an honorarium of £15 to £20 to assist with junior classes. By 1849 an assistant teacher, a person whose own schooling had been completed, was appointed, but given the continuing difficulty of finding a suitable person, McNaughton asked to split his salary of £30 or £40 pa between two pupil-teachers,⁹³ and continued in this manner for much of the rest of his career.

The turnover of pupil and assistant teachers was high,⁹⁴ and Innes noted in 1857 that '12 pupil-teachers and assistants have been trained under the direction and instruction of the master of this school, though none have adopted the teaching of a school as his employment in life'.⁹⁵ This points to an intractable problem for all government teachers and for the SGE. This was the difficulty of obtaining teaching assistants for the pittance the government was prepared to pay, and a related problem of training teachers locally to move into the established schools. Teaching in the government schools was proving to be very hard work, and there seem to have been too many better opportunities for educated Cape 'lads' than teaching. Opportunities for 'mercantile enterprise' were growing. More particularly, the colonial bureaucracy was expanding and the colonial state was committed to improving infrastructure. [Innes illustrated this dilemma in 1857, when he compiled a return showing what had happened to the potential teachers. (See **Appendix C**.)] It is clear that the teachers pressed their sons into helping out – Hugh and John McNaughton at Wynberg, their cousin at Beaufort (West), John McLachlan at Stellenbosch, and James and John Tudhope at Graham's Town. But none of these remained as teachers.

Among the Wynberg pupil-teachers listed in **Appendix C** are the sons of leading families in the area - the Horne, Borchers and Wolfe families. Not only were these boys pupils at the free government school, but once they reached the higher levels, some could be persuaded to help out in the school. This signifies the extent to which the Wynberg School had received acceptance among its élite, unlike Graaff-Reinet, as we will see. These pupil-teachers, however, also moved on to more prestigious and better paid employment. While the turnover of assistants made his teaching enterprise difficult, McNaughton saw it as a sign of his success. He was proud of the

⁹³ Innes to Col Sec, November 1849, CO 574; 22 May, 1857, CO 695.

⁹⁴ Two assistant teachers came and went in 1860 alone, with John McNaughton jnr filling in each time, Innes to Col Sec, 7 March 1860, Office of SGE to Col Sec, 6 September 1860, CO 767.

⁹⁵ Innes, G.16–'57. *Report on Public Education for the Year 1855, and Half of 1856*, xx.

number who qualified to enter the civil service.⁹⁶ At the end of his career, he was proud to state that there was 'scarcely a town in South Africa' where his former pupils, coming from all over the colony, 'may not now be found, holding responsible and lucrative situations'.⁹⁷

Cheering for Fairbairn

Despite his generally secure position within the Wynberg community, 1849 saw McNaughton drawn into the wider political drama enveloping the Colony, and this provoked him to a second flurry of agitated correspondence with the authorities. This provides us with a vignette of McNaughton in the context of his key relationships as government teacher and in Wynberg in particular. It also accords with Kirsten McKenzie's observation that the small world of private scandal has strange connections with a larger political world.⁹⁸ While McNaughton's conduct was neither truly private nor exceedingly scandalous, it was located within his classroom and reflected contested notions of how open to public scrutiny this space was. And this was only significant because it was a time of political turmoil.

Dissatisfaction with McNaughton was first voiced by Resident Magistrate and local notable, Col Richard Wolfe. Late in December 1849, Wolfe complained on behalf of the Wynberg School Commission, of which he was president, that

a Report reached some one of the Members of the Commission that on the afternoon of the day on which Mr Letterstedt postponed further proceedings against Messrs Fairbairn, Morgen and others, the Government Teacher at Wynberg "after addressing his pupils relative to the trial, directed the boys to give expression to his own sentiment by asserted cheers for the result of the trial".⁹⁹

At a specially convened meeting, the commission passed a number of resolutions which amounted to requesting from the teacher an explanation of this 'ill-judged and improper proceeding'. It would appear that not only was he capable of insubordination through official correspondence that broke the rules of etiquette; here was a government teacher inciting a class to cheer in a manner that exceeded the bounds of respectable conduct.

⁹⁶ Memorial of John McNaughton, 28 April 1857, CO 695.

⁹⁷ McNaughton to Col Sec, 2 January 1863, CO 809.

⁹⁸ K. McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney & Cape Town, 1820-1850* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 19.

⁹⁹ Innes, 'Memorandum on The case of the Government Teacher at Wynberg and the Local School Commission, 5 January 1850', in CO 594.

McNaughton was 'hurt and aggrieved' at the commission's actions and his immediate reaction was to resist

the right assumed by the Commission of sitting in judgment upon his conduct and of passing a resolution derogatory to his public character, without giving him the slightest intimation of any complaints being lodged against him.

He did assert, however, that 'the Report upon which their Resolution was founded, was utterly erroneous'.¹⁰⁰ On Christmas Day, McNaughton forwarded the correspondence with the school commission and his account of the matter to Innes. Innes then appears to have been asked to investigate the matter by Colonial Secretary Montagu on behalf of the Governor, Sir Harry Smith. The main source available is Innes's Memorandum on the affair, written early in 1850.¹⁰¹

The McNaughton investigation presages the more serious case of William Golding, teacher at Caledon and subject of the fourth case study in this thesis. Both are revealing about the state of government supervision of its teachers and the right of the teachers to protection from arbitrary judgment and the consequences of rumour. Both allow a glimpse into the social function of rumour in maintaining the norms of the community. In both instances the right of school commissions to investigate matters that might threaten the character or 'usefulness' of the school was upheld. But so too was the right of the teacher to have the charges clearly presented to him. In his role as arbiter, Innes wrote:

The first Step ... in this inquiry should have been to furnish the Teacher with a written statement of what had been reported and by whom with a request that he afford them such explanation as would enable them to ascertain to what extent the report was well grounded or otherwise.¹⁰²

The only other duty of the commission, wrote Innes, was then to report on its findings to government. Innes reassured his superiors that in this matter all involved were of good reputation. The proceedings of the school commission, though informal, had nevertheless been carried out by gentlemen of 'high character ... which places them beyond the remotest shadow of suspicion, as to their being actuated by personal feelings in this matter.' The Resident Magistrate, in particular, had always taken a deep interest in the welfare of the school. (This view is somewhat disputed by McNaughton above.)

¹⁰⁰ From McNaughton's letter to School Commission, 24 December 1849, quoted in Innes's 'Memorandum', 5 January 1850.

¹⁰¹ Innes, 'Memorandum', 5 January 1850, 2.

¹⁰² From McNaughton's letter to School Commission, 24 December 1849, quoted in Innes's 'Memorandum', 5 January 1850.'

Innes expressed his 'highest respect' for McNaughton as well, and supported his refusal to answer to an informal inquiry by the board and his 'at once submitting his case through me to the Government'. To do otherwise would allow an unfortunate precedent.

[It] would enable any boy backed by a weak parent to procure the censure of the Board upon any statement he chanced to make & thus utterly destroy the moral influence and legitimate authority of the Teacher.

Innes believed McNaughton when he claimed not to have referred 'to the trial in addressing the boys, but that the cheers had been given to Mr Fairbairn for his long & liberal contributions for prizes and that the same would have been given for Mr Letterstedt'. In a charming reflection on his own teaching career, Innes then commented that he was 'not an advocate for cheering' in the schoolroom, but,

I have many a day enjoyed a hearty laugh with my pupils. And if I meddlingly, found fault with Mr McNaughton for his cheers, he might with sound propriety retaliate on me for my mirth. Such matters must be left to the taste & discretion of the Teacher.

Fearful of a divided school, Innes then recommended that matters that would 'give rise to controversy and thus divide the Public Mind' should be kept out of the classroom; matters of religious sectarianism and politics. This was unless such 'an exposition was ... of the rich progress and principles of the British Constitution'.

There were, in fact, significant social and political implications to this classroom uproar. The context of the incident was the incendiary state of the Colony, and Cape Town in particular, over intentions of the Colonial Office from 1848 to include the Cape Colony with New South Wales, Norfolk Island and Van Dieman's Land as convict settlements.¹⁰³ As Botha and Trapido describe in detail,¹⁰⁴ the attempt by the Colonial Office to impose this 'ministerial experiment' on the Cape led to unprecedented unity in resistance from the colonists.

The issues were ones of power and representation among essentially the English merchant élite and traditional Dutch élite. There was widespread dissatisfaction with limited and ineffectual representation through unofficial colonist nominees on the Legislative Council, and the moral poison that these convicts were seen to present gave those demanding representative

¹⁰³ According to an Order-in-Council of July 1848, H.C. Botha, *John Fairbairn in South Africa* (Cape Town: Historical Publication Society, 1984), 200.

¹⁰⁴ Botha, *John Fairbairn*, 200-227; S. Trapido, 'The Origins of the Cape Franchise Qualifications of 1853,' *Journal of African History* 5, 1 (1964): 43-46.

government a cause around which to rally. This was strongly led by the Anti-Convict Association, amongst whom Fairbairn played an important role and whose newspaper was the public voice of the movement. A rift within the Anti-Convict Association occurred in September 1849 with 'moderates' and 'ultras' divided as to the extent of the pledge to boycott any government operation or anyone who continued to provision government operations. The latter's position, with which Fairbairn was identified, was that any supplies to government departments, including transport, would amount to support of the convicts.¹⁰⁵

The proceedings of Mr Letterstedt - a Swedish merchant, property owner and shipping agent resident in Cape Town since 1822 - against Fairbairn and co arose out of two issues. Firstly Letterstedt was seen as a sellout for accepting nomination to the Legislative Council and secondly for breaking the pledge and providing supplies to government operatives. This resulted in assault, burning of his effigy, damage to his property and, in October, a boycott of his businesses. Although the violence had in no way been sanctioned by the Anti-Convict Association, he sued its members including John Fairbairn for £5 000 worth of damage to his property and for loss of trade. The abandoning of the court case rested on a technicality¹⁰⁶ but cheering for it would place the celebrators squarely in the camp of the 'ultras'. Cheers for Fairbairn would be linked to public gatherings, pledges, boycott, mud-slinging; and to a radical agenda for political rights for colonists. It identified McNaughton with the more extreme position against which most of the English merchant community had now distanced itself, linked to disrespect for the political office of the governor.

Unity which had begun to emerge among the colonists in the 1840s was thus deeply severed by the time of the 'cheering incident' in McNaughton's school. The action of the Wynberg school commission could be seen as reflecting sensitivity to this. The practice by the SGE of nominating local dignitaries to act as a school commission meant that McNaughton's school fell under the eye of Wynberg notables such as the magistrate, local notary, and Master of the Cape Supreme Court, J. Steuart, in his capacity as Anglican church elder. Other members were the Dutch Reformed Minister, Dr Philip Faure; the Anglican minister, Revd Holt Okes; and further deacons and elders from their respective congregations.¹⁰⁷ But given that Fairbairn's radical position was

¹⁰⁵ Botha, *John Fairbairn*, 214.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 221-2.

¹⁰⁷ Robinson, *Beyond the City Limits*, 53, provides an undated list of school commissioners. The Resident Magistrate and two clergymen would certainly always have been on the school commission; *ibid*, 63.

supported by the Dutch colonists more than the English merchant sector,¹⁰⁸ political stance-making in the government school attended by children from the whole [white] Wynberg community would have been a seriously divisive matter.

What does the McNaughton incident reveal? Firstly, his distancing himself from the case is not really important. What is important is that even a shaky rumour or allegation from one unnamed pupil was of such import in the climate of the day, that it roused the school commission to action and resolution. The fact that one of McNaughton's pupil-teachers at the time was Richard Wolfe junior suggests that classroom conversations and perceptions of the teacher's political allegiance could well have been discussed at the Wolfes' dinner table.¹⁰⁹ In the case of McNaughton, however, the report of cheering gains no further obvious attention, so we must assume that the matter was laid to rest.

Secondly, McNaughton felt his honour and reputation to be undermined. This was in particular because he was being called to jump to the demands of his school commission to justify his actions when their information was unspecified and unproven. He stood his ground and looked to the state for justice. It is not hard to imagine that his sympathies lay with the Fairbairn faction, but he is equally unlikely to have wanted to upset the doyens of upper class Wynberg society who, as we have seen, he worked very hard to cultivate. It was not in his interests to antagonise government, either.

McNaughton's Superintendent-General did, indeed, act according to principles of justice rather than condone an arbitrary display of power. He did so to defend the autonomy of the teacher within his domain, the classroom. Not to do so would undermine his moral influence and legitimate authority. The incident thus demonstrates important ways in which the government teacher of the New System was constructed: as respectable, moral, authoritative. And this was accounted for in terms of his knowledge (we remember how Innes had verified this through his competitive trial) as well as his conduct. Instigating pupils to cheer for generosity and acknowledgement of scholastic achievement in the form of prizes was of no offence.

¹⁰⁸ Trapido, 'Cape Franchise', 44.

¹⁰⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 15 Nov 1849, CO 582.

Passed over for Promotion, 1857-1863

It is with the issue of discouragement but especially of commensurate status that this chapter ends. Through his complaints it is possible to discern that, in spite of McNaughton's successes, the Cape government was not fully behind the Scottish education ideal after all; rather it was preoccupied with saving money. McNaughton's duties were exhausting and he became increasingly compromised by growing deafness. He also appears to have become increasingly overcome by 'corroding cares for the future' of his family of six as a result of the failure of teachers' salaries to keep pace with the cost of living at the Cape.¹¹⁰ A married man was obliged to provide for his family. What most upset him and became a dominant theme of his correspondence between 1857 and 1859, was the injustice of the disparity in income and related status between him and his fellow senior teachers.

McNaughton's tenacity on matters financial was first displayed soon after his arrival at the Cape. Then he was upset that prior to reaching their stations, the teachers in the Innes party, and he especially as a married man, were given half the daily allowance that the Herschel party had received.¹¹¹ His objections were overruled by his superiors pointing out emphatically that he had agreed to the terms before his arrival and only objected once he heard about the others' allowance.¹¹² But Innes was already caught in a bind of the more generous Herschel's making. By giving the first four teachers annual salaries of £200, Herschel plundered the education budget. Innes had intended to give the superior teachers each an annual salary of £150, but manipulated his finances instead by attaching the income to the school and not the teacher. Whoever was thus stationed at Stellenbosch, Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage or Graham's Town would earn the higher income. Cape Town, as the Normal School, was also awarded a higher salary. Those, like McNaughton, at the next tier of schools, Wynberg, Paarl and Port Elizabeth would earn £50 less.

While he was establishing his school, McNaughton seems not to have complained any further about finances, but in 1857 he was part of a larger chorus of government teachers setting forth their financial woes. In April he saw transfer back to Britain as his solution, offering to become an immigration agent for the government, while at the same time trying to get medical assistance

¹¹⁰ McNaughton, 'Teachers' Answers', in G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 5-6; Memorial of John McNaughton to His Excellency Sir George Grey, 28 April 1857, CO 695, 1857.

¹¹¹ Memorial of John McNaughton to Governor Sir George Napier, 28 April 1842, McNaughton to [unnamed], 4 May, 1842, CO 510.

¹¹² Innes, notes on *ibid.*

for his diminished hearing.¹¹³ Colonial Secretary Rawson noted this offer but observed that the government 'would be sad to lose his valuable services as a teacher'.¹¹⁴

By 1857, the government and parliament realised that a chronic shortage of suitable teachers in the Colony required improved salaries, and an increase was voted. Innes had recommended all of the senior teachers' salaries be increased to £250 pa, but the vote was for an increase of £50 in addition to their existing incomes. With no improvement in his salary relative to his colleagues, McNaughton was infuriated. Firstly, he was the sole member of the original Innes party who would be earning only £200 pa. When John Paterson of the Port Elizabeth school had resigned, he had been replaced by Joseph Reid from Somerset East. Likewise George Bremner had been promoted to Graaff-Reinet from Paarl. Both of these had rated lower than McNaughton in the initial competitive trial. Neither had had the academic success that he had achieved at Wynberg. He listed the numbers passing through his senior school and those entering the civil service to support his claim. His conscientious, faithful and successful service was being overlooked. By remaining in his post at Wynberg he was being unfairly passed over for promotion and was aggrieved, discouraged and dismayed.¹¹⁵

He began to reflect on the choice made by his brother, Patrick, for some years Government Teacher at Beaufort West. 'The Memorialist's brother, partly educated by him in Scotland, taught at the Govt School at Beaufort, but wisely abandoned teaching while still in the prime of life, and is now in a fair way of realising a decent competence.'¹¹⁶ His brother opened a store in Beaufort West, and McNaughton was probably very aware that his erstwhile colleague John Paterson was well on his way to building a fortune when he reflected in 1859, that he should have 'turned his attention and energies to a more profitable pursuit than teaching'.¹¹⁷

In all of his correspondence, McNaughton was asserting his rights to recognition and promotion as a successful and faithful teacher. He had had to admit rich and poor to his school, 'nor has anyone been expelled by me for any cause whatever. I think it therefore very hard, that because a few gentlemen happen to prefer my School to any other, it should be used as an argument

¹¹³ Memorial of John McNaughton, 28 April 1857.

¹¹⁴ Rawson's note on *ibid*.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*; Memorial of John McNaughton, 31 August 1857; McNaughton to Col Sec, 18 June 1859, McNaughton to Under Col Sec, 10 August 1859, CO 741.

¹¹⁶ Memorial of John McNaughton, 28 April 1857.

¹¹⁷ McNaughton to Under Col Sec, 10 August, 1859.

against increasing my salary.¹¹⁸ What he appears to be alleging is that he had unfairly been denied an increase in salary because he taught so many fee-paying pupils. There is no evidence in the official correspondence that this was so. He was, however, one of the few government teachers with sufficient pupils paying their £1 a quarter for studies in the higher branches to make a reasonable income from this.¹¹⁹

Innes was all along pained at the way in which the linking of salaries to stations created anomalies, noting that 'the Gentleman at the bottom of that [examination] list [Reid], equally assiduous but not possessed of the same ability is now being placed on the Scale of Salary to which Mr McNaughton prays to be raised'.¹²⁰ Both he and Rawson recognised that there was justice to McNaughton's claim to be paid the same as his senior colleagues and finally in mid-1860 the requisite amount was voted through Parliament in the education estimates. This was preceded by a last appeal from McNaughton on 3 May 1860:

I trust that as my School is still in as flourishing a state as at any former period during the nineteen years that have elapsed since I took charge of it, the number of attendance being upwards of ninety boys, my salary will be raised to an equality with that of the Teachers at Stellenbosch, Swellendam &c.

In supporting the passing of the estimate, Langham Dale wrote, 'His School has probably done more for the Education of the Cape Youth than any other Established School, and is now in an efficient state, with over 90 boys'.¹²¹

The End of a Career and a School

McNaughton continued in the school that he had founded and shaped until 1863. The advent of Dale as SGE had seen the introduction of school fees at established schools, these with the noble intention of supplementing teachers' and assistant teachers' salaries.¹²² McNaughton, who resolved to get things done, had by this time made his own arrangements with Wynberg parents to pay 10/- per quarter for the elementary department, and continued with the £1 per quarter for the senior students. This meant that he could afford two assistant teachers.¹²³ The final years were, thus, freer of the financial woes he had earlier experienced. Not least of the

¹¹⁸ McNaughton to Col Sec, 18 June 1859.

¹¹⁹ Langham Dale to Col Sec, 2 May 1860, CO 767.

¹²⁰ Innes to Col Sec, 21 June 1859, CO 741.

¹²¹ McNaughton to Col Sec, 3 May 1860, 'Report' of Langham Dale, 8 May 1860 on same.

¹²² Dale, 'Memorandum – Education', [October] 1860, CO 767; 'Memorandum – Education, May 1861', CO 775.

¹²³ Dale to Col Sec, 4 February 1862, CO 791.

‘gratifying fruit’ of twenty-two years of labour at Wynberg ‘is that the advantages of a Superior education are now so well appreciated in this District that the people are willing to pay for the education of their children which was not the case generally when I was appointed to this place’. But his deafness was a serious handicap, and in 1863, at the age of fifty-four, he requested to be able to retire ‘with a pension sufficient to enable me to support my family respectably for the few years of life that yet remain to me’.¹²⁴

From the beginning of Dale’s superintendency, he had been reviewing the role of the established schools, and had come to the conclusion that they were being run at government expense for the very pupils whose parents could best afford to pay for schooling. He found very little support for free education amongst those whom he consulted (who were not the poor); surprisingly little support for it among the government teachers themselves, who felt that people did not value education if they did not pay for it. McNaughton was among a minority who opposed the alternative – public aided education. This would result in a proliferation of competing denominational private schools instead of the ideal, one good school in a village;¹²⁵ something he would be proud that he had achieved.

McNaughton’s request to retire was speedily agreed to and on 22 January 1863, the Executive Council approved a pension of £144.13.4 pa which he would have been gratified to know was the same as that voted for a pensioner of the Herschel group, Francis Tudhope of the Grahamstown Government School.¹²⁶ John McNaughton retired on pension on 1 March 1863 ‘from which date the Government School was abolished’.¹²⁷

I will elaborate elsewhere on the government’s decision to allow the established schools to die a natural death. As the teachers left, retired or died, the school were closed. Where there were sufficient private schools, as at Graaff-Reinet and Swellendam, no aided school was established by the parents for richer pupils. At other locations, the parents formed boards in order to establish a Class A aided school in the stead of the government predecessor. In an ironic twist and/or in a move of governmental conscience, it was decided that McNaughton’s schoolroom should be taken over for a school for Wynberg’s poorer classes.

¹²⁴ McNaughton to Dale, 2 January 1863, CO 809.

¹²⁵ McNaughton, 9 December 1861, CO 809, ‘Teachers’ Answers,’ G.24–’63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 6.

¹²⁶ ‘Report’ of Dale, 15 January 1863 and notes, 22/1/63 and 12/2/63 on *ibid*.

¹²⁷ SGE 13/1, ‘General Register of Schools, 1838-1875’.

Dale asked that, while McNaughton was preparing to depart, 'I be authorised to make arrangements for aiding an elementary district School chiefly for the poorer classes, to an extent exceeding £75 per annum, for a limited period'.¹²⁸ By the end of 1863 he could report that 'the inhabitants of the Village assembled in Public Meeting' had chosen a School Committee and everything was in order for this school to meet in the schoolroom until its lease expired (1870) or the Government needed it.¹²⁹ This First Class Public School (Div B Order 1) was managed by A. Smyth, Revd Phillipson, P. Batchelor, Revd Faure, T. Ingels, J. de Kock, J.W. Meyer and B. Tubb was appointed as the teacher.

Conclusion

John McNaughton probably came the closest to fulfilling the intentions of Herschel, Fairbairn and Bell in establishing a state school capable of delivering a classical curriculum. As we move to the other case studies, the problems that began to emerge at Wynberg of managing a free and inclusive system will become more evident.

McNaughton was able to sustain his self-image as a gifted teacher, this enhanced by the respectable pedagogic space he occupied and the respectable pupils he taught. He was also gratified to note that the principle of pursuing a superior education had won the support of Wynberg's leaders. The irony of his position – as with teachers throughout the ages - was that he equipped his pupils for a station in life both in the Colony and wider world that he himself could not achieve. Ruinous years of overwork and modest income left him dissatisfied and envious of his brother in a Karoo trading business. The closure of the school cannot be treated in isolation from the broader review of the New System that took place in the early 1860s. Wynberg was the only place, however, where the resources of the school were reallocated to the poorer classes. Clearly it went against government grain to fund schooling for the Wynberg respectables, however satisfied they were with the *status quo*, if they could afford to pay for themselves. This was, though, at odds with the image of the successful teacher that McNaughton had constructed for himself.

¹²⁸ Report of Dale, 15 January 1863.

¹²⁹ Dale to Col Sec, 23 December 1863, CO 809; SGE 13/1, 'Register of Schools'.

Chapter Four: George Bremner, Graaff-Reinet and ‘A State of Feeling’, 1848-1859

So perfectly satisfied am I in my own mind, that a Free School, conducted by only one Teacher, in which an Education equal if not superior to any that can be obtained elsewhere, and which is expected to render such education to all alike without distinction of class color or race, is so incompatible with the general tastes & habits, and repugnant to the genius of the people of this country, that I look upon the success of a School under such conditions to be a priori a demonstrable impossibility.
(George Bremner to SGE Langham Dale, 10 December 1859)¹

This case study charts the alienation and failure of an able young Scottish teacher attempting to implement the New System in Graaff-Reinet. Bremner was initially seen to epitomise the ‘superior’ government teacher and to be successful in his first posting at the Paarl (1841-1847). The numbers in both of Bremner’s later schools (Graaff-Reinet, 1848-1859, and Swellendam, 1860-1862) dwindled beyond redemption, however, and both schools were closed in the first half of 1862.² This chapter investigates the defining years of his career at Graaff-Reinet between 1848 and 1859.

Bremner’s is clearly not a tale of quiet discouragement. He was an articulate and combative individual. The way in which his identity as teacher was constructed both for him and by him is evident in the letters, reports and memorials (petitions) he wrote to those in authority; in the editorials and articles of *The Midland Province Banner* which he edited in 1857 and 1858, and in the more limited correspondence of those to whom it fell to supervise him. The very fact of a government inquiry being set up to investigate the First-Class School at Graaff-Reinet in April 1858³ is indicative of the capacity to disturb that seems to have been part of George Bremner’s identity. These sources combine to present a clever and capable teacher, an abrasive civic identity, and a victim – both of a faulty system and his own personality.

The central issue in this case study is a battle between Bremner and the Graaff-Reinet élite over the nature and control of ‘superior’ schooling in the town. Bremner’s identity was bound up with the government system and he embraced its original vision. In its implementation, its frailties frustrated and undermined him and he saw the school’s failure as lying beyond his control. But

¹ In SGE 1/4, Letters received by the Superintendent-General of Education, 1851-1859, from Humansdorp, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth, Bathurst, Grahamstown, Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg & c.

² SGE 17/2, Schedule of the Establishment in the Department of the Superintendent-General of Education, 1863-1875.

³ A7SC-1858. *Cape of Good Hope. Report of the Select Committee Appointed for the Purpose of Inquiring into and Reporting upon the Present Condition of the First-Class School at Graaff-Reinet. May, 1858.*

he used words as weapons in his attempt to contest his powerlessness. His most vivid writing appeared in his newspaper, and the following analysis of the New System on 18 August 1858 is a good example of Bremner in full flow:⁴

SOME eighteen or twenty years ago, the Government of this Colony introduced a scheme of public education into South Africa, which promised much for the future benefit of the country. The scheme was drafted by Sir John Herschel, one of the first men of the day; and in liberality and catholicity of range, it was perhaps as much ahead of existing systems, whether in Europe or elsewhere, as its author takes precedence of mankind generally. South Africa received the scheme with open arms, and cordially welcomed the introduction of the highly-educated gentlemen who were invited from Europe to carry it out. Sir John, however, left the Colony before the scheme was in working order, and, unfortunately, when the Schoolmasters arrived, the master-mind was gone. The arrangements and detail of the system were accordingly left to be carried out by Colonial bunglers, who either *could* not, or would not understand the principles of that liberal system of *general education* that the master-mind of Europe, untrammelled by sectarian influences and unfettered by party bias, had elaborated from its own rich and varied resources. A giant, verily, was born to South Africa; but his infancy and pupilage being intrusted to dwarfish nurses and pigmy guardians, his physical development was restrained and crushed in his infancy, his intellectual vigor and energy were cramped and paralysed. The consequence is, that he has waxed old before his time and gone down into a premature grave, leaving behind him a wretched lot of helpless, rickety children to do battle against the combined array of that ignorance, folly, presumption, and prejudice which, while it killed the parent, still offers a miserable asylum for the orphan children.

This narrative, prelude to an attack on the planned Graaff-Reinet College, provides a metaphor for both the New System and Bremner himself - 'crushed', 'restrained', 'cramped', 'paralysed', 'helpless', 'rickety', **orphaned**. He was abandoned by the visionary author of the New System, Sir John Herschel; left to the devices of incompetent administrators; and faced with obstructive townspeople who did not value the liberal and universal discourse he claimed to represent. He appears as socially detached – without any network of kin, countrymen or intellectual community to sustain him.

James Rose Innes, who for Bremner was chief among the 'dwarfish nurses' and 'pigmy guardians', seems never to have taken offence at his teacher's angry complaints. But the leaders of the Graaff-Reinet community were offended by him, as we will see, and 'such a state of feeling' developed between them and Bremner that small issues became unbridgeable chasms.⁵

While there would be agreement within government circles that the system was problematic, Colonial Secretary Rawson noted disapprovingly that Bremner 'allowed his temper to interfere so largely with the usefulness of his school'.⁶ The identity of a superior British educator, that of an

⁴ 'THE KARROO COLLEGE' in *The Midland Province Banner*, Graaff-Reinet, 18 August 1858.

⁵ 'Report', A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, iv-vi.

⁶ R.W. Rawson's margin note, 3 July on letter of G. Bremner to Col Sec, 12 June, 1858, CO 720.

increasingly affluent white small town élite in a multiracial setting, and the incapacity of the colonial state to manage its educational project efficiently, are all central to this tale of woe.

Graaff-Reinet and the Graaff-Reinet Government School

George Bremner (A.M. Aberdeen) was twenty-one years old and newly arrived from Scotland when he began his career as a first-class teacher at the Cape in 1841. In 1848 he was promoted from the Paarl to Graaff-Reinet Government School. By then he was married to a Simon's Town resident, Johanna Wikboom, and father of two infant sons.⁷ He was the third government teacher at Graaff-Reinet under the New System, preceded by two Presbyterian clergymen, Thomas Buchanan (1840-1841) who was moved to the Normal School in Cape Town, and Thomas Jones Paterson (1842-1846).

Graaff-Reinet is located about 700 kilometres to the east of Cape Town and about 300 kilometres north-west of its closest port, Port Elizabeth. Encircled by the Sundays River, it was an oasis in the semi-desert Karroo. To the north lay the Sneeuwberge whose foothills supplied good grazing for cattle.⁸ Trekboer expansion and settlement throughout the eighteenth century had resulted in the breakdown of pastoralist Khoikhoi communities, these becoming a dispossessed 'coloured' labouring population and of continuing importance in the history of Graaff-Reinet. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century there was increasing conflict between the boers and smaller Xhosa chiefdoms essentially over access to grazing rights. The conflict had flared up into full-scale war with the Khoi allying themselves to a great extent with the Xhosa (1799-1802). Graaff-Reinet was established by the ruling VOC in 1786 as the magisterial centre of a new district in an attempt to regulate the conflict. The construction of the drostdy (magistracy) and Dutch Reformed church in the late eighteenth century represented twin centres of authority, legal and moral, in this essentially Dutch community.

The 1830s saw the departure of a substantial number of Dutch-speaking farmers from the district, however, in protest against the constraints of British rule. This 'Great Trek' created a space for farmers and townsmen of British origin to take their place, the presence of British settlers in the eastern Cape having been boosted by the arrival in the Albany District of the 1820 settlers. By the 1840s the frontier had shifted firmly eastward as a result of British military intervention, and Graaff-Reinet itself was positioned more tranquilly in what many considered a

⁷ E. Bull, 'Rattray and Black: Two Scottish Schoolmasters,' *Familia* XXVII, 3 (1990): 60; Bremner to Innes, 6 January 1848, CO 574; Dale to Acting Col Sec, 10 August 1861, CO 775.

⁸ A. de V. Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet, 1786-1986* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1987), 1.

'midland' district. Graaff-Reinet's situation as an interior junction connecting all main roads between the interior and the coast aided her commercial expansion.

Bremner's arrival at Graaff-Reinet coincided with probably the most prosperous period of its history as the wool boom reached its apex in the 1850s. Saul Dubow has analysed the economy of this rural town and district, pointing to the emergence of progressive commercial wool and mohair farming by the mid-nineteenth century.⁹ The establishment of banks and of branches of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth merchant houses in Graaff-Reinet with attendant credit facilities drew wool farmers into extensive marketing and credit networks. Coinciding with an upturn in the world wool market and the introduction of merino sheep well-suited to the Karroo, the 1840s and 1850s were a period of affluence for many in the town and district of Graaff-Reinet. By 1858 local newspapers were displaying alluring lists of merchandise lately arrived or imminently anticipated.¹⁰

In 1848, with a population of 2 500, the new Municipal Board of Commissioners in Graaff-Reinet could count on 200 households to pay rates.¹¹ From the mid-1850s the English population of the town increased significantly¹² and by 1865 it was the third largest town in the Colony.¹³ Despite this, Graaff-Reinet appears to have been groping her way to civic dignity and respectability in the mid-nineteenth century. Municipal services were poor, voting for councillors half-hearted and participation in national politics, languid. The town was described in 1854 in its main newspaper as 'a Slow Village' where the Dutch Reformed minister 'exercis[ed] undisputed sway amongst his devoted and reverential parishioners'.¹⁴ This minister, Revd Andrew Murray sen, for 44 years at the helm of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in Graaff-Reinet and responsible for a far-flung 'parish', may be seen to represent a well-established, sober, literate and Christian respectability. To succeed in Graaff-Reinet, Bremner was to discover, was to take careful account of Murray and his congregants, for whom distinctions between master and servant were not readily forsaken.

⁹ S. Dubow, 'Land, Labour and Merchant Capital in the Pre-Industrial Rural Economy of the Cape; the Experience of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1852-1872' (BA Honours research report, University of Cape Town, 1981).

¹⁰ *The Midland Province Banner*, 24 March 1858, for example.

¹¹ Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 13.

¹² Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 40.

¹³ H. Fransen *Old Towns and Villages of the Cape: A Survey of the Origin and Development of Towns, Villages and Hamlets of the Cape of Good Hope* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2006), 27.

¹⁴ C.G. Henning, *Graaff-Reinet: A Cultural History 1786-1886* (Cape Town: T.V. Bulpin, 1975), 36.

At the same time the growth of 'a district of wealth ... and daily growing Mercantile importance', as described by Graaff-Reinet's municipal head, J.J. Meintjies,¹⁵ brought with it new distinctions of class (and by association, colour). Signifying this new commercial importance were the banks and road-building; but also newspapers, a library and higher status schools. An unusual town layout developed with elongated urban smallholdings used to grow vegetables, citrus and grapes, and supporting a community of 'agterstraaters' - small producers of wine, brandy and dried fruit. Minnaar describes how the demand for land in Graaff-Reinet, as its prosperity grew, resulted in subdivision of these smallholdings and the increasing impoverishment of the original Dutch-speaking proprietors. The town came to reflect the class divide, with the poorly educated urban agriculturalists living in the west of the town, and the richer German- and English-speaking residents in the east. It was the latter who participated in municipal politics, contaminated by a fair amount of 'irregularity'.¹⁶

The period of this case study coincides with the granting of representative institutions of local and central government. Thus it was that the Graaff-Reinet élite was able to acquire access to forms and levels of political influence not possible in the autocratic VOC and early British administrations. Dutch and English-speaking leaders would be united in their concern to have access to forms and structures of education reflecting their growing affluence and status. This was particularly important as Graaff-Reinet fought for recognition as a significant political centre, attempting to counter the dominance of the other eastern centres, Graham's Town and Port Elizabeth, in the new colonial parliament.¹⁷ Significantly, as Bremner's alienation from certain of the local political power brokers increased, he differed from McNaughton in Wynberg in voicing a stronger commitment to Scottish notions of a broad-based and inclusive public education.

It is not easy to open up, to any extent, the state of race relations in Graaff-Reinet and the wider district prior to Bremner's arrival, but there are clues that all was not well. The London Missionary Society's work in Graaff-Reinet under Dr J.T. van der Kemp began in 1801 at the time that about 1 000 refugees of the 1799 rebellion took shelter in the Graaff-Reinet Dutch Reformed Church. Their infamous expulsion and removal to Bethelsdorp by 1803 removed many from the town, but the LMS work continued which at times included schooling.¹⁸ This was formalised in the 1840s. Wayne Dooling has demonstrated the strain placed on master-servant relations in the

¹⁵ J.J. Meintjies to Col Sec, 27 June 1857, and attached 'Memorial of Inhabitants of the Town and Division of Graaff-Reinet', 3 January 1857, CO 695.

¹⁶ Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 40.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 111-2; H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, eds., *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg), 82, 99.

immediate post-emancipation era.¹⁹ Although he concentrates on the western districts of the Colony, he shows that the withholding of their labour by former slaves was paralleled in the eastern districts by a withholding of labour by Khoisan servants after the passing of Ordinance 50 in 1828. He indicates that there was also a greater physical mobility of workers, squatting on crown land and breaking of contracts by labourers of colour; something that Dubow sees as a feature of the Graaff-Reinet district as late as 1857.²⁰

While in Cape Town itself mission schools catering for the 'poorer classes' invariably served both white and coloured children, it seems that Graaff-Reinet's poorer Dutch-speaking white residents attended Mr Luckhoff's church-funded school. The coloured community was offered a separate DRC mission school from 1819 and a LMS mission school from the late 1840s.²¹ It was said of Bremner's predecessor, Thomas Jones Paterson, that his failure was linked to his concern for the coloured people. 'There was dissatisfaction ... it was said that [Revd Paterson] was taking an interest in the coloured people.'²² In 1858, while considering the history of the government school in the town, Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) Mr S. Probart commented: 'At Graaff-Reinet there is considerable prejudice against allowing the children to mix with each other.'²³

¹⁹ W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2007), 116-120.

²⁰ Dubow, 'Land, Labour and Merchant Capital,' 34.

²¹ Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 111-2.

²² Revd W. Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 31.

²³ S.A. Probart to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, *ibid*.



Parsonage Street, Graaff-Reinet. *The Drostdy stands at the crossroads, the LMS chapel at the centre of the picture. The school was probably located on the opposite side of Parsonage Street.*²⁴ The LMS chapel in Parsonage Street, built in the late 1840s, may be seen as symbolic of the racial divide. But at the same time it sat firmly at the centre of the axis between the DRC parsonage and the drostdy. According to Fransen, the Dutch Reformed church council built the first school in Graaff-Reinet in 1798 on a site in Parsonage Street where the library stands today.²⁵ This building was probably taken over by the government and used, first for the free school which William Robertson held from 1822 to 1828. When the New System was launched, the first-class school was held in a gabled, thatched and whitewashed²⁶ government schoolroom. Revd Long remembered the schoolroom from Paterson's days, and attributed Paterson's struggle to maintain the school in part to 'the very bad state of repair in which the school was'.²⁷

Paterson left in 1846 to become a missionary for the LMS and in April 1848, Bremner took over the reins of the school in Parsonage Street. Although almost certainly a more gifted pedagogue, Bremner would face many of the same issues as his immediate predecessor, including an uncertain commitment by the community to engaging in education beyond that needed for basic literacy, and a plethora of small educational enterprises which provided an alternative to the

²⁴ Photograph taken by E.H. Ludlow, December 2008.

²⁵ Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages*, 112.

²⁶ Tender of Mr Edwd Punchon in Innes to Col Sec, 15 August, 1845, CO 540.

²⁷ Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 32.

government school.²⁸ Significant, too, was the white community's inability to accept the social mix that the free school invited. This, combined with the lack of a 'respectable' schoolroom and adequate assistance, would plunge the school into crisis by the end of 1850.

The Teacher: 'A Man of Abilities and Acquirements'

Before launching into the tale of the loss of zeal and failure, it is important to note that not only did Bremner regard himself as 'a highly educated gentleman from Europe', but that he was generally recognized to be an able teacher. Innes stated: 'I know not a more efficient teacher than Mr Bremner.' He was 'a well-educated and talented man'.²⁹ 'Mr Bremner is considered at Graaff-Reinet a very clever man ...' commented Graaff-Reinet resident and Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), William Southey.³⁰ Even J.F. Ziervogel, Graaff-Reinet's most prominent local political figure in the 1850s and the man whom Bremner considered to be a threat to his position, did not doubt that he was 'a man of abilities and acquirements'.³¹ After Revd William Long's appointment to the school commission in 1852, he occasionally visited the schoolroom and was impressed by the performance both of Bremner's pupils and the teacher himself:

He is a kind-hearted man, and has a very interesting mode of teaching, - peculiarly so. I have listened with great attention to his lessons on physical science. He has a remarkably easy way of teaching the children.³²

Innes remarked:

I never saw boys more attached to their master; and the scene of parting between pupils and Mr Bremner is often as warm and affectionate as that which occurred the other day between Professor Dale and the pupils of the South African College.³³

Bremner, who regularly displayed his classical knowledge by dropping Latin epithets into his writing, described the 'object' of his 'mode of instruction' as being

to develop the intellect of the youth under experiment. The method, of course, varies with the idiosyncrasy of the subject, *Nullus addictus jurare in verbas magistri*. I apprehend the mode of instruction I pursue would be most aptly described as the *argumentum ad hominum* method.³⁴

²⁸ Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 99-102.

²⁹ Innes to Select Committee, 27 April 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee Graaff-Reinet School*, 3, 11.

³⁰ W. Southey to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, *ibid*, 24.

³¹ J.F. Ziervogel to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, *ibid*, 19.

³² Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, *ibid*, 34-5.

³³ Innes to Select Committee, 27 April 1858, *ibid*, 12.

The success of his methods is evident in the October 1858 report on a quarterly examination of the Government School. This was published in the town's main newspaper, the *Graaff-Reinet Herald*:³⁵

SCHOOL EXAMINATION. – An inspection of the Graaff-Reinet Government School by the Divisional Council took place on Wednesday, the 30th ultimo. The Divisional Council was represented by only one of its members, Mr J.F. Ziervogel, and the Secretary, Mr Ford, - Mr Berrangé unfortunately being indisposed, Mr Cloete away at Cape Town, and the state of the weather preventing the attendance of the other members. There were only sixteen boys present, though the number on the roll is 43, and the average attendance is 21. The public probably knew nothing at all of the examination, as the only visitors were ourselves and two friends. The exercises commenced by all the boys reading in turn from Chambers's Introduction to the Sciences. The reading did credit to the ability of the teacher, and from the manner in which it was performed, it was evident that the boys understood the subject. To make assurance doubly sure, however, the teacher, Mr. Geo. Bremner, questioned them upon what they had read, and also upon what they had learned of physical science. The intelligent replies, and ready illustrations given by the boys, were interesting, and showed a greater amount of proficiency than could reasonably have been expected – considering the desultory manner in which the school is carried on. Two scholars, more advanced than the remainder of the sixteen, were then examined in trigonometry, algebra (quadratic equations), and Latin. A class consisting of eleven boys then went through some exercises in English grammar, which were very well done. The usual dry and repulsive style of this study was entirely done away with by the ingenuity and skill of the teacher; and the conjugation of verbs and declension of pronouns, as well as the application of strong adjectives, backed by powerful adverbs, was amusingly and cleverly performed. It is to be regretted that the parents of the pupils did not attend. We know not whose business it is to invite them to the examination by the Government School, when inspected by the Divisional Council; but it would much promote the education of their children, if the parents showed a proper interest in the matter, to say nothing of the healthy stimulus and encouragement afforded to the schoolmaster himself by their presence. – *Graaff-Reinet Herald*.

This report on one of the central performances of the government school was probably written by the editor of the *Graaff-Reinet Herald*. The skill, humour and ability with which the teacher led his learners through their tasks obviously delighted this observer. At the same time the report touches on several problems with a long history: small numbers of pupils actually at school, a poor turn-out of examiners, a school carried on in a 'desultory manner' and the absence of any parents to admire and encourage the teacher's efforts. As Long, a lone sympathetic voice, commented, there was much at Graaff-Reinet to 'discourage, dishearten, and to disgust' the Government schoolteacher.³⁶ 'But' concluded Mr Watermeyer, a member of the 1858 inquiry into the school, '... whatever talents he may be possessed of, he is a most injudicious man ...'³⁷

³⁴ Bremner, 'Graaff-Reinet School,' in A1SC-1857, CGH. *Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, 9.

³⁵ The article was reproduced verbatim in the first edition of Bremner's *The Midland Province Banner*, 7 October 1858.

³⁶ Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 33.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 12.

The way in which Bremner negotiated his role and relationship with the Graaff-Reinet community can be discerned in two key periods. These will be investigated in an examination of the identity of a threatened teacher. The first was between 1850 and 1852, when Bremner was faced with what he considered to be a defining crisis in his school. The second key period was one of heightened protestation by the teacher between 1856 and 1858. This included his foray into journalism and culminated in the Inquiry into his school in May 1858. 1859 marked the nadir of his career – three pupils left in the school, a reputation of having failed, and the recommendation that he be transferred elsewhere.

Two Crises, 1850 and 1852

The 1850 Crisis : a Plea for the Government to prevent ‘compromised usefulness’ from becoming ‘complete disorganization’ (G. Bremner, 13 December 1850)³⁸

On moving to Graaff-Reinet, Bremner inherited a school that had been without a teacher for almost a year, and at the time of its closure in 1846 had about a dozen pupils.³⁹ ‘[W]hen I opened School here ... only 19 children six of whom members of one family – paupers – presented themselves for enrolment – of this number only one could read or write,’ he later reported.⁴⁰ From 1848, however, numbers grew rapidly reaching a climactic 150 in 1849.⁴¹ They remained high in 1850, but in December of that year Bremner signalled a crisis in the government school. Respectable inhabitants were beginning to remove their children in significant numbers and if urgent remedies were not applied, the damage to the government school might become irreparable.

³⁸ Bremner to Innes, 13 December 1850, SGE 1/4.

³⁹ Ziervogel to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 15, 32.

⁴⁰ Bremner to Innes, 13 December 1850, CO 594.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

The evidence of what went on inside of the school is fragmentary and indirect, but it points to the following. From 1850, Bremner found it increasingly difficult to meet the expectations of a 'Government teacher' in the Herschel System - as the provider of good quality, free, public education. The challenges for one teacher of teaching five year-olds to fifteen year-olds have been demonstrated in the Wynberg Government School. This would be the same for Bremner, but having to restart the school, he initially focused on the elementary courses. For three years he had the assistance of R.M. Moll, a former pupil from Paarl, and between them they were able to cope with the burgeoning numbers.⁴² As has been described above, Bremner was a talented teacher, and eventually they had over 100 pupils in all stages of progress from 'ABC' upwards to the higher departments of mathematics, Latin and French.⁴³ 'Another difficulty he had to encounter', reported Long, 'was the mixed state of his school, - boys of fourteen and fifteen, and children who did not know their letters'.⁴⁴

The social mix at the Graaff-Reinet School was greater than at Wynberg, however. Here the free government school received boys from all levels of society and 'social and conventional distinctions [could] not well be respected within the wall of a *public* school-room'. In dividing pupils into classes and affording status to them, 'disregard [was] necessarily shewn to wealth and social position of parents'.⁴⁵

It was Moll's decision to leave teaching to become a land surveyor that plunged the school into crisis. Neither assistant nor pupil-teacher could be found to replace him, the low stipend being a major obstacle.⁴⁶ It is difficult to ascertain how hard the SGE attempted to do anything at this stage.

Not only was there a large number of boys of all classes and ages to teach without adequate assistance, but the schoolroom itself was a liability. In 1850, at the time of his impassioned request for a new assistant teacher, Bremner also wrote that 'the School premises were allowed to remain & are now in a condition ... that if allowed to remain so, every respectable parent would eventually feel himself compelled to withdraw his children'.⁴⁷ The schoolroom may have stood in one of the more prestigious streets in Graaff-Reinet, buttressed by some of the town's

⁴² Innes G.16-'57, *CGH. Report on Public Education for the Year 1855, and the First Half of 1856*, xix.

⁴³ *Ibid*, xviii-xix;

⁴⁴ Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 33.

⁴⁵ Bremner to Innes, 13 December 1850.

⁴⁶ Innes, G.16-'57. *Report for 1855 and First Half of 1856*, xix.

⁴⁷ Bremner to Innes, 13 December 1850.

more important civic structures, but sporadic and limited attention had been paid to keeping it in a state of functionality let alone of respectability. Like McNaughton at Wynberg, he recognized the problematic pedagogic discourse represented by his schoolroom but was unable, for many years, to harness resources to make significant improvements. By 1858 the schoolroom would be described as ‘cheerless’ but in good order,⁴⁸ but between 1845 and 1852 it seems to have been in a particularly poor condition, with the teacher left without any disposable funds for even limited repairs.

Revd Long was familiar with the schoolroom and considered its ‘very bad state of repair’ to be one of the causes of the ‘diminution’ of Bremner’s numbers:

When I first went [to Graaff-Reinet in 1845], I used the school for morning service; an adjoining room was the only “necessary” provided for the children, and the smell was so disagreeable that I was obliged to leave the place ... There was also a very large hole in the thatch which, to the best of my knowledge, remained for a long time after Mr Bremner was there ... I think if Mr Bremner had had a proper school provided for him, a properly divided school-room, and competent assistance, there would have been a better state of things ... He has told me himself that he was obliged to mend the windows at his own expense; and I am not sure that he did not have the school cleaned at his own expense.⁴⁹

Repairs to the Graaff-Reinet schoolroom had been carried out in January 1846, prior to Bremner’s arrival, but they seem not to have been adequate. Nor was there any action until Innes sanctioned further repairs on his visit to Graaff-Reinet in mid 1852.⁵⁰ Cosmo Henning’s social history of Graaff-Reinet includes a description of the schoolroom, gleaned from the *Graaff-Reinet Herald* in 1854:

The Government School, resembling a great barn-like building, was an eyesore externally, with its crumbling walls and battered doors, and internally was decorated with splashed ink and desks cut and bored with knives. ‘The broken windows are the means by which the school is ventilated, and the mode appears to be efficacious and cheap, if not very scientific.’⁵¹

Practical considerations aside, the 1850 crisis was thus also marked by a failure of the government to present a commanding public face to the Graaff-Reinet community; one that supported its claim to be the site of a superior education. At the end of his career, Bremner reflected on school buildings:

⁴⁸ Probart to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 29.

⁴⁹ Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, *ibid*, 32.

⁵⁰ Innes to Acting Col Sec, 14 December 1852, filed in CO 637, 1854.

⁵¹ Henning, *Graaff-Reinet*, 37.

I am of opinion that had there been suitable school-buildings, properly furnished, and suitably and efficiently assisted from the commencement, the scheme introduced in 1839 might have commanded the education of the towns and villages, and supplied teachers for the country for a long period; but it was bungled at the very outset. **The schools never realized the prestige formed of them.** They had no air of respectability about them, and accordingly soon fell into public disrepute, paving the way, however, for other schools of a superior order.⁵² [My emphasis].

As it was, Bremner rearranged his classes, cut down on the subjects offered, and soldiered on. But he was deprived 'at the most critical period of the school's history, of the services of an assistant, and with the results, too, unfortunately, that I predicted, and from which the school has never recovered.'⁵³

Two consequences of his rearrangements can be inferred from his later writings on the problems he faced. Because the numbers in the school were large, the progress of some of the pupils was probably not what their parents expected. With the school being free and there being no way to enforce attendance, it is likely that the perennial problem of all the government schools was evident early on at Graaff-Reinet: erratic attendance. As voiced later, Bremner's dilemma was whether he should reteach the truants '*de novo*, ... as the return of the truants is of almost daily occurrence' and disadvantage the regular attendants. Or should he 'yield to the strong temptation of visiting the delinquent with neglect, and devote his energies to the service of the better portion of his pupils ...'⁵⁴ On top of that, what disturbed some of the higher standing members of the community was that their children were being outperformed by those of the lower classes. Bremner wrote that

in my experience it has more than once happened that the cleverest boy has been the son of a humble artisan. This was a clear invasion of the *vested rights of respectability*, and, therefore not to be borne. The leading pupils are accordingly summarily withdrawn; and the rest either spontaneously, or from a desire to "follow my leader," or from some other *extraneous* cause, disappear also ...⁵⁵

Bremner's distress over the failure to receive much needed assistance was linked to his recognition that his school needed to be exceptionally good if he was to retain all classes of pupils. This moment of failure was seen by him as pivotal and referred to as such repeatedly

⁵² G. Bremner, 'Teachers' Answers' in G.24-'63, *CGH. Report of a Commission Appointed, in Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to Inquire into and Report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony* [hereafter *Watermeyer Commission*], 8.

⁵³ Bremner, letter quoted by Innes, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 3.

⁵⁴ Letter to Editor, *Graaff-Reinet Herald*, 10 October 1857.

⁵⁵ Bremner, 3 December 1862, 'Teachers' Answers', G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 9.

over the years.⁵⁶ Instead, from 1850 onwards he experienced the loss of the families described by MLA William Southey as liking 'to keep their children a little select'.⁵⁷

In his discussion of markers of status within respectable society, Ross includes a number which would have had meaning to those in Graaff-Reinet who desired to distance themselves from those of lower status; even those with a common Christian religion and Dutch language.⁵⁸ Pride and prestige – or 'the vested rights of respectability'- required a 'gentrified landscape'. School buildings not only needed to proclaim their value through their external appearance, but allow for moral training and regularity through their layout. The undifferentiated cramming together of boys of all ages and classes in the stinking shambles of the government schoolroom would create an unacceptable literal physical proximity.

The Teacher and the School Commission: Resisting 'local espionage'

Subsequent to this, we find Bremner performing in a self-destructive way in his relationship with the school commission designated to examine his school. For Bremner, SGE Innes's failure not only to provide assistance, but to be seen to be trying to assist, was deeply demoralising. This was compounded by lack of access to any funds for repairs, and his problems in getting anything done about his schoolroom. Symptomatic of his discouragement, while adding to it, was his quarrel with the school commission in 1851. It was about this time that he reportedly told both Innes and Graaff-Reinet resident, Mr Stephanus Meintjies,

that he was disgusted with the treatment he got from Government, and from the Superintendent-General of Education; in fact, that he was so disgusted with the whole school, and took no interest in it any more, and wished he were rid of it ...⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Bremner, letter quoted by Innes, A7SC-1858, *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 3; 'The memorial of George Bremner, A.M., Master of the Government school of Graaff-Reinet', 25 March 1857, A1SC-1857. *Appendix to Report of Select Committee on Public Education*, 28-9.

⁵⁷ W. Southey to Select Committee, 7 May, 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 23.

⁵⁸ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1700-1879: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 80, 88 ff.

⁵⁹ J.F. Ziervogel to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 17.

In 1851, the school commission comprised the Civil Commissioner (CC), the District Clergyman, Revd Andrew Murray, and its secretary, Anthony Berrangé. All three had been on the commission since its inception in 1842.⁶⁰ They were probably already disenchanted with the system before Bremner's arrival, having overseen Paterson's failing school and withdrawn from all involvement in it at a time of an earlier failure by the SGE to act decisively.⁶¹

The nature of Bremner's initial relationship with the school commission is unclear, but it seems to have been troubled by 1850 and was probably linked to conflicting views of status, authority and respect. Bremner was asked in person by Berrangé to delay by a few days the September 1851 quarterly examination of the school as both commissioners would be out of town. Bremner refused in an irritated and officious manner, first requesting this information in writing and then responding:

In reply to your letter of this day's date, I have the honor to state for the information of the School Commissioners that with the Concurrence of the Superintendent General of Education, the Annual vacation takes place after the second Quarterly examination, and as the Nachtmaal, is to be held on the 4th proximo, the School will be broken up for a month; -

Under these circumstances, I fear the examination, like its predecessors for the last Eighteen Months and more, will have to take place in the absence of the School Commission.

I have the honor &c

Sigd G. Bremner

P.S. Should the School Commission in future have occasion to alter the days fixed by Dr Innes for the Examination I should feel obliged if in your intimation to me you would have respect to the last paragraph but one of the circular letter to which you adverted.

Sigd G.B.

When Berrangé reported this exchange to Innes he concluded: 'We have therefore to express our regret that Mr Bremner has again thought proper not to meet the wishes of the school commission, in consequence it was impossible to attend the examination.' He also observed that their non-attendance of examinations in the past eighteen months 'did not arise with them'.⁶² It appears to have been from this point that the school commission 'refused to act, and ceased to act as such.'⁶³

⁶⁰ Innes to [Acting Col Sec] Craig, 24 March 1842, CO 510, gives original nominees.

⁶¹ Resolutions of Graaff-Reinet School Commission, 20 July 1846 and 24 July 1846, T. Paterson to Innes, 24 July 1846, in Innes to Col Sec, 3 August 1846, CO 550.

⁶² Sec of Graaff-Reinet School Commission to Innes, 10 October 1851, with enclosures, Berrangé to Bremner, and Bremner to Berrangé, 23 September 1851, SGE 1/4.

⁶³ J.F. Ziervogel to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 15.

What is the meaning of this *impasse*? In order to understand this, we must move on to the visit of the SGE to Graaff-Reinet in mid 1852 while on his tour of inspection of the Eastern Districts. During this visit he inspected the school and attempted to patch up the relationship between the school commission and Bremner which he represented as a ‘misunderstanding that had for some time existed’.⁶⁴ His investigation was followed by a letter on how the school commission and teacher should ‘proceed’.⁶⁵ The actual content of his communications in 1852 is not provided, but Innes later observed:

I ought also to state that Mr. Bremner, as well as others of the first-class teachers, whom I selected in 1840, belonged formerly to the parochial school establishment of Scotland, where the nature, extent, and character of the supervision differs widely from that which obtains in the school establishment of this colony. I have impressed on the minds of those gentlemen the duty which devolves both on them and me to respect all constituted authority with which we may be called upon to co-operate, or required to obey, so long as we retain the offices we hold. Still, a feeling of repugnance does exist, in more instance than one, which accounts for in some degree, though it does not justify, the proceedings upon which I have been called to report.⁶⁶

There is an indication here that Innes, while not condoning the hot-temperedness of this fellow Scot, understood the attempted assertion of his independence; he was a capable and autonomous individual who chafed at the attempts of those whom he did not particularly respect to supervise or regulate him. Detached from the local élite who were abandoning his school, and lacking direct accountability, Bremner declined to pay much attention to them. Probing the matter in 1858, the Attorney-General suggested conceit on Bremner’s part but also posed a rhetorical question: ‘In the principle of local supervision ... is there not a great tendency that clever schoolmasters, who generally think of themselves as highly as they ought to do, are very apt to set small store by the supervision of people, who, they say, do not understand the art, and know nothing about it?’⁶⁷ Bremner’s subsequent columns in *The Midland Province Banner* would demonstrate that he viewed the local leadership’s grasp of matters educational with contempt.

For their part, the school commission was understood to represent the most ‘respectable’ inhabitants and would have felt itself able to voice their interests and concerns. Yet the government had limited their role, as we will see in the case of the Caledon teacher as well, to observation and reporting. There was no power to intervene or influence the conduct of the government school unless the teacher invited this; and perhaps even if the teacher did. Many

⁶⁴ Innes, ‘Report on the case of the Government teacher at Graaff-Reinet,’ 11 November 1857, in A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 48-51.

⁶⁵ Ziervogel to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, *ibid*, 18.

⁶⁶ Innes, ‘Report on case of Government teacher at Graaff-Reinet,’ *ibid*, 51.

⁶⁷ Attorney General, 20 May 1858, *ibid*, 40.

years later the same Revd Andrew Murray, deeply respected in Graaff-Reinet as Dutch Reformed minister there for over forty years, said: 'Permit me ... to observe, that the circumstance of the teachers having been so entirely free from all control, not only of parents, but also of local school commissions, has injured more schools than one.'⁶⁸ For all that they lacked the power of direct intervention, the school commission and leading citizens generally were shapers of opinion and mobilizers of resources. If he lost their favour, Bremner's position was deeply compromised.

The Superintendent General and the Community, June 1852 - '[Could]...anything be done to mend the state of the school?'

(J.F. Ziervogel, 7 May 1858)

The visit of Innes in 1852 is important because it provided a moment when things could have turned out differently. Bremner was, for the moment, silent, in the background. It was a point at which the local élite could have been rallied to the cause of government education and its lofty intentions. Instead the visit would prove influential in confirming their decision to abandon the government school. Subsequent developments indicate that the Graaff-Reinet leaders were mindful of the advantages of the kind of schooling that the New System offered but not in the form that we have seen it to be taking. It appears that certain 'of the most respectable inhabitants of the town' had written a letter of complaint about 'the unsatisfactory state of the school'. A number of parents sought a meeting with Innes, as they thought his visit 'a good opportunity of inquiring whether anything could be done to mend the state of the school'.⁶⁹

Revisiting the 1852 meeting in the midst of an even hotter controversy in 1858, J.F. Ziervogel was at times uncertain of details, but his evidence is helpful in trying to understand the increasingly heightened 'state of feeling' between Bremner and the residents of Graaff-Reinet. Present were those most concerned about the school, at the same time practically all the men who held the highest civic positions in town and district in the 1850s – mayor, Chairman of the later Divisional Council, four sometime Members of Parliament and the two leading clergymen: Mr [J.J.] Meintjes, Mr [T.N.G.] Muller, Mr [C.H.] Grisbrook, Revd Murray, Revd Long, J.F. Ziervogel and his brother Mr C.B. Ziervogel, and Mr Stephanus Meintjes.⁷⁰ ('I don't think Mr Berrangé was there.')

⁶⁸ 'Answer from Rev A. Murray, sen.', Appendix I, G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 48-49.

⁶⁹ Details of this meeting, J.F. Ziervogel to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 16-18; Innes's 'Report', *ibid*, 50.

⁷⁰ In 1854, J.F. Ziervogel and T.N.G. Muller were elected as Members of the Legislative Assembly. After one session Muller was replaced by C.H. Grisbrook. Ziervogel was 'the one constant', representing Graaff-Reinet for many years in distant Cape Town. Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 41.

These gentlemen were highly critical of Innes himself, and the meeting ended with the assertion that he had

grossly neglected his duty to the Graaff-Reinet School. It is in a very miserable state, and it appears to be admitted that the teacher does not take any great interest in it; and now, knowing all this, it is for the parents to know whether this is a state of things that ought to be allowed to continue.

At the meeting, 'Dr Innes gave us a long lecture ... in which there was as usual a good deal about Sir John Herschel but nothing to any very good purpose ...' Innes informed the meeting that he could only act if specific charges against the teacher were submitted to him in writing. As no written complaint was ever delivered to him, Innes took the matter no further than to inform 'the teacher personally of what had taken place'. As with McNaughton at Wynberg, and later with Golding at Caledon, the SGE was unwilling to act on vague allegations against which a teacher was unable to defend himself.

While Innes's actions in 1852 appear to have been intended to calm the situation, his visionary lecturing and principled stand did little to save the government school. It amounted to a lack of practical support for Bremner and at the same time, as far as the parents were concerned, was seen as evidence of lack of authority over him.

Despite the absence of written grievances, serious charges were made at the meeting. 'The general complaint' said J.F. Ziervogel, 'was that the teacher did not attend to the school as the parents wished he should, and considered he ought to do; that the children did not make the progress which they thought they could make, and ought to make, and that the school had fallen off in consequence'.⁷¹ Pushed by the Attorney-General to make definite charges, Ziervogel's impression was 'that the teacher frequently did not attend at the school during the fixed hours, and was absent during the school hours'.⁷²

In a separate interview in 1858, Revd Long was again more sympathetic towards the teacher, while observing that he thought the mix of class and age in one school a mistake. 'People are fickle; and generally think their own children exceedingly clever; so that the fault is thrown entirely on the teacher, if they do not succeed and become good scholars.' Asked about the

⁷¹ Ziervogel to Select Committee, 7 May 1858. A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 16-18.

⁷² *Ibid*, 20.

alleged absence of the master, he said he heard it remarked long after Bremner had first come that he was habitually half an hour late in the morning – but not habitually absent.⁷³

So the rumours and voiced but unwritten charges generally constructed Bremner as an obstructive and neglectful teacher. The context, as highlighted by Bremner himself in December 1850, indicates that he was teaching under extremely difficult conditions. These were in no way improved by Innes's failure to respond to Bremner's many letters, leaving him disheartened and isolated. Innes's own limited ability to intervene may in large part have been because of limited financial and administrative resources at his disposal. This indicates that the system was already, after ten years, showing itself to be faulty; that there was a failure in governmental regularity that was to pervade the system under the Innes superintendency.

Competition for the First-Class Government School -

'A Superior School for a District of wealth ... and daily growing Mercantile importance.'
(J.J. Meintjes, 27 June 1857)

June 1852 appears to have marked a parting of the ways of the Graaff-Reinet élite and government schooling. It was an indictment of the first-class government school that it should be replaced by a fee-paying school which intended to replicate its role, although for the wealthier residents alone. It seems that the advantage of being able to 'have some voice in the management of the school, and exercise a kind of control over the teacher himself'⁷⁴ outweighed the financial cost. As a result:

a few Gentlemen ... at a meeting held at Graaff-Reinet, and convened for the purpose of taking the Subject of Education into consideration, proposed and agreed to subscribe Five pounds (£5) each, (irrespective of School Fees) towards the Establishment of a Grammar School.⁷⁵

Revd Andrew Murray was a leading figure in establishing the new school⁷⁶ and Bremner later maintained that it had 'the powerful influence and support of the Dutch Reformed Church' and came to be 'patronized by the local Members of Parliament' and several Divisional Council members.⁷⁷ The probability that the position of teacher at the Grammar School was initially

⁷³ Long to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, *ibid*, 38.

⁷⁴ Probart to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, *ibid*, 29.

⁷⁵ J.J. Meintjes to Col Sec, 27 June 1857, and attached 'Memorial of Inhabitants of the Town and Division of Graaff-Reinet', 3 January 1857, CO 695.

⁷⁶ He signed the 'Memorial' and was in correspondence with the government about the Grammar School, see separate notes, JC 14/1/58 with 'Memorial of Inhabitants of Graaff-Reinet, 3 January 1857', *ibid*.

⁷⁷ *The Midland Province Banner*, 28 April 1858.

offered to George Bremner himself is intriguing.⁷⁸ Perhaps the founders of the new school believed that Bremner would be an asset under careful management? Had Bremner accepted, he would have taken on the 'cream' of Graaff-Reinet society; those whose parents could afford school fees (by 1856) of between 15/- and 21/- a month. He would also have earned a higher salary (£200 pa increasing to £300 over four years). He turned it down, however, and a Presbyterian minister, Revd Mr G. Brown, became teacher of what was widely regarded as a 'good school'.⁷⁹ It is important to consider why Bremner turned the position down, if indeed it was offered to him. Was he so alienated by those running the school as to snub them? Did he resist the idea of being answerable to those whose views on education he regarded as limited? Was his commitment to a more inclusive public education and the Herschel vision still intact? More mundanely, did he recognise that his financial position as a state employee was more secure in the long term than as someone contracted by local residents? The prospect of a secure retirement does seem to have been one of the inducements to the Scottish teachers to come to the Cape in the first place.⁸⁰

For all its support, the Grammar School seems only ever to have had about 36-40 pupils, but for Bremner was a bitter symbol of his school's failure. The Grammar School was also financially unsustainable. In appealing in 1857 for state assistance in the form of either an endowment of land or a grant, the trustees drew on Graaff-Reinet's increased importance in the colonial economy. They offered the justification that a 'Superior School for a District of wealth ... and daily growing Mercantile importance' should be placed on a permanent and secure footing. This school would 'enable the youth of these parts of the Colony to be prepared for a College life' – one at the South African College in particular. They also argued that government aid would permit a lowering of fees to allow more to enter the school. Although Governor Grey and Colonial Secretary Rawson did not reject the idea of an endowment,⁸¹ nothing seems to have been forthcoming and, as the financial hardships of the 1860s set in, the school closed.⁸² The creation of the Graaff-Reinet College was the pedagogical enterprise that next captured the imagination of the élite – and this will be discussed in due course.

⁷⁸ Innes to Select Committee, 7 April 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 11.

⁷⁹ Southey to Select Committee, 7 May 1858, *ibid*, 24.

⁸⁰ Bremner to Dale, 10 December 1858, SGE 1/4.

⁸¹ See notes on 'Memorial of Inhabitants of Graaff-Reinet, 3 January 1857', G. Grey 25 March 1857, RWR (Rawson) 2 April 1857, CO 695.

⁸² Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 101. There were many short-lived educational enterprises in Graaff-Reinet, but the Grammar School was symbolically important. Its demise saw a brief revival of the government school until it closed in 1862.

1853-1856: Lull before the Storm : the schoolmaster turns his spare moments to account.

No town has made greater progress during the last ten years than Graaff-Reinet – Port Elizabeth itself not excepted. From an island village it has sprung up to a great commercial centre and exercises an influence on the surrounding districts, second to that of no town in the Colony.
(*EP Herald*, 1854)⁸³

Bremner would echo the complaints of his fellow first-class teachers at the inadequacy of a teacher's salary.

There ought to exist ... no necessity for the schoolmaster to turn his every spare moment to account, in order to earn a livelihood, or to keep his income on an equality with that of his senior pupil, who has *just entered a merchant's store*.⁸⁴

The fact that he taught in Graaff-Reinet at a time of growing affluence made it difficult for him to attract and retain pupil-teachers and assistants. They had more financially rewarding options. We have also seen that the growing class division undermined the appeal of a free public school. Nevertheless, Bremner was able to participate in the public life of the town in ways that would benefit him. Although he had not endeared himself as teacher to the more affluent parents in Graaff-Reinet, he seems to have gained some influence in local affairs. He appears to have become aligned with the wealthier commercial farmers and especially with the established German-Jewish merchants of the town and district, as opposed to the older Dutch families. This is evident in a number of roles where his facility with words made him natural choice - as secretary, spokesman, editor. It is also likely that he earned honoraria from his secretarial work which would supplement his salary.

In 1853 he was secretary to the campaign committee backing William Fleming, a Cape Town merchant in the Stockentröm camp, as representative of the district on the new Parliament's Legislative Council.⁸⁵ He reflected the commercial goals of his mentors, firstly by campaigning for government to promote immigration of young apprentices and skilled workers to fill the labour

⁸³ In S. Dubow, 'Land, Labour and Merchant Capital,' 15.

⁸⁴ Bremner, 'Graaff-Reinet School', A1SC-1857. *CGH. Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee on the Subject of Education*, 9.

⁸⁵ *Graaff-Reinet Herald*, 1 August 1853, CO 53/43 National Archives, Kew, London, accessed 21 March 2009, <http://genealogieworld.net.settlers.herald.html>. Minnaar observes that local political animosities were papered over in an attempt to win for Graaff-Reinet better representation in Parliament. Graham's Town, it was felt, was given a disproportionate amount of Eastern Province representation. Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 41.

vacuum.⁸⁶ Secondly he became secretary to the board of the newly established South African Central Bank in January 1854.⁸⁷ Henning describes the bank as being well capitalised but marked by 'unsound business principles'. It was

criticized as a family bank which only offered loans to friends of the directors, who were to all practical purposes, a syndicate of capitalists. They disregarded one of the clauses of the Trust Deed e.g. three were directors of Alfred Thornton's Steam Mills, while five out of seven were directors of the *Graaff-Reinet Banner* (sic), a newspaper which openly advocated the interests of the South African Central Bank.⁸⁸

The newspaper which was financed by the directors of the bank, J.L. Leeb, M. Lilienfeld, M.H. Benjamin and the Chairman, S.E. Wimble, among them,⁸⁹ was in fact *The Midland Province Banner*. This Bremner edited from October 1857 until he sold it on his departure from Graaff-Reinet in early 1860. In 1857, Bremner was also named as provisional secretary to the Graaff-Reinet Flockmaster Association, which invited investment in the importation of 'Sheep of the Purest Merino Breed ... from Europe'. The President was CC Berrangé and the provisional committee comprised the leading commercial farmers of the district.⁹⁰

In 1855 and 1856, Bremner had about 70 pupils enrolled in his school but an average daily attendance of about 35.⁹¹ There is little correspondence on file between Bremner and government from the time of Innes's 1852 visit to Innes's 1856 inspection. This may reflect a teacher 'getting on with things' – at the same time Innes's decline in health dates from heat exposure on an abandoned 1853-4 eastern Cape tour of inspection,⁹² and the administration of his department suffered as a consequence. Bremner did however correspond concerning the need for the SGE to release the money for the school repairs authorised in 1852,⁹³ and sent an uppity response that he could not fill in his returns if he was not sent the appropriate forms.⁹⁴ He also requested [unreasonably] extended leave to take his ill wife on the long journey by 'mule waggon' to Simon's Town while the schoolroom was being repaired. The tone of the single piece of correspondence for 1855 is classic Bremner, and includes his presumption [not accepted by Innes] that he could defend departing before having obtained authorisation for the trip.⁹⁵

⁸⁶ *Graaff-Reinet Herald*, 10 May 1856, 12 July 1856, *ibid*.

⁸⁷ C.G. Henning, *Graaff-Reinet*, 47.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 71.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 43; Dubow, 'Land, Labour and Merchant Capital,' *passim*.

⁹¹ G.16-'57. *Report on Public Education for 1855 and First Half of 1856*, xviii.

⁹² Innes to Acting Col Sec, 6 May 1854, CO 637.

⁹³ Bremner to Innes, 4 October 1854, Bremner to Innes's clerk, 24 November 1854, SGE 1/4.

⁹⁴ Bremner to Innes, 15 June, 1854, *ibid*.

⁹⁵ Bremner to Innes, 7 July 1855, CO 656.

As the saving of time is a saving of considerable expense to me at the present moment, having to forage my cattle, feed my boys, and pay them wages besides, I shall presume on your extending my leave of absence and start for Cape Town on Friday next, receiving in Town a verbal reply to the official letter herewith translated!!! – A strange way you will say, of doing business, but unavoidable under the circumstances. Trusting that if I must needs have an official rap over the knuckles for my imprudence, I shall have fortitude enough to take it like a Trojan, and that I shall have undergone the infliction in your own drawing room within three weeks from this date ...

That Bremner was owner of cattle and employer of ‘boys’ adds to his repertoire of extra-pedagogical economic activities – and provides some explanation for a late commencement of his teaching day. It also explains why he became an employer of Stuurman, a Dutch apprentice, after they arrived in 1856.⁹⁶ He took in boarders from time to time, too, probably pupils from out of town who engaged in the higher branches when they were offered.⁹⁷

1857-1858: A New Crisis for the Graaff-Reinet First-Class School

The context of the next crisis involving the government teacher was the changing nature of both central and local accountability. The new colonial parliament held its first session in 1854 and by 1855 had begun to review the state of education in the Colony through a number of select committees.⁹⁸ In 1857 the focus turned directly on the government schools as John Fairbairn chaired a review of the ‘Returns sent to the Superintendent-General of Education, from all the First-class Teachers for the year 1856’.⁹⁹ Then, because of the inclusion among these returns of George Bremner’s injudicious 1856 report, a further select committee, this time chaired by Mr P. Bosman, was called upon in April 1858 specifically to investigate the Graaff-Reinet first-class school.¹⁰⁰ J.F. Ziervogel became the longest serving MLA for Graaff-Reinet and, as a member of the Graaff-Reinet Divisional Council, was also a member of the reformed Graaff-Reinet school commission from its commencement in 1855.¹⁰¹ He was a member of the above 1857 select committee, and was called to give evidence before the 1858 committee. All of this unnerved George Bremner in whose imagination Ziervogel became the embodiment of a local conspiracy against his school with Revd Andrew Murray, the other bastion of Graaff-Reinet society, a close

⁹⁶ *The Midland Province Banner*, 28 October 1857 reported that Bremner’s apprentice, Stuurman, had absconded.

⁹⁷ *The Midland Province Banner*, 4 February 1858.

⁹⁸ E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa I: 1652-1922* (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Juta, 1925), 92-93.

⁹⁹ A1SC-1857. CGH. *Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education (June 1857) and Appendix (November 1857)*.

¹⁰⁰ A7SC-1858. *Report of the Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*.

¹⁰¹ Innes to Col Sec, 14 June 1855, CO 656.

second.¹⁰² Certainly both were powerful men in Graaff-Reinet, exercising a patriarchal authority in the community notwithstanding the increasing trappings of mercantile success and representative democracy.¹⁰³

The Teacher's state of mind

With the establishment of the Divisional Council in 1855, the government school came under the somewhat erratic surveillance of a popularly elected local authority. A new school commission was formed from Divisional Council members in the place of SGE nominees, and generally their level of education was lower than that of the clergy, who no longer served as commissioners except in an interim role in the transition period. The role of the commission to review and report remained unchanged. A supportive Divisional Council could make representations on behalf of the government school and provide support for the teacher – something that happened, for example, at Cradock and Worcester.¹⁰⁴ From its inception, however, the Graaff-Reinet Divisional Council played at best a cautious or reluctant role with regard to the government school, adding to Bremner's sense of isolation. There were to be many occasions when Bremner would carry out his examinations with few or no Divisional Council members present.¹⁰⁵ As Ziervogel himself commented:

I am not aware that there has been any quarrel between the divisional council and the teacher at all. I only know that the divisional council has, perhaps, not stepped forward to the utmost extent of their duty with regard to this government school; but this arose from their wish to be very cautious in that respect, having some knowledge of what had occurred with the former school commission.¹⁰⁶

However strained or otherwise the relations between the new Divisional Council and Bremner might have been in 1855, a new chain of events involving them, the SGE and Parliament was to 'widen the breach' irrevocably by 1857. It hinged on the inadvertent laying before the Education Committee of Parliament of Bremner's 1856 Report on the Government School at Graaff-Reinet.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² H. Murray, 'The Andrew Murray Family Register' (S.I.s.n.,1931), 13. These two powerful families were related by marriage, with John Murray, eldest son of Andrew Murray sen married to Maria Anna Ziervogel.

¹⁰³ C. Henning, *Graaff-Reinet*, 36; Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 39-41.

¹⁰⁴ 'Report', CC D.H. Meurant, Cradock, 7 February 1860 in CO 767; see chapter 7 of this thesis for a discussion of Worcester.

¹⁰⁵ For example, Bremner to Innes's clerk, 7 November 1857, SGE 1/4.

¹⁰⁶ Ziervogel to Select Committee, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 44.

¹⁰⁷ Rawson to Innes, 25 July 1857, *ibid*, 45.

1856 saw a resurgence of the frustrations felt so strongly by Bremner in the early 1850s, despite a good performance by the 35 boys examined before the visiting SGE and ‘several members of the [new] Divisional Council and other inhabitants’ on 8 February.¹⁰⁸ The breadth of Bremner’s duties persuaded Innes that an assistant was necessary, but the administrative complications attendant on securing this saw two successive assistants unpaid and departing for more reliable employment.¹⁰⁹ The fact that his former pupil Henry Ritchie found this in a ‘mercantile store’ added insult to injury for Bremner who was again without any assistance throughout 1857.¹¹⁰

Bremner’s anger at the continued neglect shown him and his school was compounded by the disrespect he felt evident from Murray who was assisting at the September 1856 examination.¹¹¹ Bremner was probably particularly sensitive to the good opinion of the cleric who represented for him the abandonment of the government school by the élite. It appears that Bremner had only one pupil engaged in the higher branches and led him through a virtuoso performance but ‘hurried over’ the other classes so that Murray ‘could not say what the boys knew, or did not know’.¹¹² Bremner’s suspicion of the examiners’ intentions was clearly voiced in a letter to Innes on 31 October. He requested access to a copy of their report, ‘this being the first one, and drawn up by gentlemen, most of whom have ever shown the most decided hostility to the Gov School’.¹¹³

Bremner’s own controversial 1856 Report on the Government School at Graaff-Reinet had not been received by Innes by October, and it is difficult to put an exact date to it; but the issues identified in it relate to the matters described above. This report, intended for the SGE’s eyes only, would accidentally be placed before Parliament uncensored and this would put the cat among the pigeons.

The SGE’s state of health

Innes’s growing incapacity to manage all the affairs that fell to him, due to ill health and overwork, was the context in which Bremner’s angry report became an ‘EVENT’. The physical outworking of the New System on the body of the teacher will be explored in more detail in the

¹⁰⁸ See Innes’s full report on the Graaff-Reinet Government School. G.16–‘57. *Report on Public Education for 1855 and First Half of 1856*, xviii-xix.

¹⁰⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 23 April 1856, CO 676; Bremner to Innes, 30 October 1856, 10 January 1857, SGE 1/4.

¹¹⁰ Innes to Col Sec, 29 September 1857, CO 695.

¹¹¹ Bremner to Innes, 30 October 1856, Bremner, ‘Graaff-Reinet School’, A1SC-1857. *Appendix to Report of Select Committee on Education*, 8.

¹¹² Cited by Ziervogel, 7 May 1858, A7SC -1858, *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 22.

¹¹³ Bremner to Innes, 30 October 1856, SGE 1/4.

Colesberg case study. For the SGE, the limitations of his body in coping with the demands of his office were to exacerbate the irregularity of the New System and the failed governmentality it represents. At that very time, Innes was attempting to resign his position as SGE. On his December 1853 tour of the Eastern Cape, he had suffered from severe exposure to the sun which he described as causing a 'severe affliction' of the head marked by pain, ringing in the ears and depression. His 1855-56 tour of the Eastern Cape had worsened this and by December 1856 he felt incapable mentally and physically of carrying on the exhausting duties of SGE. This was corroborated by medical opinion, John Laing 'Surgeon' writing that Innes was 'at times perfectly unfit for the onerous & responsible duties attached to his appointment'.¹¹⁴ As Nell has described in some detail, Colonial Secretary Rawson harassed Innes, regarding him as inefficient and inattentive to administrative tasks.¹¹⁵

As it turned out, Innes's resignation was not accepted. Instead it was demanded that he immediately submit to the Parliamentary Education Committee the 'annual returns for 1856, which had been received from the first-class teachers of the establishment'. This he did on 27 April 1857 without having them copied or checking their contents, being preoccupied with the final compilation of a late report on all schools in the Colony for the previous year. When the select committee met, it would find among its papers both this return, and a memorial, dated 28 April 1857, submitted by Bremner to Parliament just as it convened.

*The offending Report*¹¹⁶

The allegations in Bremner's 1856 report that outraged the residents of Graaff-Reinet were those that disrespected their 'intellectual culture' and their commitment to education, and hinted at a conspiracy amongst their leaders to crush the government school. He asserted that nine-tenths of the town's residents had a limited 'intellectual culture', satisfied by reading only the Bible and the *Zuid Afrikaan*. They valued education very little beyond getting a 'smattering of English, a very partial acquaintance with figures, and a ready faculty in handling a pen'.

We are practical people, and set no value on education beyond its practicality. Not educated ourselves, we cannot, for the life of us, see the use of paying for books, to bother our children's heads with, - geometry

¹¹⁴ Innes to Col Sec, 19 March 1857, attached Dr James Abercrombie, 19 March 1857, John Laing, Surgeon, 19 March 1857, CO 695.

¹¹⁵ W.L. Nell, 'James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859,' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), 296-8, 396, 446.

¹¹⁶ Bremner, 'Graaff-Reinet School', in A1SC-1857. *Appendix to Report of Select Committee on Education*, 8-10.

and algebra, and such like *nonsense*. Even our parson asks our schoolmaster, at the public examinations, amidst the approving smiles of the few spectators, “What is the use of teaching such things?” Besides, we are convinced there can be no good result from the prosecution of studies, which, instead of being irksome and burdensome to the boys, is rather a source of amusement and pleasure to them ...

Here, as in most other colonial towns, the *people* are clamorous for education ... *Their representatives* head a crusade against the Government Schools, and are disposed ... to crush the *local* school, by sending *their* sons to a Government school some hundreds of miles off. By these means, they to some extent secure for themselves, for the next generation, a monopoly of the advantages the Government schools were designed to throw open to all alike.

To cloak all this manoeuvring, they (I mean those who *really value* education) are particularly zealous in getting up proprietary elementary schools, which the *public* assist in paying for, and which, to the projectors, are convenient stepping-stones to the S.A. College it may be, or some similar institution, but which constitute the Alpha and Omega of the education of the general public.

A second theme was the need for the government to come forward and play the role in diffusing ‘a higher grade of education’ that only it was capable of playing. As they stood, the schools were fast becoming ‘pauper schools’. They needed to become ‘locally respectable’ and that would require ‘liberality’ and not neglect; assistants, furnishing, apparatus, ‘imposing and attractive’ buildings, funds for apparatus and repairs, and above all a living wage for teachers.

Bremner would have been unaware that his Report would come before Parliament; not so the Memorial which seems to have been aimed at stimulating thinking about future educational policy.¹¹⁷ His commitment to the form of education that the established schools represented was unchanged and this document was written in more moderate language. It reiterated that the story of the government teachers was one of government ‘disregard’ and the SGE’s ‘utter neglect’. It restated many of the problems mentioned in the Report, and the same remedies – but added one new suggestion. This was conciliatory and recognised for the first time that working with the community instead of against it might make a difference to the success of the government school. The new element was his suggestion that a ‘co-operative local committee’ be formed – not as a ‘system of local espionage, or direct control over the teacher [which is] derogatory to his character and independence, and calculated to impair his usefulness’ ... but to help to advise, communicate between himself and the public, and to manage the ‘external economy of the school’. As in his later newspaper articles, he emphasised the value of well-qualified teachers, arguing that their salaries should be guaranteed by government and adequate to enable them ‘to maintain themselves in that position and rank in society to which their superior education and the highly responsible character of their office clearly gives them a claim...’

¹¹⁷ He republished this memorial verbatim as ‘The Teacher’s Petition’ in *The Midland Province Banner*, 31 March 1858.

The scope of the 1857 review was far wider than the Graaff-Reinet school and it ultimately recommended a continuation of the system but noted the difficulties experienced by the government teachers. The need for assistance and increased salaries was emphasised.¹¹⁸ On these recommendations, Parliament voted an increase in teachers' salaries for the first time since the inception of the system. Given the furore his Report unleashed, however, authorisation of Bremner's additional £50 pa¹¹⁹ would be delayed for 15 months, adding to his bitterness.¹²⁰

The Teacher Teaches, Edits and Faces a Further Inquiry, 1857-1858

As Innes later explained, in the teachers' reports in the annual returns,

considerable latitude, both of expression and opinion, has occasionally been used [by teachers], which I have not thought it my duty either to comment upon or restrain, as the remarks more frequently referred to what was considered the shortcomings of the head of the department [himself], than on any other matter.¹²¹

It took three months for the attention of the Governor to be drawn to the outrageous content of the Bremner Report.¹²² But despite being required by the Colonial Secretary to address the matter, Innes had no access to the report, it having been sent to the Government Printer. By the time it was printed along with all others in an Appendix to the *Report of the Select Committee on Education for 1857*, in November 1857, he had forgotten about the matter!¹²³ It was then, too, that a copy reached the Graaff-Reinet Divisional Council, having been brought to its attention by Ziervogel. Offended by its content, the Divisional Council 'resolved to request the Government to institute an inquiry into the truths of the statements and charges contained in the report'.¹²⁴

In the meantime Bremner had commenced a new phase of his public life. In October 1857, the first edition of a weekly newspaper, *The Midland Province Banner*, rolled off the presses. While the intention of the newspaper's directors was to give publicity to their business interests, it provided a public platform for Bremner as editor to make pronouncements on a range of political and educational issues, though in this chapter the focus will remain with the latter. In the very

¹¹⁸ J. Fairbairn, in A1SC-1857. *Report of the Select Committee on Subject of Education*, v.

¹¹⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 19 August 1857, 29 August 1857, CO 695.

¹²⁰ Rawson's margin note, Bremner to Col Sec, 12 June 1858, CO 720.

¹²¹ Innes, 'Report on case of Government teacher', 29 March 1858, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 48 ff.

¹²² Rawson to Innes, 25 July 1857, *ibid*, 45.

¹²³ Innes, 'Report on case of Government teacher', *ibid*, 49.

¹²⁴ A. Berrangé, CC to Col Sec, 19 November 1857, *ibid*, 46.

first edition he republished the *Graaff-Reinet Herald's* report on his most recent examination (see p. 84) and in November wrote scathingly of the high expectations but 'mean estimate put by the Colonial Government on the character and accomplishments' of a first-class teacher who was 'a graduate of an European university'.¹²⁵ In January 1858, he linked Rawson with the contemptuous neglect of the government teachers as well as rallying 'opponents of the general diffusion of an extensive and liberal education'. He also argued that the answer to Parliament's quest for good education was to have a teacher of quality in every town – by implication, men such as himself.¹²⁶

It is perfect nonsense to say that the youth of Africa, or of any other country, can be instructed by *systems*, or taught by Government *schemes* of education. They can only be taught by *teachers*. But teachers who are worthy of the name, and qualified to undertake and carry out such an important trust, are not to be conjured up from the vasty deeps of a wish to have them ... They seem not to be indigenous to South Africa, nor ought they to be culled from the ranks of those who have proved themselves, in other countries, unfit for every other enterprise or profession. ... "Give me," said a teacher of our acquaintance, "the virgin soil, never mind though it may lie in the middle of the Karroo, destined apparently to everlasting sterility, and I'll produce a crop of ideas from it, in a quarter of the time, and with half the trouble, that it could be done in your garden which you have been cultivating unskilfully in the last quarter of a century." Any real teacher will readily acquiesce in this; and had MR RAWSON been brought up a schoolmaster, it would have been unnecessary to have told even *him* this anecdote.

The *Banner* was a compromised public platform as Bremner attempted to keep his editorial identity concealed. He was, however, rapidly unmasked by the opposition *Graaff-Reinet Herald* and the Colonial Secretary informed thereof.¹²⁷ Rawson instructed that 'such connection [was] inconsistent with his capacity as teacher in the service of Government, and that he must discontinue it together, if he desires to remain in the public service'.¹²⁸ Bremner at first denied that he had any connection with the paper, but as the inquiry into his school commenced in April 1858, finally owned up to contributing to this and other papers;

a practice which had often furnished me with amusement and gratification in the many tedious hours that fall to the lot of one so situated as myself and which I faintly hope has not been altogether unproductive of benefit to my fellow colonists.¹²⁹

He agreed to desist from such writing in future. As late as August 1858, however, articles appeared in the *Banner* which were manifestly written by Bremner.

¹²⁵ 'Government Patronage of Education,' *The Midland Province Banner*, 18 November 1857.

¹²⁶ *The Midland Province Banner*, 8 January 1858.

¹²⁷ Innes to Rawson, 11 November 1857, A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 51.

¹²⁸ Rawson to Innes, 20 November 1857, *ibid*, 52. He referred to a Government Notice of 15 December 1852, framed by Acting Col Sec Richard Southey as forbidding civil servants to write on 'political subjects in any newspaper'.

¹²⁹ Bremner to Innes, 28 April 1858, CO 720.

Throughout this time Bremner had continued to teach and in April 1858 had about 30 boys in his school, six in the higher branches.¹³⁰ How Bremner learnt of the inquiry is not revealed, and he was not invited to appear before the select committee which sat in Cape Town. Its advent precipitated a shift in the focus of his writing, however, and he became involved in an intense campaign to defend his reputation and career. His communications with the SGE in April 1858, from whom he hoped to gain access to any incriminating reports on his school, show him capable of frankly libellous accusations of malicious lying and ‘misrepresentation’ against Ziervogel, the lone examiner at the September 1857 quarterly examination.¹³¹

Innes persuaded Bremner to withdraw the letter containing this invective¹³² – which in a cooler moment Bremner did, admitting: ‘I am free to confess that it was written under the influence of Strong feeling, because it was meant to counteract what I then believed and do believe still, a nefarious attempt to injure me behind my back ...’¹³³

He also fought through the pages of *The Midland Province Banner*. He continued to warn of conspiracy against the government schools by a faction represented in Parliament (Ziervogel clearly the head of this). From April through to August 1858, the focus of his articles was the latest educational project of the Graaff-Reinet élite, a Graaff-Reinet College on the model of Cape Town’s South African College. This he quickly decried, associating its location in a desiccated landscape with an intellectual desert and dubbing it the ‘Karoo College’.¹³⁴ Bremner construed the establishment of a Graaff-Reinet College as the beginning of the end for a first-class government school. He also saw the petition in favour of the college led by CC Berrangé and seconded by Revd Murray as an attempt to influence the sitting Parliamentary Select Committee against him.

The easy, off-hand way in which [the Petition] treats the Government School is not very complimentary to its Teacher. The present Government School, says the Petition, “does not meet the requirements of the locality”. In what ways it may be asked? Is the Teacher not up in classics, or is he unable to come up to the Karroo standard of mathematics? Or is it not, rather, that our members of Parliament require some little *local agitation*, to strengthen their hands in the manly onslaught they are at present engaged in, with the Government Teacher?¹³⁵

¹³⁰ A7SC-1858, *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, iii.

¹³¹ See for example, Bremner to Innes, 6 March 1858 and 17 April 1858, SGE 1/4.

¹³² Innes to Col Sec, 24 April 1858, CO 720.

¹³³ Bremner to Innes, 17 April 1858, SGE 1/4.

¹³⁴ ‘The Educational Petition,’ *The Midland Province Banner*, 28 April 1858.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

Bremner questioned the genuine commitment to education of the 'projectors of the scheme'. He implied further impropriety of leading citizens in proposing their own properties be rented to the new institution. He alleged that leading citizens, backed by 'the Colonial Exchequer', sought to 'divert a portion of the general revenue for the special benefit of a favoured few in Graaff-Reinet'. He patronised the colonists generally as not being 'the best judges of ... the manner in which their children ought to be educated' and claimed that it was 'the most monstrous absurdity to imagine that such an institution could flourish' where there was a lack of elementary schools and the standard reached 'in nine cases out of ten, is partial mastery of the three "R"s'. 'Depend upon it the Karroo College is a veritable *joke* ...'.¹³⁶ It is little wonder that the combined impact of his public and professional writing was the permanent alienation of Bremner and the Graaff-Reinet leaders.

*The Select Committee appointed for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting upon the present condition of the First-class School at Graaff-Reinet, 14 April-31 May, 1858*¹³⁷

The Select Committee sought to understand why 'the usefulness of this school to the inhabitants [had] been constantly diminishing during the last six years or more'. This took them back to the beginning of Bremner's career in Graaff-Reinet, and their evidence has already been used in this chapter to flesh out those years. There is, in fact, very little to add to what has already been shown to be the state of feeling between the residents and Bremner. The 1856 Report had simply 'widened the breach previously existing'.

With the Graaff-Reinet school having only six pupils in the higher branches in 1858, the Committee concluded that annual government spending of £330 on a government school was no longer justified. The question then was, was the decline of the school the teacher's fault? The conclusion was that it was not. Bremner emerged from the inquiry as a man of admirable achievement. It was circumstances that had contrived to fan the embers of small 'personal' and 'political' differences into larger flames than warranted. These circumstances were the failure to give the teacher necessary assistance and material support; that when he appealed to government for help he had been 'disappointed'. This had led to discouragement which further impaired his school and caused the discontent of parents – which then worsened their

¹³⁶ *Ibid*; 'THE KARROO COLLEGE,' *The Midland Province Banner*, 18 August 1858.

¹³⁷ Members of the Select Committee were P. Bosman (chairman), Attorney-General W. Porter, J. Fairbairn, Mr Watermeyer, Mr Loedolff. Called to testify between 22 April and 20 May were Innes, Revd W. Long, and MPs for Graaff-Reinet, J.F. Ziervogel, W. Southey and S.A. Probart. A7SC-1858. *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, iii, vii-viii.

relationship. The 1856 Report was a product of the teacher's despair, but worded in 'extremely inconsiderate language' and in such a way as to appear to blame the residents of Graaff-Reinet for the failure of the school and a general lack of commitment to the education of their children.

Examining the accusations in Bremner's 1856 Report, the Select Committee judged these also to be unfounded. Generally the local representatives *paid* for their children's education. The community efforts to establish and sustain the grammar school, to have 350 children privately educated in a variety of schools in the town, and their willingness to raise £5 000 for the projected Graaff-Reinet College supported their claims to be promoting education. Innes himself said, 'I have not, throughout my travels in the colony, been at any place whose inhabitants I more respect than those of Graaff-Reinet, and who are more disposed to act and co-operate with Government in regard to education'.¹³⁸

The real problem had been faults in the education system, more specifically the lack of local supervision. This meant that there was no capacity to deal with small issues before they escalated, and no-one to provide the necessary warm interest in the school. The committee felt that there were no major charges concerning Bremner's running of his school, and certainly none impugning his character. The 'state of feeling' between him and the community was, however, so great that they recommended he be transferred to another post.

As far as the First-Class Government School was concerned, they recommended that it be relieved of providing elementary education. There were sufficient 'gratuitous' mission and other schools capable of delivering the level of elementary schooling that the Government School had provided. It was a waste of state money to keep it going. It should instead be incorporated as the preparatory section of the new College; the government role limited to a lesser amount of aid and perhaps some bursaries for poorer children of merit.¹³⁹

George Bremner moves on

Despite the sympathetic verdict of the Select Committee and the recommendation that Bremner be transferred to another position, he was left in limbo until the end of 1859. His reputation in Graaff-Reinet had reached such a low point that in April 1859, the Divisional Council reported

¹³⁸ Innes to Select Committee, 27 April 1858, *ibid*, 4.

¹³⁹ 'Report' of the Select Committee, 31 May 1858, *ibid*, iii-vi.

that it saw no point in conducting formal examinations.¹⁴⁰ In that month the average attendance had fallen from twelve of the twenty-five registered to a mere five.¹⁴¹ Innes, a few months before he finally did resign in October, asked whether he should 'inquire personally of Parents and Guardians, the reasons for withdrawing their Children or Wards from the Government School', and went as far as to ask for a list of withdrawals for 1857, 1858 and the first quarter of 1859.¹⁴² Mercifully for all concerned, the Governor thought it 'unfair to the teacher without some definite grounds of suspicion inpunable to his character or conduct or system of managing his School'.¹⁴³

By September, Bremner was left with three pupils, his two sons and a coloured boy.¹⁴⁴ It seems that the Executive was struggling with what to do with him as they had a contractual obligation to employ him at the rate of salary attached to the Graaff-Reinet school. Successive governors were opposed to the transfer of teachers to the civil service (fearing that they would lose their teachers). Finally it was agreed that Bremner should move to Swellendam where the first-class teacher had died of a stroke, and the replacement teacher was not up to standard.¹⁴⁵

Bremner was reluctant to accept the transfer, suspecting (correctly as it turned out) that in Swellendam, too, the respectable residents would not support government schools in their present condition. He agreed to go only when assured that he would be given an assistant teacher and necessary apparatus:

in which case the elementary instruction could to some extent be kept distinct and separate from the Higher department of Education, the prejudices of class and color might in some measure be got over; and there would be room and scope for bestowing that consideration on local rank and conventionalism without attention to which, no Govt School worthy of the name could ever command itself to the public generally.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

The Graaff-Reinet Government School was closed on Bremner's departure but, as he had predicted in the *Banner*, there were delays in getting the Graaff-Reinet College off the ground.

¹⁴⁰ CC Berrangé to Innes, 9 April 1859, CO 741.

¹⁴¹ Bremner to Sec to Div Council, 8 April 1859, *ibid.*

¹⁴² Innes to Col Sec, 30 May 1859, *ibid.*

¹⁴³ Rawson's margin notes, 29 June 1859, on Innes to Col Sec, 16 June 1859, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Minnaar, *Graaff-Reinet*, 100.

¹⁴⁵ Dale to Col Sec, 27 January 1860, CO 767.

¹⁴⁶ Bremner to Dale, 10 December 1859, SGE 1/4.

Until it was, the school was reopened for a period under a newly graduated recruit from Stow's Normal Seminary in Glasgow.¹⁴⁷

To Bremner's name, he himself stated, was attached 'the reputation of having failed in Graaff-Reinet'.¹⁴⁸ Yet amidst the conceit and contempt, Bremner had identified some important realities. The first was that, although its 'curriculum of instruction' was 'far-ahead of the immediate requirements of the country', the 'Herschel Scheme of Education' had the capacity to disturb existing social relationships and in so doing to upset those who had the power in society.

Add ... the inevitable disturbance in the social equilibrium which the general diffusion of knowledge would bring in its wake, and one can easily imagine how the local magnates that *are*, and generally the "powers that be", should have set their face against the system of *universal* education propounded by Sir John Herschel, and which, if thoroughly carried out, would long ere now have compelled many of them to withdraw to that hazy obscurity in which they were born ...¹⁴⁹

As Mr Watermeyer of the Select Committee on the Graaff-Reinet School discerned when attempting to account for the failure of the government teacher and school:

I think you [Revd Long] have described two evils as existing at Graaff-Reinet school, quite independently of the individual who had charge of it. – the mixture of ages and colors in the school, and the want of local supervision.¹⁵⁰

Differently stated, while many Graaff-Reinet residents may not have valued an education above that needed for church membership, those who did wanted it to be 'somewhat select' and under their control. The disruptive potential of an inclusive popular education at the hands of a liberal but /and condescending intellectual was not to be contemplated. Bremner also correctly discerned that in moving towards supporting the establishment of private, though state aided, higher institutions of learning rather than investing in the first-class government school, the state was giving up on 'the education of the people generally'.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Dale to Col Sec, 19 March 1860, CO 767.

¹⁴⁸ Bremner to Dale, 10 December 1859, SGE 1/4.

¹⁴⁹ 'THE KARROO COLLEGE,' *The Midland Province Banner*, 18 August 1858.

¹⁵⁰ Watermeyer interviewing Long, 20 May 1858, A7SC-1858, *Report of Select Committee on Graaff-Reinet School*, 39.

¹⁵¹ Bremner to Secretary to the Divisional Council, 8 April 1859, SGE 1/4. Innes was author of a 'Memorial on the proposed establishment of a "Collegiate Institution" at Graaff-Reinet', dated 1 August 1858 (in CO 720). In this he notes that it is at the instruction of His Excellency [Sir George Grey] that he makes his suggestions as to how such an institution could function. There is a likelihood that Governor Grey was on his own educational mission, rather than using his influence to promote the existing government schools. He endowed the Grey Institution in Port Elizabeth, where there was already a government school, and considered doing the same at Caledon (CC Caledon to Municipal Commissioners, 21 October 1857, 3/CAL/5.)

Chapter Five : Colesberg - An Ailing Teacher and a Female Assistant Teacher

We move in this chapter from the world of McNaughton and Bremner, two of the original Scottish recruits to the New System, to that of James Rait, a second-generation government teacher. Rait was a product of the New System, educated at the Stellenbosch Government School by a third Scottish teacher, Humphrey McLachlan, and later apprenticed by him as assistant teacher. In May 1849 Rait was posted to Colesberg, a Karroo village on the Cape northern frontier. Official reports on the career of James Rait indicate that he was judged a success by those who shared in the goals of his educational project - his Superintendent-General and a supportive and approving local school commission. He saw himself as a good teacher. As so often, however, the realities of implementing the New System began to grind him down. This was compounded by severe illness from which he died in 1858 and, with his death, just short of a decade of successful government education at Colesberg came to an end.

An important document survives from his tenure; his twelve page 'Report of the School established by Government at Colesberg for the Quarter ending 30th September 1851.'¹ Its pages allow access to Colesberg pupils and particularly to the way in which the curriculum was implemented. This chapter thus investigates the teacher as mediator of a particular construction of knowledge, attitudes and dispositions in the context of the realities of a small northern Cape frontier town. It also examines his attempts to manage his growing incapacity to sustain a respectable and successful manly identity. This was because of the incommensurate demands of his career and family on his ailing body and limited income.

As Rait's illness, probably tuberculosis, advanced, he was granted permission to employ one of his senior pupils, Eliza Arnot, as a paid pupil-teacher. Eliza is seen only through brief references in the correspondence and by association with her more famous 'coloured' half-brother David Arnot junior. Yet, though she is but a shadow in the educational scene, her career first as a pupil under Rait, then as assistant both to him and his successors, makes her the individual with the longest, most intimate association with Colesberg Government School. She remained as assistant in the school until it was formally closed on 31 March, 1866.² What makes her role significant is that she was one of very few young women to be given a formal, if junior, position within the

¹ In SGE 1/4, Letters received by the Superintendent-General of Education, from Humansdorp, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth, Bathurst, Grahamstown, Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg & c, 1851-1859.

² SGE 17/2, Schedule of the Establishment in the Department of Superintendent-General of Education, 1863-1875.

government schools of the New System. This case study thus examines teacher identity within an intersection of race, gender and class in a more fluid social context than that of either Wynberg or even Graaff-Reinet.

Colesberg

Colesberg was an arid frontier town shaped by complex and vigorous connections between the interior and coast in ways that belie its remoteness and smallness. It lay forty kilometres south of the Orange River, far from the centre of government in Cape Town and its closest port at Port Elizabeth [800 and 450 kilometres respectively]. Its nearest neighbour was the humble Griqua village of Philippolis, fifty-six kilometres to the north 'across the river'.³ Graaff-Reinet, linked to Colesberg through strong cultural and economic ties, could be reached after three days' travel by wagon.⁴

Colesberg originated as a Dutch Reformed church centre. This was at the site in the Tooverberg where Graaff-Reinet's Revd Andrew Murray held quarterly *nagmaal* for the area's Dutch-speaking farmers. In 1824 the north-east boundary of the Colony was moved to the Orange River bringing the Tooverberg under direct British colonial authority and the village of Colesberg was formally proclaimed in 1830.⁵ The Colesberg Division was carved out of the Graaff-Reinet District in 1837, at which date Fleetwood Rawstorne was appointed as Resident Magistrate and Civil Commissioner of Colesberg.⁶ The extension of the Cape's northern frontier and increasing emigration of colonial farmers after 1825 and especially after the Great Trek, created a connection between the Colony and Transorangia that would characterise Colesberg's orientation throughout the period under examination.

Its frontier position saw Colesberg host a variety of diplomatic, military and missionary delegations, but it was pre-eminently an economic connection that tied Colesberg to the interior. As in the Graaff-Reinet District, the Colesberg Division saw British, German and other settlers leaving the eastern frontier, buying up trekker farms and setting up businesses to service the

³ The Khoisan (Nama) name for the river was the Gariep, and the area to its north became known as the trans-Gariep. Going 'across the river' seems to have become shorthand for Colesbergers visiting anywhere in trans-Gariep. The end of 1853, e.g., found the teacher James Rait 'over the river' because it was the holidays. Rait to Innes, 1 February, 1854. SGE 1/4.

⁴ T. Gutsche, *The Microcosm* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1968), 56.

⁵ H. Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages of the Cape: A Survey of the Origin and Development of Towns, Villages and Hamlets of the Cape of Good Hope* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2006), 298.

⁶ 'Introduction', 1/CBG, Inventory of the Archive of the Magistrate of Colesberg, 1, 4.

northern frontier community. Colesberg was the last colonial town en route to Transorangia if travelling from eastern centres. Its economic life was sustained by provisioning farmers and hunters who came from a wide area, as well as provisioning expeditions to the interior. Wagons, trek oxen, horses, general supplies, guns, and gunpowder in seemingly vast amounts were supplied by a growing number of local merchants, both independent and increasingly off-shoots of larger national merchant houses. In return they purchased ivory, skins, cattle and provided a market for wool clips; at times long lines of credit, too.⁷

From the 1840s, a 'new era of imperial expansion' was evident in southern Africa, driven by the rise of local rural capital.⁸ The market value of hitherto undesirable semi-desert Karroo land in the Colesberg area escalated rapidly with the introduction of merino sheep and the wool boom of the 1840s and 1850s.⁹ Anderson notes the concomitant move in the northern Cape at this time to survey and auction tracts of crown land.¹⁰ As sheep farming flourished many Colesberg merchants became landowners, too. Some farmed, others bought speculatively on both sides of the river.¹¹

An 1841 census of the Colesberg District (measuring '11 654 square miles') recorded it as having one town, no schools and no missionaries. The population was 4 248 whites and 4 778 coloureds.¹² Gutsche claims that by about 1840, a significant percentage of Colesberg residents were English-speaking, and many of them Scots.¹³ By the 1850s, some of those linked to the military and official establishments had aspirations to lives of fashionable respectability;¹⁴ on the whole, however, the Colesberg community seems to have focused more on opportunities of earning good profits, whether from their local businesses, land speculation or from commerce in the new town of Bloemfontein (established in 1846).

⁷ Gutsche's *Microcosm* is the only detailed, though unreferenced, history of Colesberg. For many examples of gunpowder licences granted see 1/CBG/4/2/4, 5, 6 - Letters received by the Resident Magistrate, Colesberg, December 1850 – December 1853.

⁸ M. Legassick and R. Ross, 'From Slave Economy to Settler Capitalism: The Cape Colony and its Extensions, 1800-1854', in C. Hamilton, B. Mbenga and R. Ross eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa I, From Early Times to 1885* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 316.

⁹ H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, eds., *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), 145.

¹⁰ E. Anderson. *A History of the Xhosa of the Northern Cape, 1795-1879* (Cape Town: UCT Centre for African Studies, 1985), 44-67.

¹¹ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 84.

¹² 'Return of the Extent, Population, and Stock, of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope for the year 1841', in W.L. Nell, 'James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859,' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), 497.

¹³ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 61, 75.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 107, 109.

Governor Sir Harry Smith's precipitous extension of the colonial boundaries within months of his appointment in 1847 incorporated the Colesberg Division in a colony which doubled in size.¹⁵ Thousands of acres of crown land were added as the boundaries of the Colony were extended to the full length of the Orange River in 1848, marking a closure of the political frontier. British political authority was uncontested in the northern Cape colony, although distant reverberations from eastern frontier conflict and Boer-Griqua and Boer-Basuto contestations across the Orange River occasionally disturbed the equanimity of Colesbergers.¹⁶

The temporary annexation by Britain of Transorangia as the Orange River Sovereignty (1848-1854) increased opportunities for economic expansion in the area by Colesberg merchants and farmers, and generally the 1850s were prosperous. This was until Colesberg, like Graaff-Reinet, was devastated by the drought and famine of the 1860s.

This 1850 painting by Thomas Baines captures the village spread along the Colesberg River in a narrow valley between arid hills.



View of Colesberg from the North-East, 1850¹⁷

¹⁵ Giliomee and Mbenga, eds., *New History*, 144.

¹⁶ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 85-90; 101-105 for example.

¹⁷ Cape Archives, M546.

It allows us some sense of the place at which the new government teacher arrived in 1849. Hans Fransen notes Baines' depiction of the 'raw landscape on which the pretty town seems to have been superimposed', the predominance of thatched and gabled houses, and 'a row of flat-roofed cottages which were probably workers' dwellings'.¹⁸ Gutsche comments that there were San living in the surrounding koppies and 'Hottentots' in humbler stone edifices on the village periphery – for which they had freehold title. She also notes that Baines 'did less than justice to the busy anthill that Colesberg had become' by 1850.¹⁹

Schooling and Colesberg

The 1840s saw moves made to correct the village's lack of educational provision. By 1843 a Dutch Reformed church-clerk school had been established in Colesberg for coloured congregants.²⁰ Within a few years it was taken over by the LMS, as schism and an unpopular dominee, Thomas Reid, immobilised the Dutch Reformed Church until the late 1850s.²¹ Colesberg does not appear on the original list of schools designated under the New System, but by 1843 a government schoolroom was being hired in the village, and E. Murray was paid a salary as the first Colesberg government teacher.²² He was replaced in January 1845 by a Dutch-speaking, former South African College pupil, Servaas Nikolaas de Kock.²³ A lack of correspondence between de Kock and Innes means that nothing is known of his tenure except that he ended it in order to engage in missionary work, taking over responsibility for the local LMS mission school.²⁴ James Rait arrived in 1849 to replace de Kock.

By 1851 there were girls in Colesberg attending a 'female school', but no information exists on the nature of the school.²⁵ Unlike Graaff-Reinet, an attempt to establish a private academy failed.²⁶ It is evident that some of the more affluent residents sent their children to private establishments in Cape Town and some affluent farmers employed private tutors for their children on their farms.²⁷ But, according to Rawstorne's successor as Civil Commissioner, Henry

¹⁸ Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages*, 298-300.

¹⁹ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 84, 98.

²⁰ Revd T. Reid to Innes, 25 November 1843, CO 518.

²¹ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 100.

²² Innes to Col Sec, 20 December 1843, CO 518.

²³ Innes to Col Sec, 2 May 1845, CO 540; Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 100.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Rait, 'Report of the School established by Government at Colesberg for the Quarter ending 30 September 1851,' notes pupils withdrawn to attend a 'Female School', SGE 1/4.

²⁶ Innes to Col Sec, 8 June 1858, CO 720.

²⁷ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 117; A. Noble to Innes, 24 June 1858, SGE 1/4.

Green, by 1861 Colesberg 'had the usual inhabitants of our colonial towns: mechanics and shopkeepers, and they looked to the government school for their education.'²⁸

James Rait and the Colesberg Government School

James Rait was a young man and a bachelor in 1849 when he was promoted from the position of assistant to Humphrey McLachlan to first-class teacher in Colesberg. Rait's own training in the New System was possibly responsible for his strong sense of vocation. He referred to teaching as entailing 'responsible and important duties' and that being 'intrusted with the education of the Rising generation' was 'a great duty and sacred responsibility'.²⁹ He was able both to deliver the higher branches and achieve good results with a large number of pupils ranged across the five classes of the elementary section of his school. He received good support from the local school commissioners, Fleetwood Rawstorne and Revd Dr Charles Orpen, as well as the later Divisional Council, unlike his more combative senior colleague at Graaff-Reinet.

Rait's career in Colesberg began well, with a rise in enrolled scholars from 29 in September 1849 (five months after his arrival) to 101 a year later.³⁰ The schoolroom that he took over, hired from the widow and then daughter of the late Revd James Murray, was thus soon filled to bursting point. Urged on by both the teacher and the local school commission, the government came to an agreement for a new room to be built on the same site, erf 22 Ryneveld Street, in the centre of the village.³¹ By October 1850, occupation was taken of one of the larger government schoolrooms: 70' by 25' and a lofty 20' in height.³² Its interior was whitewashed, its floor made of stone, and it was furnished in much the same way as the Wynberg schoolroom. By 1855 it had separate, walled in boys' and girls' playgrounds.³³

Colesberg Government School was a 'mixed' school, catering for both boys and girls throughout its existence. Like the school at Wynberg and unlike that at Graaff-Reinet, Rait's school was able

²⁸ 'Answer from H. Green Esq., Civ. Com., Colesberg,' 31 December 1861, Appendix I, G.24-'63. CGH. *Report of a Commission Appointed, in Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to Inquire into and Report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony* [hereafter *Watermeyer Commission*], 39.

²⁹ Rait to President of School Commission, 12 March 1852, Rait to Innes, 21 April 1853, SGE 1/4.

³⁰ Rait to President of School Commission, 1 August 1854, *ibid*.

³¹ Rait to Colesberg School Commission, 16 April 1850, 16 August 1850, President of School Board to Col Sec, 21 August 1850, CO 594.

³² Innes to Col Sec, 7 March 1856, CO 676; G.15-'60, CGH. *Report on Public Education for the Year 1859*, Table 1, 11.

³³ CC Rawstorne to Innes, 16 April 1856, SGE 1/4.

to include many of the progeny of the town's and district's leading citizens. According to the 1851 'Report', it was attended by the children of prominent merchants such as Adolph Ortlepp, Thomas Plewman and Edward Gibbon.³⁴ So too, of the village intelligentsia: CC Rawstorne, Revd Thomas Reid of the Dutch Reformed Church, and, briefly, the son of the Anglican priest, Orpen. The apothecary C.J. Kemper's children attended the school, along with many children from among the growing number of local artisans. The Scottish blacksmith David Arnot sen also seems to have had a number of his children at the school; younger half-siblings of his son, general agent, David Arnot jnr.³⁵

Race and the Government School

[A coloured] parent could no more be deprived of the privileges of the Government school than of the court of justice when he had to plead his rights.'
(James Rose Innes, 4 December 1861).

The Colesberg school differed from most government schools in that it came to have a number of coloured children attending it from at least 1850, when it was doing well, through to its final dying days.³⁶ Specific details of the coloured families attending the government school are almost impossible to find, other than of the Arnot family discussed below. There may well have been coloured artisans in the village. There were many Khoisan labourers on Colesberg farms, the major decimation of indigenous (largely San) frontier communities having been completed by the 1790s.³⁷ While important as workers on farms and in the village, the capacity of Khoisan to regulate their labour, given some access to free grazing land, is evident in a description from Joseph Orpen in 1850. (He recruited a number as a Colesberg levy for the 8th Frontier War):

The commonage of Colesberg was nearly 40 000 acres in extent. At this time a number of Hottentots and Bushmen were squatting on it, especially around the edges. They had been in service as shepherds and were ... accustomed to shoot game, so they were valuable. They were now generally resting after having earned little flocks, which were gradually diminishing. Otherwise, they were taking occasional service in

³⁴ 'Report of the Colesberg Government School,' SGE 1/4. This lists all pupils at the school. Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 60, 62, 68.

³⁵ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 85.

³⁶ J.B. Tennant to Dale, 23 and 27 March, 1861, SGE 1/9, Letters received by the Superintendent-General of Education, 1861 (all districts).

³⁷ J.S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1957), 20-22; M. Legassick, 'The Northern Frontier to c 1840: the Rise and Decline of the Griqua People,' in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*, 2 ed (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989), 361-3.

town. The neighbouring farmers were already dissatisfied about their squatting and the more so now that war [8th Frontier] had commenced.³⁸

The existence of the Dutch-medium LMS mission school in the town has been noted, and its pupils, 'the children ... chiefly those of Hottentots and Bushmen'³⁹ would have been given a basic 3R curriculum. Who chose to go to the government school and why is not spelt out, and the admission of coloured children to the Colesberg Government School seems to have happened amid unusual circumstances. The only reference to this is Rait's comment on 16 August 1850:

As a considerable number of the panes of the window are broken /several of which were broken during the excitement consequent upon the introduction of the coloured children into the school/ & in consequence of exposure several of the children have caught colds. I trust that you will see to their being put in, as soon as possible.⁴⁰

There are two clues as to the circumstances, although much needs to be surmised. A Memorial written by the deacons of the coloured congregation of the Union Chapel in Port Elizabeth on 22 February 1856, protested at their exclusion from the government school in that town, and pointed to a similar situation having occurred in Uitenhage and Colesberg: 'it create there only Animosity stil there was Redress also in Colesberg an thare of couse the same feeling stil thare.'⁴¹ This Memorial importantly shows a bid by coloured Christian leaders for the inclusion in the new educational dispensation that was theirs by right.

In an exploration of the success or failure of the New System by the Watermeyer Commission in the early 1860s, Innes (now a commissioner) engaged with LMS Agent Revd W. Thompson on the subject. Thompson argued strongly that colonial prejudices had largely excluded coloured children from government schools. Innes described how he had handled the situation in what might well have been Colesberg:

To show the working of the system: a coloured man in one of the country towns had his child first educated at the mission school, but, being able to pay for the higher branches, was anxious that his child should join the Government school. This created great excitement among the European population, and the matter was referred to me. My reply was, that the parent could no more be deprived of the privileges of the Government school than of the court of justice when he had to plead his rights. The child was, in consequence, at once admitted, and, in half an hour, twenty-eight of the European children left the school. This was subsequently thought better of, and the children returned, whilst the coloured child remained.

³⁸ J.M. Orpen, *Reminiscences of Life in South Africa from 1846 to the Present Day I* (Durban: P. Davis, 1908; Cape Town: Struik, 1964), 39.

³⁹ G.16-'57. *CGH. Report on Public Education for the Year 1855, and the First Half of 1856*, 30.

⁴⁰ Rait to President of School commission, 16 August 1850, CO 594.

⁴¹ Deacons of Union Chapel to Innes, 22 February 1856, SGE 1/4.

Do you not think that if firmness were calmly exercised in every instance of this kind, objections would gradually give way, especially if the teacher were successful?⁴²

The legal position was clear, but it took endurance to remain in a school where you were not wanted. As Revd Thompson said, 'I believe that where something of the kind has been tried, the children themselves have been as like speckled birds; they have found themselves very uncomfortable ...'⁴³ At Colesberg it was apparently possible to endure this, nonetheless.

It is not clear how many coloured children attended at Colesberg, but children on the roll who may have belonged to coloured families include M. Bloem, M. Jantjies, R. Sapphira and David Struis. The four Arnot children on the list had white parents but coloured half-siblings, as their father's first marriage (by special licence) had been to a Bethelsdorp resident, Catharina (or Kaatje) van der Jeugd, daughter of Jacobus van der Jeugd and Mina Piet van de Kaap. Catharina van der Jeugd was mother of David Arnot jnr, born in 1821.⁴⁴ (See **Figure 5.1.**) Arnot jnr's energy, education and eye for business had set him up to play an important public role in Colesberg and 'across the river'. The Arnots were important figures in Colesberg at the time that Rait was teacher, and their story entwines with that of Rait in significant ways.

⁴² Innes for Commissioners, 4 December 1861, G.24–'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 124.

⁴³ Rev. W. Thompson, 4 December 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence' in *ibid*, 125.

⁴⁴ J.A. Heese and R.J.J. Lombard, *South African Genealogies 1* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1986), 84.

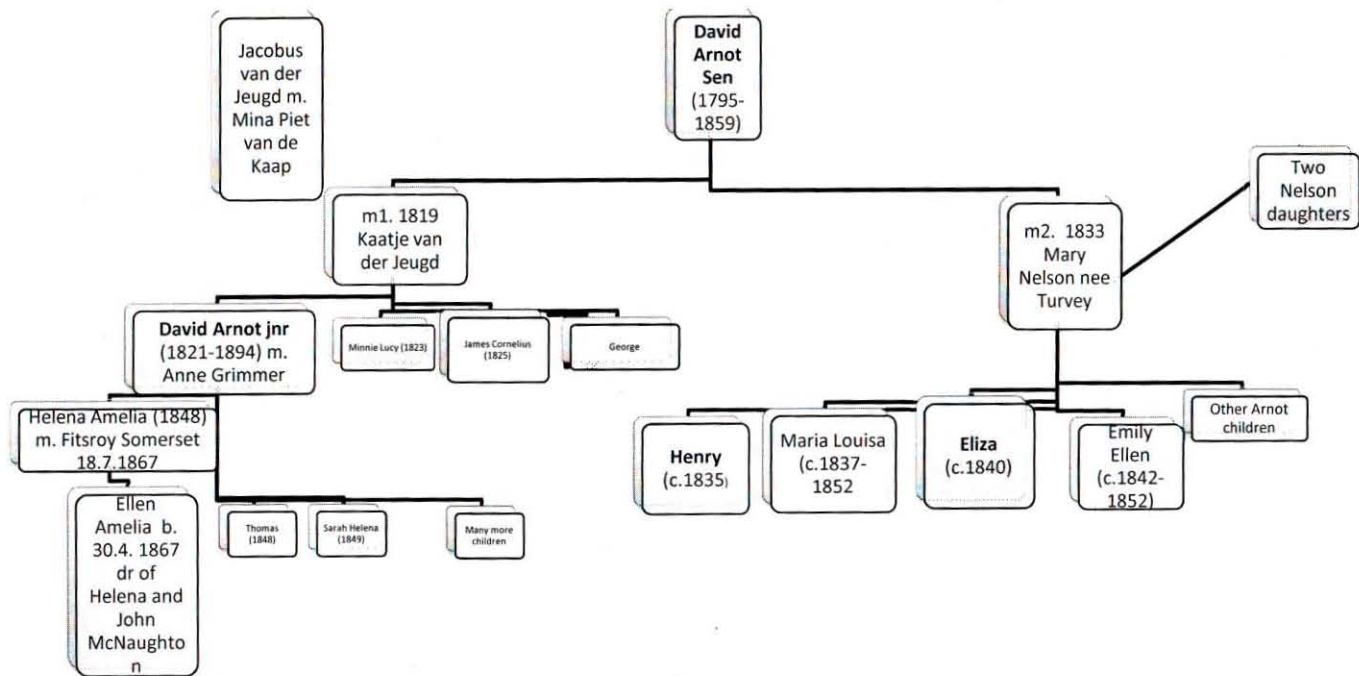


Figure 5.1: Arnot Family Tree

Source: J.A.Heese and R.J.J.Lombard, *South African Genealogies 1* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1986),84, and T. Gutsche, *A Microcosm* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1968), *passim*.

It may have been the influence of the Arnots, the older Scottish blacksmith who had spent a number of years living and working at Bethelsdorp, and his half 'Hottentot' son which made the entry of coloured children into the Colesberg School more acceptable to the wider community. Added to this the paternalistic CC and President of the school commission, Rawstorne, had been an assistant Guardian to the Slaves at Swellendam⁴⁵ and may well have been committed, as was Rait, to the improving role of education. The fourth person who may have created the possibility for all local children to attend the government school was its other school commissioner, Charles Edward Herbert Orpen. The Irish surgeon had arrived in Colesberg late in 1848 to join his older sons, but also to serve as an Anglican priest under the new bishop of Cape Town, Robert Gray. Among his interests had been Pestalozzi's approach to education,⁴⁶ and his son Joseph described him as 'an eminently benevolent man and the first who had ever taught a deaf-mute in Ireland. He founded the Deaf and Dumb Institute there ... and numerous charities.'⁴⁷ He appears to have brought that same concern for the needy to Colesberg, accompanied by a sharp intellect. His interest in the government school is demonstrated in his loan to it of ten maps and four natural history plates, as 'without such, the children would not possibly be well taught (as Mr James Rait the master wished)...'⁴⁸

Classification of the school

The school day, as in all government schools, was from 9 am-12 noon and 2-4 pm. In 1851, the 101 pupils were spread fairly evenly over the five classes of the elementary school. [In addition, there were five pupils taking the higher branches for which they would pay the quarterly fee of £1]. Three classes made up the Junior Division, the 1st being the most junior, and two the Senior Division, where again the 1st was junior to the 2nd. See **Figure 5.2**.

⁴⁵ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 70.

⁴⁶ *Dictionary of South African Biography IV* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1981), 437.

⁴⁷ J. Orpen, *Reminiscences*, 2.

⁴⁸ C. Orpen to Rawstorne, 12 November 1853, SGE 1/4.

Figure 5.2 : Report of the School Established by the Government at Colesberg, for the Quarter ending 30 September 1851.

REPORT of the SCHOOL established by GOVERNMENT (105)

at Colesberg

for the Quarter ending 30th September 1851

1. PUPILS ENROLLED, AVERAGE ATTENDANCE, &C.

| In the Month of | No. of days School was open. | No. of days School was closed. | No. of Pupils on the Roll. | Of whom were admitted. | Of whom were withdrawn. | Average Attendance. | | | | | Monthly Average. | Reasons for the School being closed for the No. of Days reported |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|------------------|---|
| | | | | | | First Week. | Second Week. | Third Week. | Fourth Week. | Odd Days. | | |
| <i>In SGE 1/4</i> July | 21 | 10 | 90 | 5 | 2 | 74 | 73 | 76 | 70 | | 73.75 | Attendance during the Quarter, compared with that of the preceding. Increase. — 12 Decrease. — 14 |
| August | 21 | 0 | 93 | 5 | 4 | 70 | 74 | 75 | 74 | | 73.25 | |
| September | 20 | 2 | 96 | 1 | 8 | 70 | 68 | 70 | 73 | | 67.75 | |

2. APPROPRIATION OF TIME to the Subjects of the Elementary Course.

| Hours set apart weekly to the following Subjects. | Senior Division. | | | | | | Junior Division. | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| | Second Class. | | | First Class. | | | Third Class. | | | Second Class. | | | First Class. | | |
| | Under the Master. | Under Assistant or Monitor. | Preparing at the Desk. | Under the Master. | Under Assistant or Monitor. | Preparing at the Desk. | Under the Master. | Under Assistant or Monitor. | Preparing at the Desk. | Under the Master. | Under Assistant or Monitor. | Preparing at the Desk. | Under the Master. | Under Assistant or Monitor. | Preparing at the Desk. |
| Religious Instruction. | 2 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 2 1/2 | 2 1/2 | 0 | 2 1/2 | 2 1/2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| English Language, Reading. | | | | 1 | 7 1/2 | | 1 | 4 1/2 | 1 1/2 | 1 | 8 | 1/2 | 1 | 9 | 1/2 |
| Etymology. | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grammar. | 2 | | 1 1/2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Composition. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Arithmetic.—Theoretical. | 5 1/2 | | | 6 1/2 | | | 6 1/2 | | | 6 1/2 | | | 6 1/2 | | |
| Practical. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Geography.—Physics. | 1 1/2 | | 1 | 2 1/2 | | | 2 1/2 | | | 2 1/2 | | | 2 1/2 | | |
| Description. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| History | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Analysis and Illustration of Text Books on Chemistry.— | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hydrostatics. | 2 | | 1 1/2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mechanics. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Matter and Motion. | 1 | | 1 1/2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction to the Sciences. | 1 | | 1 1/2 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dutch Language.—Reading. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Translation. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing | 1 1/2 | | | 2 1/2 | | | 3 1/2 | | | 2 1/2 | | | 2 1/2 | | |
| Drawing | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Music | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

26 School da

It appears that in 1851 most of the teaching of the younger children was done by a pupil-teacher with Rait's role in the first three classes confined to a combined daily lesson in Religious Instruction (based on the Scripture alone) and some teaching of reading and writing.

In February 1856, however, he wrote:

The progress of the more advanced classes has been considerably retarded for want of an Assistant. I have no confidence in Monitors, and have therefore arranged my time as to give each class the advantage of my immediate tuition. The result is on a given day, one part of it I devote to teaching the A,B,C; another to teaching children beginning to master small words, and so on. The progress of the more advanced scholars cannot, consequently, be such as if I devoted my whole time to them; and an estimate of my deserts must be formed from the state of the whole school.⁴⁹

Classification was not rigid, nor was it age-bound, so advancement through the educational course was more flexible than in later systems of classroom-based teaching. But children were not obliged to be at school, a frustrating source of irregularity that most schoolmasters bemoaned; and the necessity of being in one room under one master but without the mechanisms of the monitorial system made for further irregularities and indiscipline. As the years passed, the school seems to have increased proportionately in younger children, mostly Dutch-speaking, and from families less committed than his original intake to obtaining more than a basic education.⁵⁰ With continuing large numbers and his declining health, Rait was hard-pressed to continue with provision of the higher branches, although he had three pupils engaged in these studies in 1855.⁵¹

For most of his career in Colesberg, Rait conducted his school on his own, with the periodic assistance of a senior pupil acting as pupil-teacher. It was only as his illness became critical by 1856, that he was able to acquire the formal services of Eliza Arnot as a paid pupil-teacher, someone who was completing her studies and could devote much of her attention to the junior classes.

Discourses in and of the Colesberg classroom

Rait's itemization in his 1851 Report of the subjects studied and texts used in his classes provides an opportunity to engage with the discourses these represent. It offers a glimpse at the

⁴⁹ Rait to Innes, 1 February 1856, SGE 1/4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ G.16-'57. *Report on Public Education for 1855 and the First Half of 1856*, xxii.

intriguing interplay between the Scottish context and worldview in which they were constructed and the children of the town and district, Colesberg, that has been presented so far.

Drawing on the literary culture of Scotland, and writing and publishing on matters as diverse as Scottish folklore, English literature and new ideas in science, William and Robert Chambers 'helped feed the growing taste for popularizations of science and culture'.⁵² *The Chambers's Educational Course* was published in Edinburgh as one branch of the Chambers' burgeoning publishing empire. The educational series was eventually widely used throughout Britain and introduced to the Cape by Innes. The significance of the course, argues Sondra Cooney, was this:

Partly inspired by an unconventional philosophy, it advocated a broad moral, intellectual secularity at a time when educational institutions and practices were infused with the worst in narrow, anti-intellectual sectarianism.⁵³

The Chambers's educational approach was directly influenced by the Scottish phrenologist, George Combe, and indirectly by European educational philosophers such as Pestalozzi and Froebel.⁵⁴ It followed a theory of learning that shifted attention from original sin as defining human nature to innate potential needing to be unfurled. While in time jettisoned as a science, phrenology emphasised the role of the brain as seat of the mind and it provided 'scientific' backing for the Chambers's belief in human improvability through education.⁵⁵ An understanding of human physiology and provision of a good environment in which the brain could develop became important parts of education. Diet, play, exercise and, importantly, learning that related to childrens' developmental stages informed the Chambers's design of their educational texts. The emphasis was on quality texts which were both practical and cheap.⁵⁶

A number of authors was employed to write for the series, including experienced teachers, while Robert Chambers himself wrote some of the most popular books. Cooney notes that there was, however, not much toleration in Edinburgh for educational innovation, particularly ideas that deviated from traditional approaches to a classical education. In a pragmatic approach to

⁵² B. Waggoner, 'Robert Chambers (1802-1871)' (University of Berkeley Paleontology Museum) accessed 15 December 2010, <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/chambers.html>.

⁵³ S.M. Cooney, 'Publishers for the People: W & R. Chambers: The Early Years, 1832-1850', (PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 1970), 153 ff.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 162.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 172, 208.

publishing, it appears that in time, 'except for the [R]eaders, the Chambers books would conform even to the programme of traditional schools'.⁵⁷

The introduction of the *Chambers's Course* into Cape classrooms, as the defining way in which the curriculum of the New System was implemented, brought with it 'rules and standards by which [to] "reason" about [the] world';⁵⁸ a vocabulary, subject matter and frame of reference that was Scottish and British in orientation. Popkewitz sees a curriculum as 'a field of cultural practice', 'a knowledge' and 'a governing practice'. Not only are subjects learnt but also 'dispositions, awareness and sensibilities'.⁵⁹ To the extent that they acquired the educational discourses in the limited time they stayed at school, the children of Colesberg were absorbing the knowledge and social rules to shape their identities as male or female subjects of the British Empire. In the books Rait used and content he taught, there were messages that cohered with a rational and inclusive identity. At the same time there was much that naturalised acceptance of a gendered, hierarchical social order, British civilization and imperial power.

The pedagogy used is not recorded, but a teacher, like Rait, or an assistant might follow the guidelines supplied at the beginning of each of the Chambers texts. Thus the Colesberg beginner reading class of over twenty children might learn to **form** their letters by copying the teacher in inscribing them in chalk on their boards. Following a phonic rather than alphabetical system, they would also learn to **sound** these by using them in words. 'Face, lace; cake, lake; cane, lane, gate, pate; cave, wave; rake, cage; tape; babe; page.' 'Let the vowels be sounded boldly, and the consonants with a considerable emission of breath.' Pronunciation was important and, in order to help children '*really* understand the *idea* represented by the *word* employed', they should be provided a mental image through 'object, experiment, drawing, pantomime, anecdote' and the like.⁶⁰ As set out in the first reader, though, words were isolated and only put together meaningfully at the end of the book in the form of 'LESSONS OF MIXED WORDS'.

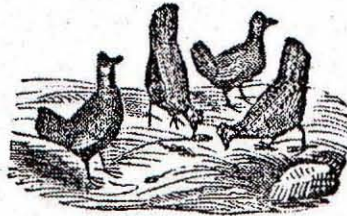
The second story below is typical of those in the Chambers's Readers; an engraved illustration is accompanied by a text which in part relates to the world of children while at the same time conveys a moral message which positions them as either 'good' or 'bad'.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 210.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 152.

⁵⁹ T.S. Popkewitz, 'The Production of Reason and Power,' in T.S. Popkewitz, et al., eds., *Cultural History and Education: Critical Essays on Knowing and Schooling* (London & New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), 152-164.

⁶⁰ W. and R. Chambers, eds., preface to *First Book of Reading* (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1845).



I can see four nice Hens. Let me give them some fresh corn. They lay nice eggs. Do not let the dog run at the poor Hens. A Hen has two wings and two legs.



Do you see this Boy? He is good, and tells no lies. He loves a hoop, but he will not take a hoop, or a top, or a ball, if it is not his. He will not push, or hit, or cuff. He is too kind to do so. He likes fun, but he is not rude. He is at the top of his class, and all the boys love him. He will not hurt a worm, or a fly. God loves good boys and girls.

The *Second Book of Reading* has a similar methodology though denser texts. In the stories, 'God is good, and great, and wise.' 'We should be kind to animals'. 'Sheep are pretty and innocent animals'. [One wonders how that went down in Colesberg?] Dogs are good or 'naughty', a room is neat. The stories are both gendered and straddle respectable working class and middle class discourses. A 'pretty little girl' feeds chickens in one story, in another a girl stands by 'in a clean white frock', ready to water the garden which is being tamed by a man and a boy. In a story about a toyshop, the girl receives a doll and the boy, a toy gun.⁶¹

The second class of the Junior Division of Colesberg Government School was engaged, in 1851, in reading from the third reader in the *Chambers's Educational Series*. It was called *Simple Lessons in Reading*, and continued in the same vein as the earlier readers. Its preface states:

The principal object in view is to bring the child a step forward in the art of reading and spelling, and so prepare him for methodic intellectual culture in the books which follow. At the same time, in order to *amuse*, and induce reading *for the pleasure it communicates*, the subjects of the lessons are of that species of narrative which uniformly delights the infant mind, bearing in each case a reference to the moral perceptions of the pupil, or tending to encourage in him a love of the beautiful in nature...⁶²

Its authors recommend not cramming the child with too much explanation, but that the teacher should ask good questions and raise simple ideas that will 'interest and encourage the dawning faculties'. The skilled teacher would also put the blackboard to constant use for drawing sketches and use 'pictures and sensible objects'.⁶³

There is a vibrant and unrelenting moral purpose in these writings. Deeds and doers are categorised as wicked, good-hearted or occasionally repentant. But the authors manage to imbue their tales with a sense of affection, enthusiasm for the God-given beauty of the world, and occasional humour. 'The Milk-Maid' forgets the pail of milk balanced on her head as she imagines herself clad in 'Green – let me consider – yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be'. Tossing her head at the thought of her ability to refuse her many suitors, she proves the moral: 'When we dwell much on distant and un-cer-tain pleasures, we neglect our present bu-si-ness, and are exposed to real mis-for-tunes.'⁶⁴

⁶¹ W. and R. Chambers, *Second Book of Reading* (Edinburgh: William & Robert Chambers, 1850).

⁶² W. and R. Chambers, preface to *Simple Lessons in Reading* (Edinburgh: William & Robert Chambers, 1845).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 38.

The third class of the Junior Division used *Rudiments of Knowledge* as a 'Reading-book' which aimed 'strictly at an explanation of *external appearances* in the natural and social world'.

[*Principles* were left to be dealt with in the subsequent volume, *Introduction to the Sciences*.]

The various sections normalise a world which accepts the authority of God, parents and government; in which children are ignorant and need to learn in order to prosper. 'Mankind' is treated as one 'human species' endowed with reason, an ability to work, and to live together in society. 'As for race,'

some people have white skins, with blue or gray eyes and light hair on their heads. Other people have dark skins, with black eyes and black hair. But all people are human beings, and are the same way made; and it is no matter what the colour of their skins or their outward appearance. We should never hate or ill-use any persons because the colour of their skins is different from ours, or because their outward appearance is not beautiful, but be equally kind to all...⁶⁵

Some people live in the country in *cottages*, but most people live in houses near each other in *villages, towns, and cities*. Family and nationality are explained. Hard work and property ownership are to be valued without sacrificing modesty, humility and an understanding that poverty comes from misfortune, old age or illness and not only as a consequence of idleness.

While a common humanity is claimed, societies are not the same. 'We belong to the British nation. ... There are two kinds of nations – those which are *barbarous*, and those which are *civilized*.' It would be easy for the children in this class to think of the squatters on the Colesberg commonage and classify them in the light of the following description:

In barbarous nations, the people have not comfortable houses, food, or clothing, and they live almost like beasts of the field. In civilized nations, there is a regular form of government; there are comfortable houses, and well-built towns; there are trades, commerce, and an abundance of everything that can make life agreeable; the lands are well cultivated; and there are churches, schools, hospitals for the poor, and other valuable institutions. We live in a civilized society.⁶⁶

The topics dealing with the natural world move pupils towards some elementary categorisation, and include animals, wood and trees, and water. In September 1851, the Colesberg class three were tackling 'objects'. Among these were 'inanimate objects – stones, slate, coal, clay, bricks, glass, metals'. They also learnt about the form, size and measurement of objects. When examined on their knowledge of objects before the school commission that month, the performance of the class was labelled 'satisfactory' by Fleetwood Rawstone.

⁶⁵ W. and R. Chambers, *Rudiments of Knowledge* (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1848), 14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 73-74.

Arithmetic formed part of each day's schedule for all five elementary classes, and Chambers's *Introduction to Arithmetic* appears to have been written for the teacher rather than pupils.⁶⁷ It sets out a rule-based methodology with detailed, wordy instructions and explanations on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Tables and exercises are included, the latter showing the application of arithmetic to daily life and a mercantile future: 'A merchant bought 9 pieces of cloth, each piece containing 73 yards, and 12 pieces, each of 68 yards. How many yards did he purchase in all?'⁶⁸ It is dull fare compared to the readers. In an application of mental arithmetic to local use, the older three classes in the elementary section of Colesberg Government School were all learning how to convert 'Dutch money into English and the converse'.

All five classes spent some time doing Geography, mostly with the monitor – capitals, in the case of the second class, and principal lakes, rivers, mountains and 'the World' in the third. The loan of the series of maps and charts to the school by Revd Dr Orpen meant that they would be able to consult maps of Palestine, Asia and Africa, as well as British, European and American ones.

Rait appears to have put most of his time and effort into teaching the most senior class in the junior section, giving them 19½ hours a week of his time. The more junior class of the senior division spent 12½ hours under the master. He appears to have taught them the same (unidentified) sections of grammar, and focused heavily on teaching 'Natural History and Physical Science'. It appears that most science was taught without apparatus (something that was lamented by a number of the teachers) and instead knowledge was developed through 'conversational lectures'. These were based on the widely used and very popular *Introduction to the Sciences* which, claimed its author Robert Chambers, 'presents a connected and systematic view of Nature ...' He continued:

[I]t has been the ambition of the writer that the information given should not be a superficial view of a few unconnected phenomena, but a chain of principles, calculated, in combination, to impress a distinct and comprehensive idea, and to make it possible that even those who leave school at the early age of ten, shall not go into the world without some knowledge of the parts of which it is composed, and the laws by which it is regulated.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ W. and R. Chambers, *Introduction to Arithmetic* (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1843).

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

⁶⁹ W. and R. Chambers, preface to *Introduction to the Sciences* (Edinburgh: William & Robert Chambers, 1843). Cooney identifies Robert Chambers as the author of this book, as well as *History and Present State of the British Empire*. S.M. Cooney, 'Publishers for the People', 201.

It was at this stage, therefore, that government school pupils were introduced to the analytical thinking that the scientists of the era were engaged in. While the previous years' emphasis on learning to read and write, gain knowledge about the world, and be upright future citizens was not lost, the shift was being made towards developing the rational and logical facilities that would enable pupils to discern the regularities and laws of nature. While the senior class paid attention to 'Matter and Motion' and 'Hydrostatics', there was a particular emphasis on his pupils learning 'Cuvier's Arrangement of the Animal Kingdom'. It was this that was presented for examination before Rawstone and Orpen in September 1851, and pupil performance in answering questions on the classification was pronounced 'satisfactory' by the two commissioners.⁷⁰

Chambers (who was to undertake an anonymous investigation of his own into the evolution of species)⁷¹ entitled the section, 'The Animal Creation'. The introductory paragraph would surely have stymied most ten-year-olds, particularly those for whom English was used only at school. It nevertheless demonstrates the movement into evolutionary thinking.

All parts of the earth's surface, except those exposed to intolerable degrees of cold, are peopled by *Animals* – that is, by beings which not only possess an organised structure, as the plants do, and, like them, are capable of being nourished by assimilating various other substances, but are animated by an *internal principle*, which can be traced in many very remarkable results, particularly motion from place to place, a selection of advantageous circumstances, and a power of adapting means to ends. At the head of this class of beings stands *Man*.⁷²

Pupils were introduced to four Divisions (Vertebrata, Mollusca, Articulata, Radiata), and subdivisions or Classes, Orders, Families and Genera. For Rait the task of exploring these would have been immeasurably assisted by the loan from Orpen of four 'coloured and varnished large plates of Natural History; on canvas, and rollers top and bottom', these being of Cuvier's classifications.⁷³ It is likely that he was also trying to impress his mentor by showing how well the pupils had learnt from them!

⁷⁰ Cuvier was a French pre-Darwinian animal anatomist and palaeontologist whose work on classification was current at the time that Chambers wrote the textbook. He challenged Lamarck's work on gradual evolution but believed hard evidence to show that extinctions had occurred. This was a challenge to those who felt that God had made everything perfect and if a species no longer existed in Europe it must exist elsewhere. B. Waggoner, 'Georges Cuvier (1789-1832),' (University of Berkeley Paleontology Museum) accessed 1 May 2010, <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/cuvier.html>.

⁷¹ R. Chambers, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844. Reprinted in J. Secord, ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁷² Chambers, *Introduction to Sciences*, 97.

⁷³ Orpen to Rawstone, 12 November 1853, SGE 1/4.

Also itemised on the report as part of the Natural Science curriculum is the section on 'The History of Man'. Having classified 'man' with the vertebrates, it is now noted that he is distinctive for his intelligence and moral nature. Then, in a shift from the presentation in *Rudiments of Knowledge* of all 'mankind' as essentially the same, although living in differing state of civilisation, there appears an exposition akin to later social Darwinism:

He is not, however, in every country the same creature. Europe, the western part of Asia, and the north of Africa, have been possessed since the dawn of authentic history by a white-skinned race, the highest in intelligence, and the most elegant in form, named the Caucasian variety ... The remainder of Asia has been at the same time occupied by an olive-coloured race, of less intelligence and vigour of character, named the Mongolian variety, from Mongolia, a country to the north of China. A third race, of black skin, coarse features, and small intelligence, have inhabited the greater part of Africa: they are denominated the Negro or Ethiopian variety. In America, when it was discovered three hundred years ago, a fourth race of a copper-colour, and of no great intelligence, was found in a generally barbarous condition.

The white-skinned variety are remarkable for their cultivation of letters and science, and as the only race amongst which any considerable progress is made in intelligence from age to age.⁷⁴

We close our time in the Colesberg school with a taste of the history lesson that the first class of the Senior Division was having. Another widely used text was Robert Chambers's *History and Present State of the British Empire*,⁷⁵ which tracks British history through the reigns of various monarchs. This time the pupils were studying the 'concluding portion of the Reign of George IV, Commencement of the Reign of William IV'. The textbook mentions the passing of the Reform bills and other improving measures, though very briefly. 'The most important of these, in a moral point of view, was the abolition of slavery in the colonies ... which had long been a disgrace to humanity.'⁷⁶

It is likely that the pupils would have been far more entertained by the section on Queen Elizabeth, which begins with the statement that, 'While Elizabeth increased in power and resources, she became more noted for feminine weaknesses'. This included volatility, susceptibility to bad influence, hypochondria, melancholy, and agitation during which she would 'stamp on the floor, and pierce the arras with a rusty sword ...'⁷⁷ Despite a concern to amuse and entertain that the Chambers brothers seem always to have borne in mind, the presentation of the foibles of certain (English) monarchs did not prevent Robert Chambers from concluding that:

The British Empire, as at present constituted, is universally acknowledged to be one of the greatest which exists, or ever existed on the face of the globe. Its territories are of vast extent; embracing England,

⁷⁴ Chambers, *Introduction to Sciences*, 117-8.

⁷⁵ Published in 1847.

⁷⁶ Chambers, *History of the British Empire*, 246.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 77-8.

Scotland, and Ireland, which form what is termed the mother country, and a range of colonies and dependencies in all quarters of the world...

[The] extension of the English tongue, and with it English literature and habits of thought, as also Christianity, over so large a portion of the earth's surface, is perhaps the most extraordinary fact connected with the history of modern civilization.⁷⁸

Thus might the Colesberg children be disposed to interpret disruptive events on the not too distant frontiers of their own Colony - the Kat River Rebellion and War of Mlanjeni (8th Frontier War of 1850) - as unwarranted resistance to the inevitable expansion of British civilization?

The Challenges of Maintaining a Respectable Status if/when a Married Teacher

In common with his colleagues elsewhere, James Rait very soon took up the theme of sustained respectability requiring a better income. His initial salary at Colesberg was a meagre £100 pa in line with the school's humble location. While a bachelor, this did not concern him unduly and he was even able to assist poorer pupils with purchasing school books out of his own pocket.⁷⁹ His agitation for better pay seems to coincide with his decision to marry, sometime in 1852. In March, he wrote at length to the local school commission asking them, on the strength of their acknowledged high satisfaction with his services, 'to recommend to Government that my salary be raised, at least to ... one hundred and fifty pounds per annum as well as the usual allowance for house rent'.⁸⁰

Rait provided a clear statement of his entitlement, comparing his achievements to those of 'Schools to which Two Hundred pounds per annum is attached' – in other words the best remunerated schools at which Herschel's initial selection of teachers had been placed such as Stellenbosch (Rait's own school) and nearby Graaff-Reinet. He justified an increase in salary through his high numbers (95-100) and by the progress of his pupils, believing that he equalled the more prestigious schools in both areas. His third point was that the cost of living in Colesberg 'where every article is so very dear' would make it impossible on his current salary, 'were I married, to maintain that status in society which my situation entitles me to hold'.

Rait then cited Sir John Herschel's founding memorandum as authority for his own position. He quoted Herschel's statement:

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 256, 263.

⁷⁹ Rait to Innes, 1 February 1856, SGE 1/4.

⁸⁰ Rait to President and Members of the Local School Commission, Colesberg, 12 March 1852, CO 594.

The salaries of Civil servants ... mark to a considerable extent their status, so far at least, as this, that it is not in human nature, that a service should carry with it any show of public respect, which is considered inadequately remunerated by a salary barely sufficient to maintain an individual, insufficient for a family, and accompanied by no power, no privilege, no honorary circumstance whatever of any description, but on the contrary associated with proverbial drudgery.⁸¹

In harnessing Herschel to his cause, Rait was demonstrating a familiarity with the origins of the New System and possibly hoping to impress local authorities, while at the same time showing up 'government' if it failed in its own commitments.

Despite the expression by the school commission of its 'strong sense of [Rait's] merits and success',⁸² and Innes's own endorsement of 'the very efficient & successful manner in which Mr Rait has conducted the Government School at Colesberg', he was to wait until 1855 for the increase. Innes was unwilling in 1852 to depart from the principle that increased salary came with promotion to a superior school – a principle he later regretted. Nonetheless Innes was prepared to recommend a 'Special Gratuity in acknowledgement of past services' and would decide on this when inspecting the school later in the year.⁸³

The inspection came and went, satisfaction was expressed and a gratuity accordingly recommended by Innes. This was outlined by Rait in a letter sent two years later to the local school commission.⁸⁴ The gratuity had, however, not been received. He then reproduced his 1852 letter with little modification. The same arguments concerning the high numbers in and efficiency of his school still applied. He changed the phrase, 'if he were married' to 'now since I am married' – and wrote that, given that 'the necessaries of life here are nearly 100 per cent higher than in the Western Province' a salary 'that would suffice to support a family comfortably and respectably there, would be far from adequate to support the same family in the same state here'. That, he argued, was the case with his salary. Instead of backing his argument with a quotation from the originating genius of the New System, this time he promoted the earnestness of his cause through statistics – he listed the large pupil enrolment of his school for every quarter since he had arrived.

⁸¹ Rait was citing the 'Memorandum' dated 17 February 1838, in W.T. Ferguson and R.F.M. Immelman, comps., *Sir John Herschel and Education at the Cape, 1834-1840* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961), 14-25. See chapter 2, page 28 ff in this thesis.

⁸² President of School Commission to Col Sec, 1 April 1852, CO 594.

⁸³ Innes, 'Report' on *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Rait to President of the Local School Commission, Colesberg, 1 August 1854, SGE 1/4.

James Rait's identity as a married man, with responsibilities to support his family in a manner fitting his situation and status, sat heavily with him all the time. The sense existed that respectability was a precarious status to maintain given the financial demands on a small salary. The granting of a gratuity as a result of persuasive performance in a public examination, or through convincing statistical information, could help to promote short-term security. The loss of pupils if parents did not bother to send them to school could imperil his enterprise. Rait was sure that his performance was equal to that of any other teacher in the New System but it was a status that would be further threatened by poor health, as we shall see.

The theme of financial stress continued throughout his career, although somewhat alleviated in 1855 when the George government teacher's position became vacant and Innes shifted £30 of the salary to Colesberg, rather than take a successful teacher away from Colesberg.⁸⁵ Rait then earned £130 pa, until the increases of 1857 brought him to £150.⁸⁶

In the period between his two major letters on record concerning his salary, Rait's correspondence shows him to have become intensely anxious about a drop in attendance at his school and the impression this would make on the SGE.

Enrollment at Colesberg Government School⁸⁷

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Quarter Ending</u> | <u>Pupils on Roll</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1850 | 31 March | 73 |
| 1851 | 31 March | 107 |
| 1852 | 31 March | 82 |
| 1853 | 31 March | 60 |

He became very critical of irregular attendance which he felt was condoned by apathetic and indifferent parents. Rait echoed Bremner in his characterisation of less advanced 'Boer' education:

The boer idea of education is ... very low. Generally, their standard is a knowledge of the Dutch catechism, to be able to sign the name, and to read the Bible.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Innes to Select Committee, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *CGH. Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education (June 1857)*, 34.

⁸⁶ Innes to Col Sec, 29 August, 1857, CO 695.

⁸⁷ Rait to Colesberg School Commission, 1 August 1854, SGE 1/4.

⁸⁸ J. Rait, 'Colesberg School,' A1SC-1857. *CGH. Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education, (November 1857)*, 7-8.

He made no differentiation on the basis of race but generally seems to have found the children of lower classes least conditioned to attend school with serious regularity. '[T]he excuses put forward for non-attendance are frivolous in the extreme.' Linking his frustration with irregular attendance to his support for the purposes of a first-class education, he commented further:

[T]o render the School what, I am sure, you [Innes] intend it to be, an efficient instrument for elevating and improving the youth of this Community – the Humbler classes in particular – I must again take the liberty of expressing my unaltered conviction that regularity of attendance must be strictly enforced.⁸⁹

Asked by Innes to account for poor attendances in the quarter ending March 1853, the school commissioners reported that it was due largely to illness of the children or members of their families. The parents, they assured Innes, professed to value their children's education highly. Commission President Rawstone wrote that:

Mr Rait not being quite aware of this and annoyed by the irregularity while at the same time conscientiously anxious for the progress of the Children and the credit of the School expressed himself rather strongly in his letter as to indifference or apathy on the part of the Parents and is now sensible that he did so.⁹⁰

Rait's letter to Innes shows him to be less persuaded of his misinterpretation than Rawstone believed, but his high levels of frustration and irritability may also have been due to the onset of illness. This was to plague the next five years of his career.⁹¹

The Failing Body of the Married Teacher

In April 1855, Rait 'deemed it [his] duty to make [Innes] acquainted' with the state of his health for the first time. He requested to be moved to a less taxing position in the civil service as he had 'been subject for some months past to an irritating cough, accompanied, at times, by the spitting of blood, and by loss of appetite'. He clearly understood the possible seriousness of his condition, expressing the 'fear that the continued pulmonary irritation caused by the amount of

⁸⁹ Rait to Innes, 21 April 1853, SGE 1/4.

⁹⁰ President of School Commission, Colesberg, to Innes, 10 May 1853, *ibid.*

⁹¹ Irritability was expressed, for example, with Innes's rather surprised clerk, Mr Jervis, for sending a request for information in a way that Rait interpreted as uncivil and abrupt. Rait to The Clerk to the SGE, 7 December 1853, *ibid.*

speaking requisite for the efficient teaching of from 80 to 100 children, may develop in my system the insidious malady, “consumption”.⁹²

An accompanying medical certificate from the Colesberg ‘District Surgeon’, Braham Kisch, indicated that, despite improvements to the school’s interior, it was not a healthy environment for a teacher with chronic respiratory problems:

... I have known Mr James Rait since his arrival at this place – now six years, and for the last three years his health has suffered materially. I should strongly advise him to discontinue, or change his occupation which confines him to considerable and sudden alterations of temperature, being obliged to pass many hours a day in a highly heated and dry atmosphere of the schoolroom and the immense amount of labour and incessant talking to scholars – mostly children under ten years of age – numbering from eighty to one hundred, has increased his ailment considerably.⁹³

He had clearly been struggling on, coughing ‘almost incessantly the whole time I am in school’, attempting to carry out his duties conscientiously. Despite his request for a ‘civil appointment equal in point of respectability and emolument’ to his current position, Rait promised to continue as best he could in his current position ‘so long as I consider myself equal to its duties – I have no other means of supporting my family’.

The rest of James Rait’s career was beset with the management of his illness, and it is this illness that invites us to engage with the health of the government teachers as a significant theme. Christopher Forth describes a model of nineteenth century manliness which drew on notions of a bounded and naturally robust male body. Physical strength, associated as it was with both work and war, was generally necessary if a man was to claim moral strength.⁹⁴ In the case of scholarly men, middle class intellectuals, however, there was some ground for claiming to be manly if one’s health was sacrificed in a noble cause – war – and by implication the war on ignorance and savagery that education represented. ‘Like battle wounds borne by warriors, health problems could be embraced as proof of a man’s willingness to endure physical distress in the name of some higher ideal.’⁹⁵ Though never explicitly claiming this consideration of his illness, Rait’s setting out of his claims to financial recognition was based on such a construction of his efforts as nobly sacrificial. There is little information on how Rait was received by other men, but Rawstone and Innes appear to have showed nothing but sympathy for him. Likewise, the

⁹² Rait to Innes, 18 April 1855, *ibid*.

⁹³ Attached copy, *ibid*. Kisch, according to Gutsche, was an apothecary rather than a qualified medical practitioner. Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 72.

⁹⁴ C.E. Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West: Gender, Civilization and the Body* (Basingstoke, UK & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 72-3.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 81.

parliamentarians discussing his case at the 1857 Inquiry perceived him to be among the most oppressed of government servants, 'breaking down from excessive labour'.⁹⁶

In *Imperial Bodies*, historian of the British Raj E.M. Collingham notes that the British experience of India was intensely physical, assailing all senses. Values, attitudes and ideologies were literally embodied.⁹⁷ It is 'clear ... that the body was central to the colonial experience, but the body, as the site where social structures are experienced, transmuted and projected back on society, is ill-defined as a historical object.'⁹⁸ How, then, would Rait, with his sickening body be seen, in these terms? Collingham demonstrates the 'burden on the physique' of the British official in India, resultant from long hours of bureaucratic duties⁹⁹ and Rait may likewise be seen to have carried in his body the demands of the educational state. While he could convince everyone – pupils, parents, school commissioners, SGE – of his moral reputation and conscientiousness, the large numbers of pupils of differing ages, the extensive range of subjects to be taught and the lack of effective assistance weakened his resistance such that the random occurrence of a TB bacillus was able to take hold and sap his vitality. In the various reports of Innes and especially of Dale after 1859, there were concerns with sanitation and ventilation which presaged a more systematic attempt to regulate school populations in a healthy way. The complaints of fatigue and bodily ailments resulting from the arduous duties of teaching and supervising in the New System are too many to be glossed over. Rait's illness ended in his death in 1858, but was arguably just an intensification of the malaise that affected McNaughton at Wynberg, Hugo and Rowan at Worcester, and Innes himself.

Rait also came to carry in his body the impact of the environment and the temporal and spatial separation of the town from adequate medical care. This is most poignantly conveyed in the image of the weakened teacher being jolted to and from Port Elizabeth in Mr Grant's cart in December 1856 'to secure a change of air and scene for a short time, and to obtain better medical aid than can be got in Colesberg'.¹⁰⁰ It is captured, too, in his final journey to Queenstown in November 1857, from which the CC Rawstone feared there was 'very faint hope of his return or recovery'.¹⁰¹ His illness weakened him and affected his ability to deliver – to the point where two women stepped in to provide what he was expected to provide – education for

⁹⁶ J. Fairbairn, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee on Education*, 33-4.

⁹⁷ E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* (Cambridge : Polity, 2001), 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 124, 142.

¹⁰⁰ Rait to Innes, 1 December 1856, SGE 1/4.

¹⁰¹ Rawstone to Innes, 10 November 1857, *ibid*.

his charges and support for his family. Disease can be seen to feminise the body, and while illness increasingly confined Rait to a private space, his wife and female assistant were to bridge the domestic and working worlds.

Eliza Arnot – The [Limited] Space for Women Teachers in the Government Schools

James Rait's worsening illness coincided with the decision of the SGE to recommend the appointment of sixteen year old Eliza Arnot as pupil teacher in the Colesberg Government School. The rationale for her appointment was 'the very considerable number of Girls as well as Young Children' at the school.¹⁰² The appointment of his senior pupil, one of only three engaged in the higher branches in 1855, offers an opportunity to reflect on a different teacher identity at Colesberg; that of the woman teacher.

Writing about nineteenth century Australia, Theobald makes the point that women teachers were often present but invisible, teaching in the seclusion of private homes, and later in ladies academies.¹⁰³ She also notes the opacity of sources about them and the need for the historian to work with very little in trying to construct their lives.¹⁰⁴ This is true for Eliza Arnot, from whom no word is heard in the ten years that she acted as pupil-teacher and later assistant teacher at Colesberg. Her career is pieced together from the limited references of the men who supervised her, at home and in the school system. A fairly tortuous piece of reconstruction of the Arnot family suggests that not only was Eliza Arnot Rait's assistant teacher, but also his sister-in-law.

It is possible to get a fair sense of Eliza's own education because she was for at least six years a pupil in the government school. There are two E. Arnots listed on Rait's 1851 school register. One was in the third class, alongside of eight-year old L. Rawstorne. The other was in the second class of the Senior Division, the fifth year of the elementary school. Listed with this E. Arnot are M. Arnot and Henry Arnot, the latter registered for the higher branches in 1851 as well. Thelma Gutsche refers to the death in 1852 of two of David Arnot sen's daughters, Maria Louisa and Emily Ellen, at the age of fifteen and ten respectively.¹⁰⁵ It thus seems likely that Eliza, who would have been twelve in 1852, fell between these two and was in the senior class with her older sister. This shows her to be somewhat precocious. Henry and Eliza both managed a full 52

¹⁰² Innes to Col Sec, 23 April 1856, CO 676.

¹⁰³ M. Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in Nineteenth-century Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 4. See 'Arnot Family Tree', page 120 in thesis.

¹⁰⁵ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 115.

days out of 52 days attendance for the quarter listed on the register, their conduct was 'good' and their progress 'very good'.

Eliza was thus familiar with the course of education offered in the government school, conceivably having been under Rait's tuition from the time of his arrival in Colesberg in 1849. For a brief time, until 20 September 1852, while Eliza was too young to move into that position, Henry Arnot acted as unpaid pupil-teacher for Rait.¹⁰⁶ Innes mentions in a later letter, that when he visited the school in 1852, he 'found that the Teacher had for some time received the gratuitous services of his brother-in-law who was then preparing to proceed to Capetown for a course of Mathematical reading' before being examined as a government land surveyor.¹⁰⁷ This suggests that Rait had married an Arnot whom neither the *S.A. Genealogies* nor Thelma Gutche help identify, however. All we know about Rait's wife is that, as his illness progressed, 'Mrs Rait, by teaching at a female school, contribute[d] considerably to the support of the family'.¹⁰⁸

What is interesting about Eliza Arnot is the unusual trajectory of her educational career. As daughter of an independent artisan, she would perhaps have been expected to acquire a basic level of literacy, marry young and run her own home. The existence of a free government school, mixed because it was located in a small town, created unusual opportunities for her to be taught, not simply trained. (This was a distinction Innes made.) This, and the financial contribution of her older half-brother.

In the male negotiation that took place to secure her services, Rait first approached David Arnot jnr. He was at this time a local dignitary, although his fortunes fluctuated somewhat. He was an affluent general agent, keeper of the town's gunpowder store, sometime school commissioner, JP, musician, collector of botanical specimens, and eventually father of twelve.¹⁰⁹ His success was built on a foundation of education gained at Innes's free school in Uitenhage and on a bursary for poor but capable boys at the South African College in Cape Town.¹¹⁰ David Arnot did not object to Eliza becoming a teacher but argued that a salary of £25 pa would be desirable, not the £15 offered. His father was poor and his own circumstances not as good as formerly. Eliza would need 'in a manner to support herself'. Rait reported that Arnot 'had always taken a great

¹⁰⁶ Rait to Innes, 24 June 1856, SGE 1/4.

¹⁰⁷ Innes to Col Sec, 12 October 1857, CO 695.

¹⁰⁸ Rait to Innes, 15 May 1857, SGE 1/4.

¹⁰⁹ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 85, 91, 95, 117-9, 137-8; David Arnot to Clerk to Resident Magistrate, 15 November 1854, 1/CBG/4/2/6, Letters Received by Resident Magistrate of Colesberg, 1854.

¹¹⁰ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 38, 66, 74.

interest' in his half-sister (some nineteen years his junior). Significantly it was David Arnot who had paid for her to study the higher branches and to be given music lessons – that great marker of a female accomplishment.¹¹¹

Innes met Eliza himself in February 1856 as he was in Colesberg to carry out an examination of the school. She had, he reported, 'passed a creditable examination in Latin, the Elements of Euclid and Algebra'. The texts from which she was examined along with two male pupils, were 'Caesar's Commentaries, Main's Syntax, Euclid, Chambers' Algebra, and Valpy's Delectus.'¹¹² He immediately appointed her at a salary of £20 pa subject to government approval. Eliza was to teach the junior classes, allowing Rait more time for the senior section of his school.¹¹³

Eliza Arnot was unusual for her time; a young woman who had been given the classical education essentially regarded as suited to more able boys. It is striking to note, by way of contrast, David Arnot jnr's choice of appropriate education for his eldest child Helen (also called Ellen), born in 1848 and so some eight years younger than Eliza. This was what Marjorie Theobald refers to as the 'female accomplishments curriculum' offered by female academies.¹¹⁴ Helen, granddaughter of Kaatje van der Jeugd of Bethelsdorp, was sent at the age of five to Miss Wilmot's Select Academy for Young Ladies in Wynberg. She returned to Colesberg as a fine musician and eventually married the effete grandson of Lord Charles Somerset, sealing her status as a lady.¹¹⁵ While Eliza's classical education was unusual, her move into caring for the young children in the school was less so – although it took central government authorities some time to adjust to the thought of any women staff in government schools.¹¹⁶ Those in charge of Cape education appear to have reflected the commonly-held view that, although acceptable as carers of small children, women were endowed with intuitive strength but delicacy rather than rationality of mind.¹¹⁷ The

¹¹¹ Rait to Innes, 1 February 1856, SGE 1/4.

¹¹² Innes to Col Sec, 23 April 1856, CO 676; G.16-'57. *Report on Public Education for 1855 and First Half of 1856*, xxii.

¹¹³ Innes to Rait, 4 February 1856, SGE 1/4.

¹¹⁴ Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 15-16.

¹¹⁵ Gutsche, *Microcosm*, 147. It appears that this marriage saved her respectable status, for on 30 April 1867, three and a half months prior to her marriage to Fitsroy Somerset, Helen Amelia gave birth to a daughter, Ellen Amelia, whose father was John McNaughton. Heese and Lombard, *South African Genealogies 1*, 84. The father was possibly John Gourlay McNaughton, 21 year old son of Patrick, teacher at Beaufort West. This is supported by the fact that an older brother, William, and a younger brother, Peter, both lived in Colesberg in the 1860s. Another possibility is their cousin 24 year old John McNaughton, son of Wynberg's government teacher. GISA, *South African Genealogies 5*, 394.

¹¹⁶ When it was suggested that 'the most advanced pupil' at the Beaufort West Government School, Margaret McNaughton, be employed as a pupil-teacher, Lieut-Governor Darling vetoed the idea on the grounds of her gender. Margin note, CAD, on Office of SGE to Acting Sec to Govt, 19 March 1853, CO 622.

¹¹⁷ Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 19-20.

grounds for exclusion, or at best a junior role for women teachers, were mental incapability and an accompanying lack of moral authority.¹¹⁸ This would naturally exclude them from leadership roles in the more prestigious schools which the authorities regarded as the domain of male teachers. How strongly Innes felt about the matter is evident in his argument against the permanent appointment of Miss Read as head teacher of the humbler aided mission school at Phillipton. They were sentiments with which both Rawson and the Governor, Sir George Grey, concurred.

Juvenile Schools which are to provide for the instruction of both sexes between the ages of five and fifteen cannot be solely in charge of a Female Teacher, with any reasonable hope of efficiency and success ... I am the more disposed to press this matter on the attention of His Excellency from a tendency, that occasionally prevails, to substitute female for male Teachers; an arrangement that must unavoidably compromise the usefulness of the Juvenile day Schools, open for the instruction of both sexes.¹¹⁹

The moral influence and helping presence, first of female pupil-teachers and later women teachers under male leadership, gradually came to be regarded as desirable, however. Eliza Arnot clearly had the academic skills which would have been accepted in any aspiring male pupil-teacher and we have noted the urgent need of assistance for the government teachers. Innes seems not to have hesitated to recommend senior girl pupils to such assistant posts when need and opportunity arose. Regarding it an economic necessity in smaller centres to continue with co-educational or 'mixed' schooling, both SGEs were nervous of its moral implications when teachers were men on their own. Innes spoke of 'the evils inseparable from a mixed school'.¹²⁰ Dale echoed this.¹²¹ Although the Colesberg school remained too small to develop separate boys' and girls' sections, the appointment of Eliza Arnot under Rait and subsequent male head teachers was in line with Stow's moralizing 'family model' of schooling¹²² emerging both in Scotland and at the Cape under Dale's superintendency.

Little was subsequently written of Eliza Arnot's career, but the evidence of Rait's periodic absences from the school in late 1856 and early 1857 suggests that she may have had to compensate a great deal for his frailty.¹²³ By November 1857 Rait had left Colesberg on his final

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 26.

¹¹⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 11 September 1856, CO 676.

¹²⁰ Innes to Select Committee, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *CGH. Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, 30.

¹²¹ Dale, G.15-'60. *Report on Education for 1859*, 25.

¹²² D. Jones, 'The Genealogy of the Urban Schoolteacher,' in S. Ball, ed., *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 65 ff.

¹²³ Rait to Innes, 1 December 1856, Secretary to Divisional Council to Office of SGE, 15 April 1857, Rait to Innes, 15 May 1857, SGE 1/4.

journey to Queenstown where he died in February 1858. She assumed the responsibilities of a head teacher, by implication a male teacher, at moments of crisis but was never paid more than the allowance given a female teacher who was assumed to have family support.

Eliza Arnot remained in government employ through the three and a half year tenure of the unpopular Scot, John Tennant. Despite having studied at the Glasgow Free Normal Seminary and presenting an impressive *curriculum vitae*, Tennant's tenure was clouded by 'low attendance, want of Classification, and absence of order and discipline'.¹²⁴ In trying to ascertain what was going wrong, Dale asked Tennant to send him copies of his timetable and subjects taught. His response provided evidence of a much diluted curriculum, with Eliza assisting with the elementary three classes containing 17 of the 20 children in the school. Pupils spent their time reading, spelling, writing on slates, doing some arithmetic and a little geography. Texts from the Nelson and Irish National School series were used along with Chambers's *Introductory Geography*. Little William Rait was listed as a pupil in the lowest class and his father would surely have lamented the shallowness of the operation. Another Arnot, Edward, provided a continuing family presence in the school as one of three pupils in the highest of the five classes. His curriculum included some Latin, grammar and etymology, and British history.¹²⁵

Tennant was asked to resign at the end of 1861¹²⁶ and for a good part 1862, until the appointment of Peter McNaughton, Eliza again kept the school going on her own.¹²⁷ They then taught together until, following the pattern of the other government schools, the Colesberg Government School was closed in March 1866 and replaced by an aided First-Class Public School.¹²⁸ The new mixed public school, managed by the residents of the town, was headed by 'a superior teacher ... specially introduced from Europe.'¹²⁹

At this point twenty-six year-old Miss Eliza Arnot was awarded a government gratuity in appreciation of her services – '£33.6.8, equal to eight months salary'.¹³⁰ So small a sum would have left her dependent on familial support unless another teaching opportunity emerged. She

¹²⁴ Dale to Acting Col Sec, 12 October 1861, CO 775.

¹²⁵ Tennant to Dale, 23 and 27 March, 1861, SGE 1/9.

¹²⁶ Dale to Acting Col Sec, 12 October 1861, CO 775.

¹²⁷ Office of SGE to Col Sec, 23 August, 17 October, CO 791.

¹²⁸ Office of SGE to Col Sec, 10 April 1866, CO 853.

¹²⁹ Office of SGE to Col Sec, 30 November 1867, CO 870. From 1 October 1871, an additional schoolroom was erected and a female teacher employed to teach the girls. The 'Girls School' was awarded a grant of £50 pa. The Head master of the Boys School was (remained?) Dr John Shaw. Office of SGE to Col Sec, 5 December 1871, CO 944.

¹³⁰ SGE 13/1.

then disappears from the records. This is unlike her more famous half-brother David, whose profile in the historical record was to be raised in the context of the early stages of the southern African mineral revolution. This was as a legal agent successfully defending the claims of the Griqua of Nicholas Waterboer to the newly found diamond fields.¹³¹

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a cameo of a young male teacher, himself a product of the New System, with the self-image of a respectable and dedicated improver of minds. In attempting to carry out the full requirements of the New System, he was backed by school commissioners who similarly valued the educational improvement of all in Colesberg. Judged by the numbers in his school and the respect he earned, Rait achieved periods of success in this socially fluid setting. The strain, however, placed by his duties and financial insecurity on his emotions and physique demonstrate a feminisation of a manly middle class married man. At the same time the affordance of the New System in this small town was a liberal education for a young woman. The illness, death and dismissal of her male superiors and the general shortage of qualified teachers in the Colony provided a contingent opportunity for her to step into the bounded world of first-class school teaching. But despite her academic and moral credentials, the dominant discourses of quality education did not allow a woman to head a school with boys in it – in other words to do permanently what she was permitted to do periodically. Eliza's teaching career appears to have ended with the closing of the government school. Her career nevertheless presaged the move from one-man schools to those which catered for children of all ages and genders in a more complex establishment. This we will witness in the final case study at Worcester.

¹³¹ *Dictionary of South African Biography I* (Pretoria: NCSR, 1968).

Chapter Six : Examining the Government Teacher, Caledon

Different judgments serve but to declare,
That truth lies, somewhere, if we knew but where.
(John C. Golding, 1841)¹

Events disrupting pedagogical order within the New System were the occasion of intense correspondence, and such was the case of one of the least among the established schools, the government school in the village of Caledon.² Never more than a modest elementary school, it was also the first government school to be closed, the scandal surrounding its teacher contributing significantly to this. The teacher John Chapman Golding's seemingly innocuous participation in a baptismal ceremony became the focus of village rumour – such that civic concerns became a matter of state intervention. An inquiry appeared to exonerate the teacher, until four years later, when the basis of rumour – the teacher's sexual misconduct – was corroborated and solidified as profound scandal.

This chapter investigates the ways in which John Golding performed his identity as government teacher in Caledon. It takes the form of a microhistory, exploring the conundrum that Golding's performance presents to the historian. At the same time it explores the broader implications of an individual teacher's professional or moral conduct. Here we find the teacher as part of a moral community, knit into small-town politics, fighting to defend his reputation. Teacher and townsfolk are linked through notions of surveillance and moral ordering as both an official and a public gaze are brought to bear on them. This case demonstrates very well the strange connections that the small world of private scandal has with a larger political world,³ for, in the eyes of one respectable observer, immoral conduct such as that of the Caledon teacher undermined the whole educational project:

The established school at this place ... has proved a failure. Some years ago, when visiting Caledon and Clanwilliam, the general opinion was the same as to the Government schools in those places. What was the cause of it? The general conviction seemed to be: the inability of the teacher, either from moral or other causes.

(Rev Professor N.J. Hofmeyr, Stellenbosch, 1863)⁴

¹ This unacknowledged quotation was placed by the teacher, John C. Golding, at the end of his 'small' book, *An Epitome of the State of Education, Schools, and Teachers, & c. & c. at the Cape Colony for the Last Twenty Years* (Cape Town: Victoria Press, 1841), 18.

² The 'Education' correspondence of the Cape Colonial Office (CO) has a collection of 30 documents (letters, notes, reports, Lieutenant-Governor's memoranda, and a testimonial) relating to the Caledon Inquiry.

³ K. McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820–1850* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 19.

⁴ 'Answer from Rev. Professor Hofmeyer,' G.24-'63. CGH. *Report of a Commission Appointed, in*

The Charge: 'The Usefulness of the School Is ... Affected by the Rumours in Circulation'

Central among the letters and reports detailing the dramatic proceedings in Caledon is a letter, penned on 5 August 1854, when the school commission of Caledon decided that it was their 'duty' to draw attention at the highest levels to the 'declining usefulness' of the government school. This, they asserted, was due to the withdrawal of pupils 'in consequence ... of certain proceedings of the Teacher said to be of immoral tendency'. The letter from the three commissioners, magistrate and Civil Commissioner Captain William Mackay, Dutch Reformed Church dominee, Revd Dr P.K. Albertyn, and minister of the 'English Church', Revd Mr Henry Wilshere, continued:

A married woman residing in the place whose husband has been away for many years, lived in the Teacher's house, with him whilst his own wife residing in Cape Town. This woman whilst so residing gave birth to a child for which at the baptism the Teacher stood sponsor and here it is right to mention that the School is held at the Teacher's residence.

It appears that the minister of the English Church, in consequence of information he received advised the Teacher to abstain from receiving the Sacrament.⁵ The consequence was the receipt by the Commission of a Note from the Teacher [*to the effect that until 'justifiable cause' was shown for 'excluding me from the Sacrament I protest against his being present at the Examination of the Government school, of which I am the master'*]⁶ ... This state of things cannot be allowed to continue without manifest injury to the School and we therefore bring the matter in this form to the Knowledge of His Honor the Lieutenant Governor.

We write in Confidence because we are not aware in how far the conduct imputed to the Master can be proved whilst at the same time we should be culpable in withholding from His Honor a knowledge of the fact that the usefulness of the School is materially affected by the rumours in circulation.

We request that His Honor will be pleased to give us in confidence such instructions as may appear to His Honor calculated to remedy the existing evil.⁷

The letter is ripe with social issues - of duty and watchfulness; of fitness for purpose and loss of it; of transgression and exclusion. It also signals the performance of a number of significant social rituals, including: 'standing at the Font' as representing entrance to a community; 'exclusion from the Sacrament' representing the sanction of and exclusion from the same community; and a newer social ritual – that of attending the examination of the public school. At the centre of the vigilance, muddled purpose, purported transgression and associated rituals stands John Chapman Golding, government teacher at Caledon from 1849.

Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to Inquire into and Report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony, April 1863 [hereafter Watermeyer Commission], Appendix i, 58–9.

⁵ In a penciled note on the text, Colonial Secretary Rawson wrote, 'This insinuates that there was some other - & a very grave charge against Mr G.'

⁶ John C. Golding to J.S. Needham, Caledon, 27th June, 1854, CO 637. Needham was church warden and secretary of the school commission.

⁷ W.J. Mackay, P.K. Albertyn and H.M.M. Wilshere to Lieutenant Governor Darling, 5 August 1854, CO 637. (Albertyn's role on the commission was limited to the meeting at which this letter was written. He alleged that he had not known before then that he was on the commission. Innes, 'Report on Govt School,' 27 September 1854, CO 637).

The Teacher Presents Himself: 'A man of skill, ability, and independent & public spirit'

Golding's personal history as a colonial teacher clearly shaped his self-conception as a good – a fit – teacher; it also placed him in an ambivalent position where due status supported by financial security was absent. In these aspects of his identity, he was similar to the other government teachers examined in the case studies. Significantly, however, he was neither recruited for the New System from outside of the Cape Colony like McNaughton and Bremner nor was he a product of the New System itself, like Rait and Albert Rowan at Worcester. While much of this history is unknown, it is on record that he settled at the Cape in 1820, taught under the colonial chaplains at the Government Grammar School (1825-1827, and 1832) and then became English teacher to the male pupils at the Dutch private school, 'Tot Nut van het Algemeen', from 1838-1843.⁸ Both of these institutions were in Cape Town.

While at 'Tot Nut', he confidently asserted his knowledge and experience by writing a critique of the state of Cape colonial education, published in 1841. This 'small book' is twenty-one pages in length, excluding appendices, and entitled *An Epitome of the State of Education, Schools, and Teachers, & c. & c. at the Cape Colony for the Last Twenty Years*. It was thus published as the New System was introduced. Golding asserted that Cape Colonial education was in crisis; there were district schools without teachers, districts without schools, and those that taught had no talent.⁹ In clear reference to the teachers used in Somerset's programme of anglicisation through English free schools, he went on to allege that these bad teachers were unsuited to the task of educating colonial children. They were ignorant of Dutch, culturally insensitive, and their qualifications unexamined.¹⁰ He blamed the government for leaving supervision of education (before 1839) to inert and uninformed Bible and School commissioners whose English was 'shamefully deficient'. These men selected teachers through patronage rather than merit and added insult to injury by paying teachers the wages of 'menial servants' or 'coolies'.¹¹ Though claiming 'impartiality', it is clear that Golding felt victim of the prevailing educational dispensation.¹² Social powerlessness was already part of his identity:

⁸ Golding, *Epitome*, vii; Memorial of J.C. Golding, 4 January 1857, A1SC-1857. CGH. *Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the Subject of Education*, 21; S. Howes, 'Tot Nut van het Algemeen' School, Cape Town 1804-1870: a Case Study of a Cape School's Response to Political and Philosophical changes in the 19th Century' (MEd diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2004), 164.

⁹ Golding, *Epitome*, 2. This critique resonates with what appeared in the editorials of John Fairbairn's *South African Commercial Advertiser*, H.C. Botha, *John Fairbairn in South Africa* (Cape Town: Historical Publication Society, 1984), 142-5.

¹⁰ Golding, *Epitome*, 5-6.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 3.

¹² *Ibid*, vii.

[I]t would evidently appear that they did not need such as I; no, no; men of ability, of skill, and of independent and public spirit, who knew their duty and would do it without fear or favour, were not wanted.¹³

As a 'colonist of 21 year's residence', he clearly felt able to serve the local Dutch community who he was teaching and whose language he was able to translate, seeing in them, perhaps, 'the people' to whom the book was dedicated. He felt that a teacher 'should be chosen by the *people* of the village', and 'be removeable by them',¹⁴ (a somewhat ironic position to hold considering the events of 1854). He aligned himself with good teachers in the work of improvement through education and he distanced himself from the earlier educational administrators, both Dutch and British. Under the leadership of James Rose Innes, appointed as first Superintendent-General of Education in 1839, Golding hoped and expected that,

public schools will for the future work better, teach better, and give better satisfaction to all parties interested in the improvement of the people, who have to earn what they eat, what they drink, and what they wear, by the sweat of their brows.¹⁵

It was as part of the new educational dispensation that Golding became the government teacher in Caledon, at one of the four second-class schools which provided only for elementary education. In so doing, he came under the eye of the local school commission, as had his colleagues throughout the Established System. The powers of the school commission were subordinated to those of the Superintendent-General of Education. This did not, however, 'in any respect set aside the important duty ... of visiting the school ... and of reporting to Government on whatever may appear to your board **to affect its character, or have a tendency to compromise its usefulness**'.¹⁶ [My emphasis]

It was within this framework of local surveillance that the Caledon School commissioners, Mackay, Wilshere and Albertyn, assisted by school commission secretary, Joseph Needham, reported their disquiet concerning the Caledon teacher to government in August 1854. This case study of the Caledon teacher hinges on his relationship with them, the local élite of the village, and its leading residents, as his reputation and associated 'usefulness' of his school were brought into question.

¹³ *Ibid*, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ J. Moore Craig, Acting Colonial Secretary, 'Letter of Instructions to the Local School Commissions of the Colony', 18 February 1842. Copy in CO 637, 1854. The reduction in powers was more in theory than in practice as few towns had effective local School commissions before 1841. In August 1841 the SGE set about identifying suitable commissioners and having them approved. CO 499. See also Innes to Craig, 24 March 1842, CO 510 for Caledon's first school commission.

The Caledon School

Although Caledon owed its origins in the eighteenth century to the recuperative powers of its mineral springs, it was only formally laid out in 1812 - by the colonial government as a regional administrative centre.¹⁷ It remained essentially a farming village knit into the wheat- and pasturelands of the south-western Cape. Provisioning government, military and other travellers from Cape Town to the eastern interior proved lucrative for some Caledon merchants,¹⁸ but it was a small village. It was also one of the Cape villages in which a Free School had been established, and clearly the school was in trouble by the time the New System was launched in 1839. On a visit to Caledon in 1841, Innes found an unpopular teacher, 1820 settler Joseph Turpin, with no pupils in the school other than a number of his own 11 children.¹⁹ As Turpin had 'declined to undergo Examination in the course of Instruction laid down in the New System', his retirement was gently engineered.²⁰

The removal of Turpin seemed to revive schooling, and in August 1842 the clergyman acting as interim teacher reported having 52 pupils.²¹ By January 1843, Samuel Goldsbury, judged fit for the task by Innes,²² was the incumbent and living in a rented house in Church Street. Because of the unavailability of a suitable schoolroom, the school at Caledon was, initially at least, held in the teacher's house²³ – a blurring of the boundaries of private and public space which is significant in the unfolding of the later Golding case. Here Goldsbury remained until mid 1849, developing a more congenial relationship with the local community and adding to his meagre income the stipend of secretary to the municipality.²⁴

While the Caledon school was being re-established, Innes made use of the services of John Golding and his 20-year-old son, Henry, as part-time instructors in English to 'negro apprentices'

¹⁷ E. Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey: People, Roads and Early Days* (Swellendam: E.H. Burrows, 1994), 83 ff; J. Edwards, *Our Heritage: A History of Caledon* (Caledon: Caledon Venster, 1979), 1-5.

¹⁸ Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 137.

¹⁹ Memorial of Joseph Turpin, Government Teacher at Caledon, 17 August 1841, CO 499.

²⁰ Innes to Craig, 9 August 1841, *ibid. Chambers's Educational Course*, published in Edinburgh, provided the 'course of instruction' used in the government schools.

²¹ Innes to Acting Col Sec, 23 September 1842, CO 510.

²² Innes to Acting Col Sec, 19 July 1841, CO 499; Innes to Craig, 20 June 1842, CO 510. Goldsbury was at one time a pupil at the South African College, where Innes had been Mathematics professor from 1830 to 1839.

²³ Innes to Col Sec, 'Accounts for hire of School Buildings and for allowances to Teachers in lieu of a Residence', 6 October 1843 and 20 December 1843, CO 518; Property Valuations 1845, 3/CAL/1, Minutes of the Municipality of Caledon, 1840–1860, 39.

²⁴ 3/CAL/1, Minutes 1840–1860, 43. The New System of education was paralleled in civic affairs by the granting of municipal government to Caledon in November 1839.

in Cape Town.²⁵ Finally, in June 1849, Golding, now about 52 years of age, was appointed to the second-class Government School at Caledon at the minimal salary of £65 per annum with an allowance of £25 for house rent.²⁶ The continued unavailability of a suitable school building meant that he was, in addition, paid £20 for providing a school room in his house.²⁷ He moved to Caledon, leaving his wife and children in Cape Town for reasons that he did not divulge.²⁸

By the time Golding arrived in Caledon, its population had increased 'particularly amongst the lower classes'²⁹ in the wake of slave emancipation. In the 1850s, the wool boom brought prosperity to the area³⁰ and also found a growing British population in Caledon, partly as a result of economic opportunities, but also as a result of the explicit anglicisation of the civil service. The British residents seem to have worked alongside the Dutch-speaking residents in civic and commercial affairs without too much difficulty.³¹ The British segment was nevertheless rallied, as throughout the colony, by Anglican Bishop of Cape Town, Robert Gray, to the cause of constructing an 'English' church building. This rose between 1850 and 1855 according to plans provided by Sophy Gray, his wife.³² Until the Anglican church building was completed, English services were held after the Dutch service in the Dutch Reformed Church,³³ another blurring of spatial boundaries that was to have implications for the Inquiry into the government teacher in Caledon. And so, let us now move to the Inquiry.

The Government Inquiry, August-September 1854

An initial exchange of letters between Lieutenant-Governor Charles Darling and the school commissioners failed to reveal the exact nature of the charge against the teacher. The clergymen stuck to their assertion that this was confidential. The result was the demand that they resign.

²⁵ Memorial of J.C. Golding, 4 January 1857, CO 695; Innes to Col Sec, 30 December 1853, CO 622. Baptismal records show Golding as having two children, Henry James, born 11 July 1824, and Adelaide, born 12 February 1832. Their mother is not named. See J.A. Heese and R.J.J. Lombard, *South African Genealogies 2* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1989), 476-7.

²⁶ Innes to Col Sec, 5 July 1849, CO 582.

²⁷ Innes to Col Sec, 30 April 1850, CO 594.

²⁸ Memorial of J.C. Golding, 1 November 1857, CO 695. The gist of the 1857 Memorial was a request for a pension so that he could return to his family 'to whom he has been long a stranger'.

²⁹ Municipal Commissioners J.S. Needham and J.J. Tesselaar to Governor Maitland, 22 July 1844, CO 534.

³⁰ J.E. Wilson, 'A History of Caledon in the Nineteenth Century, 1811-1884' (MA diss., University of South Africa, 1984), 101-4.

³¹ Municipal minutes were written in English and Dutch; Municipal Commissioners represented and were elected by householders from both groups. See 3/CAL/1; Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 98-103.

³² D. Martin, *The Bishop's Churches* (Cape Town: Struik, 2005), 28.

³³ Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 90, refers to English services following Dutch services in the Dutch Reformed Church.

Darling was undoubtedly urged to take this course by the new Colonial Secretary, Rawson W. Rawson, whose margin note to the initial letter was: 'The Commsn ask for advice – They are requested to give information. They refuse it & resign.'³⁴ This stand-off between secular and sacred authority is interesting, as it is clear that none of the commissioners enjoyed being regarded by Rawson and Darling as obstacles to the truth.³⁵ Rawson and Darling asserted that the truth was needed in order to 're-establish the School in public estimation'³⁶ and render justice to the teacher. Regularity and due process were required, not arbitrary judgments. In a note on the correspondence, Darling wrote:

I cannot suffer the Character of the humblest Servant of the Govt to be irretrievably destroyed without giving him an opportunity of defence and at least knowing upon what grounds the charges against him rest grounded.³⁷

What was being called into question at this stage was the character – the respectability and morality – of the 'humblest of public servants', the government teacher. This allegation is crucial, and will be explored fully once the inquiry has been described.

Thus it was that Innes, as Golding's superior, was sent on a fifteen hour journey from Cape Town to investigate. His two day Inquiry on 21 and 22 September 1854, was framed around the four issues:

1. Was attendance at the Caledon Government School declining and the school failing to function effectively?
2. Were many respectable citizens withdrawing their children because of the teacher's immoral actions?
3. Did a married woman live with him at his house while both their spouses were living elsewhere, and give birth to a child during this time, for whom he 'Stood Sponsor' at the baptism?
4. Did the Anglican minister 'in consequence of information he received' effectively exclude the teacher from church life by excluding him from the sacrament of Communion?

³⁴ Mackay, Albertyn and Wilshere to Darling, 5 August 1854, notes of Rawson W. Rawson on this letter, CO 637.

³⁵ Albertyn and Wilshere to Mackay, 4 September 1854, Wilshere to Mackay, 4 September 1854, Albertyn and Wilshere to Col Sec, 25 September 1854, *ibid*.

³⁶ Notes of Lieutenant-Governor C.A. Darling, 14 August 1854, on the back of letter, Mackay, Albertyn and Wilshere to Darling, 5 August 1854, *ibid*.

³⁷ Notes of Darling, 12 September 1854, on back of letter; Mackay to Rawson, 4 September 1854, *ibid*.

The School Examination: The Teacher Presents his Register and Pupils for Scrutiny

Setting the Inquiry at noon on Friday 22 September at the offices of the Civil Commissioner, Innes then made use of the available time on 21 September and the morning of 22 September to visit the school located, as we have noted, in Golding's house. His intention was to seek for himself evidence of its alleged dire predicament. This was particularly important as the whole inquiry had been precipitated by Golding's assertion of authority over the school as his domain by excluding Revd Wilshere from the scheduled public examination. The examination had in fact not taken place at all.

On the charge that the school had been 'for some time back, indifferently attended and its usefulness ... rapidly declining', the information gleaned by Innes supported Golding's assertion at the subsequent Inquiry. Then he 'declared the allegation to be erroneous, as his Register shows that instead of attendance at the School decreasing it had been increasing'. Innes noted that there were 73 children enrolled (compared to 53 in August 1851; 54 in October 1852; and a maximum enrolment of 65 from July to December 1853).³⁸ 34 were girls and there were 39 boys. As to its effectiveness:

In respect of the state of progress shown by the several classes, I am bound to report that on no former occasion, during the charge of the present Teacher, have I found the School, which in its character is purely elementary, in a more satisfactory state.³⁹

Innes's emphasis on this being an elementary school is important, for it is clear that the first-class schools delivering the higher branches – the classics and mathematics at secondary level – represented for him the essence of the New System. The teachers in these schools such as McNaughton, Bremner, Rait and Rowan were 'superior' teachers.⁴⁰ Innes was, however, familiar with hundreds of schools distributed over the length and breadth of the colony – from mission schools to church clerk schools to farmers' schools, as well as the more élite institutions like the South African College and 'Tot Nut' in Cape Town. If any individual was in a position to judge, it was he. So, while the complaining commission was excluded from this particular opportunity to turn its appraising gaze on the performance of the Caledon school children, he brought the official and professional gaze to bear.

Innes also recorded the names, ages, gender and paternal occupation of every child in the school, leaving an invaluable record.

³⁸ Innes, 'Memo – Caledon School during 1853', filed with August 1854 correspondence; Innes, 'Report on Govt School', 27 September 1854, *ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ A view reflected in correspondence: for example Innes to Rawson, 2 April 1856; 12 September 1856, *ibid.*

Figure 6.1

List of pupils on the Roll of the Government School at Caledon, when inspected by the Superintendent General of Education on the 21st and 22nd of September 1854 – showing also their ages, and the occupations of their respective Parents.⁴¹

| List of | Name | Age | Occupation of Parent |
|-------------|--------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| Boys | | | |
| 1. | A.B. Theron | - | Farmer |
| 2. | I/J. Renceforth | 9 | Mason & Builder |
| 3. | Stephanus De Vos | 8 | Merchant |
| 4. | M. Geering | 9 | Wine merchant, wh'sale & retail |
| 5. | William Uys | 10 | Butcher |
| 6. | Charles Albertyn | 11 | Medical Practitioner |
| 7. | H. Dempers | 15 | Merchant, Lowry's Pass |
| 8. | Daniel Steyn | 16 | Farmer (dead) |
| 9. | H. Gildenhuis | 12 | Builder |
| 10. | B. Maree | 10 | do |
| 11. | Wm Knox | 10 | Wheel Wright |
| 12. | F. Albertyn | 9 | vide 6 |
| 13. | Carel Muller | 10 | Father dead |
| 14. | Wm Renceforth | 7 | vide 2 |
| 15. | Barend Maree | 7 | vide 10 |
| 16. | Hny Knox | 9 | vide 11 |
| 17. | Jan Muller | 7 | vide 13 |
| 18. | John Nicholas | 7 | Hatmaker |
| 19. | Peter Villiers | 6 | Grandson of Church Clerk |
| 20. | Dirk Knox | 6 | vide 11 |
| 21. | H. Geering | 5 | vide 4 |
| 22. | H. Uys | 5 | vide 5 |
| 23. | Wm Wright | 5 | Architect & Builder |
| 24. | John Dangor/Dangar | 8 | Baker |
| 25. | John Knox | 4 | vide 11 |
| 26. | B. Renceforth | 4 | vide 2 |
| 27. | Anthony Osterloh | 5 | Merchant &c |
| 28. | G. Wolverans | 7 | Shoemaker |
| 29. | John Wolverans | 5 | do |
| 30. | Wm Holloway | 7 | Hotel Keeper, left |
| 31. | Dirk Graaff | 11 | Miller (Grandfather) |
| 32. | Wm L. Fick | 12 | Farmer |
| 33. | Jan P. Fick | 11 | do |
| 34. | Lambert H. Fick | 7 | do |
| 35. | Henry E. Holloway | 14 | vide 30 |
| 36. | Wm Stoddart | 5 | Shoemaker |
| 37. | Johannes Steyn | 6 | vide 8 |
| 38. | Edwin Emett | 11 | Agent (dead) |
| 39. | P. Badenhorst | 13 | Farmer |

⁴¹ Innes, 'Report on Govt School', Addendum 4, 27 September 1854, CO 637.

| List of | Name | Age | Occupation of Parent |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----|--|
| <u>Girls</u> | | | |
| 1. | Judith Knox | 14 | vide Boys 11 |
| 2. | Vemina (?) Dempers | 13 | vide Boys 7 |
| 3. | Christina Vos | 10 | " " 3 |
| 4. | Catherine Emett | 9 | " " 38 |
| 5. | Johanna Viljoen | 13 | Farmer, Matjes' Drift |
| 6. | Clasina Dempers | 12 | vide Boys' list 7 |
| 7. | M.C. Pietersen | 11 | Resides with Mr Otto (her grandfather) |
| 8. | Susan Pietersen | 13 | do Mrs Needham (her Grandaunt) |
| 9. | M. Fabricius | 9 | Carrier |
| 10. | G. Stoddart | 13 | vide Boys' list 36 |
| 11. | Emily Wright | 7 | " " 23 |
| 12. | Jane Day | 8 | Shoemaker, Agent. &c |
| 13. | Lena Fabricius | 8 | vide 9 |
| 14. | Anna Fabricius | 6 | " " |
| 15. | Jane Dagar | 7 | vide Boys' list 24 |
| 16. | Betsy Nicholas | 6 | " " 18 |
| 17. | Helen West | 5 | Mason |
| 18. | Anna Langenhove | 6 | Orphan, lives with her aunt |
| 19. | Betty White | 6 | Brickmaker |
| 20. | Truitje Maree | 6 | vide 10 Boys' list |
| 21. | Betsy Pararae or Pararee | 4 | Carrier |
| 22. | Maria Lotter | 5 | Blacksmith |
| 23. | Sally White | 3 | vide 19 |
| 24. | Betsy Fabricius | 4 | vide 9 |
| 25. | Anna Theunissen | 4 | Dealer in wine |
| 26. | Isabella Niekerk | 12 | Stepfather Shoemaker |
| 27. | A. Stoddart | 6 | vide 36 Boys' list |
| 28. | Anna Graaff | 9 | " 31 " |
| 29. | Maria Moltby | 14 | Miller |
| 30. | E. Alexander | 7 | Labourer |
| 31. | Sarah Fick | 10 | vide 32 Boys' list |
| 32. | Maria Fick | 4 | " " |
| 33. | Maria Osterloh | 5 | " 27 " |
| 34. | Maria Fourie | 10 | Farmer & Carrier |

The picture is of a family and community school representing both the oldest families in the town and the newer ones.⁴² There are few pupils in the school who do not have at least one and often more siblings along with them. There are almost as many girls as boys, and more of the children have fathers who are artisans or tradesmen than any other occupation. The local doctor's sons attend, as do those of the most propertied municipal commissioner, merchant Thomas Osterloh.

⁴² Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 92ff refers to a number of residents whose names also appear on this list of school pupils.

The racial composition is difficult to ascertain, but the school was certainly open to all residents. There are clearly both Dutch- and English-speaking families represented. The age range is from three to sixteen. On the day of the visit, 49 children were present – pointing to the common feature of colonial schools, the divergence between enrolment and attendance.⁴³ As Innes reported: ‘the Teacher complained and justly of the great irregularity of the majority of the pupils attending his School – many being absent for months at a time.’ The use of child labour probably accounts for much of this, with harvest time⁴⁴ and possibly sheep shearing being particularly disruptive to schooling.

The children would, for the most part, have been familiar with the ritual of the quarterly public examination. Innes described the performance of the children on 21 August 1854 thus:

Of the 49 pupils present, 31 were Reading in both languages (Dutch and English) and of these more than one half were not only fluent and accurate in their reading, but also could translate, with ease, simple sentences from the one language into the other. They also made a creditable appearance in the outlines of Geography, more especially in connexion with Sound [?] history and the Elementary Rules of Arithmetic ... Those Pupils who had been regular in their attendance satisfied me that the labours of the Teacher have been successful in those elementary branches to which the course of instruction in a Second class School is confined.⁴⁵

The Caledon Government School drew on a population comparable in size to that of Colesberg, and it was similarly a mixed school. Its curriculum was clearly more limited than that delivered by Rait to the same range of elementary pupils, but Golding was doing what was expected of him as teacher of a second-class school.

The Memorial: The Teacher Produces a Testimonial of his Good Character

At noon on 22 September, the Inquiry was convened at the office of the civil commissioner. It was delayed as commissioners awaited the arrival of ‘a Resident’ who the previous day had told Innes ‘that he intended to substantiate one of the allegations affecting Mr Golding’s character’.⁴⁶ Unfortunately this unidentified witness failed to arrive, and the Inquiry proceeded with five men present: Innes, Golding (who had been informed the previous day of the charges), Mackay and the two clergymen on the school commission. Wilshere, aged 27, was probably the youngest of the group, and at the same time parish priest to both Mackay⁴⁷ and Golding.

⁴³ It is a regular feature of the Cape government teachers’ reports: see, for example, G.16–57. *Report on Public Education for the Year 1855, and the First Half of 1856*, xv–xxiv; M. Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women’s Education in Nineteenth-century Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 206 makes the same point for Australia in the nineteenth century.

⁴⁴ A.J. Keulder, ‘Die Ontstaan en Ontwikkeling van Onderwys te Caledon, 1812–1895’ (BEd research report, University of Stellenbosch, 1942), 49.

⁴⁵ Innes, ‘Report on Govt School’, 27 September 1854, CO 637.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 94–96.

While Mackay participated in the Inquiry, his clerical colleagues were present but refused to testify, as they 'formally rejected' this having been instituted at all. They stood by the principle that their initial letter to the Lieutenant-Governor had been intended to guard the reputation of the school and welfare of the children, because 'reports were current detrimental to its interests'. Having no firm evidence against Golding, the letter was 'confidential', however, and people had resigned from the commission rather than disclose the core complaint against him.⁴⁸

Innes set out the four issues in turn, as charges, and recorded the comments of Mackay and Golding on each. As has been noted above, the first assertion – that the school was failing – was refuted by Golding, and Mackay had nothing more to add. They moved on to the second, related assertion: 'Several of the Pupils, members of the most respectable families have been withdrawn in consequence, as it is stated, of certain proceedings of the Teacher, said to be of immoral tendency.' Discussion focused on the alleged withdrawal from the school of children of respectable families. Mackay knew of the allegation but could not name specific instances, nor did he set out any reason for their purported withdrawal. Golding's immoral action was still unspecified. Golding said that nothing had been communicated to him; pupils enrolled and withdrew as a matter of course, and where reasons were given he reported them to the authorities. He did however file a 'Paper' with 30 signatures attached.⁴⁹ It was worded:

We, the undersigned Inhabitants of Caledon, fully approve of the conduct and the teaching of Mr Golding of our Children in the Government School here, during the last five years; and having nothing in the least to say against his moral & religious character, we wish him success in all his proceedings.
12th June 1854

The issue of respectability, tied to a monogamous Christian identity, was clearly central if the reputation of the school, the teacher and the educational project was to be secured. To some extent it appears that the 'respectable' citizens of Caledon were divided into camps. On the one side were the clergy and septuagenarian Needham, one of Caledon's leading citizens. Needham was Justice of the Peace, former municipal commissioner, former school commissioner, current secretary to the school commission and one of the largest property owners in Caledon.⁵⁰ In his capacity as Anglican church warden, it was he who personally informed Golding that the minister forbade him to come to the sacrament.

⁴⁸ Albertyn and Wilshere to Mackay, 4 September 1854, CO 637.

⁴⁹ Annexure 3, Innes, 'Report on Govt School', 27 September 1854, *ibid*.

⁵⁰ Minutes of Caledon Municipality, 1840-1860, 3/CAL/1, 2 and 39. From 1840 until the time of his death in 1854, Needham had at least three properties in the village and acquired the Baths, at which he resided at the time of the altercation with Golding: Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 93-4.

On the other side were those who rallied round the teacher for, three days after his excommunication, Golding 'sent a paper round for signatures'.⁵¹ At the Inquiry, he handed in the document to show that he had a significant number of respectable parents and guardians on his side. When a comparison is made between the signatories and the pupils on the Register, it is clear that a number of the signatories had children of school-going age attending the school at the time.

An examination of the Caledon Municipal Record Book, 1840–1860 indicates that the signatories indeed represented several of the important householders of the village in 1854.⁵² They included the church clerk, and the medical doctor and sometime municipal commissioner, Abraham Albertyn (brother of the Revd Dr P.K. Albertyn).⁵³ Significant as major property owners were wool merchant L. Weyman, C.A.M. de Vos and Thomas Osterloh, three of the five municipal commissioners in 1854. The memorial was also signed by the secretary to the municipality, P.C. Blommestein, business partner to Weyman,⁵⁴ as well as long-time resident (and one-time canteen owner) W.H. Kleyn. The signatories also came from humbler occupations – a wheelwright, blacksmith, hatmaker, shoemaker and butcher. A couple of builders and a farmer also signed.

At the end of the day's proceedings, and presumably on Mackay's unrecorded advice, Innes wrote notes to four citizens who had been identified as respectable people who had withdrawn their children from the government school.⁵⁵ Only one replied directly that he had – the same Rev Dr Albertyn of the School Commission.⁵⁶ That he felt personally implicated in the saga makes this understandable, and I will explain this further under the third charge. So far, however, it appeared that Golding's reputation was on reasonable ground – there was a stable school population, and he could call on many of the townsfolk to testify to his good character.

⁵¹ Innes, 'Report on Govt School', CO 637.

⁵² Minutes of Caledon Municipality, 1840–1860, 3/CAL/1, 101; 'Valuation of Property in the Municipality of Caledon', n.d. 3/CAL/5, shows Needham, who died in 1854, scored out, so probably 1854 or 1855.

⁵³ Heese and Lombard, *South African Genealogies I*, 48. Dr Albertyn was described by Lady Duff Gordon as 'a very clever Dutchman who studied in Edinburgh and Berlin, and travelled all over Europe,' in Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 158.

⁵⁴ Wilson, 'History of Caledon', 104.

⁵⁵ Annexure 10, Innes to Revd Mr Albertyn, Annexure 12, Innes to Miss Fabricius, Annexure 14, Innes to Mr Peter Theron, and 'a similar letter to Mr Ley, the Deputy Sheriff', all 22 September 1854, Innes, 'Report on Govt School', 27 September 1854, CO 637.

⁵⁶ Annexure 11, P.K. Albertyn to Innes, 22 September 1854, *ibid*.

The 'Irregular Christening' : The Teacher Stands at the Font



The Dutch Reformed Church, Caledon [known as the 'Kruiskerk'] where the baptism was performed.⁵⁷

The third charge set forth for clarification was:

A married woman residing in the place whose husband has been away for many years, lived in the Teacher's house, with him whilst his own wife residing in Cape Town. This woman whilst so residing gave birth to a child for which at the baptism the Teacher Stood Sponsor and here it is right to mention that the School is held at the Teacher's residence.

The woman in question was named Mrs Day. It was agreed that she had indeed stayed at Golding's house, but Golding said this had been as his housekeeper from December 1852 to March 1853 and she stayed there along with her sister and her sister's husband Frank Knox. (The possibility that the teacher supplemented his own income through providing lodgings is reasonable, given the meanness of his salary.) The baby, Golding asserted, had been born at the

⁵⁷ Cape Archives, M 431.

Baths prior to her coming to his house, and after the mother had returned from Cape Town.⁵⁸ As church warden at that time (though no longer at the time of the Inquiry), Golding had arranged for the christening of the child during the passing visit of Wilshere, who had not yet become resident Anglican priest. His presence at the font was in his capacity as church warden. He was not a sponsor. In other words, his act of standing at the font was symbolic of nothing more than his official position and civic identity; there was no personal significance to the act. This was strongly contested by Mackay, and subsequently by the other commissioners.

Once the teacher had admitted to having Mrs Day living at his house, the civil commissioner could not restrain himself from pointing out that she had been a frequent visitor to the house prior to moving in – and the teacher asserted that this was because her other (pregnant) sister was then living there with her husband (Mr Lotter). The actual sponsors of the baby were in fact Mrs Day's two sisters, Mrs Lotter and Mrs Knox, and the third her brother-in-law, Frank Knox.⁵⁹

One can imagine the pregnant silence of the two clergymen at the Inquiry – torn between maintaining their moral positions (and their reputations) and interjecting with what they knew. That they were unable to hold their silence is evident by their writing a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor dated 25 September 1854,⁶⁰ thus three days after the Inquiry had taken place. Wilshere had finally consulted the baptismal register, having been surprised to hear at the Inquiry that Golding was not a sponsor; he also found the sponsors to be as Golding had asserted.

Attaching four statements from Anglican congregants who witnessed the baptism, the letter also explained Revd Dr Albertyn's involvement and points to the depth of the social transgression in which Golding and Mrs Day had become involved. The letter set out the following:

Mr Wilshere performed this christening in passing through Caledon, before residence, nearly two years ago – believing, that as the parties were brought by Mr Golding who was moreover then acting as Churchwarden, everything was in order. He was surprised however to hear some months afterwards, that the Mother was a Member of the Dutch Church and that Baptism had been in her own church, refused to the child until such time as she would attend a meeting of the Consistory to account for the circumstances relating to the birth of the child. Had Mr Wilshere been acquainted with this, he certainly would not have performed a Christening which interfered with the discipline of another Church ...⁶¹

⁵⁸ The 'Baths' were located about a kilometre above the village. They included hundreds of hectares of land and multiple buildings, including the old government baths, as well as the newer, but also ramshackle, Baths which Needham owned. The government land and baths were ceded as a glebe to the Church of England by Sir Harry Smith in 1850, at Bishop Gray's instigation. A mission village was developed there where many poor members of the church were able to take up residence: Wilson, 'History of Caledon', 107; Edwards, *Our Heritage*, 5, 41. If Mrs Day had had her baby there, it was significantly 'beyond the pale'.

⁵⁹ Innes, 'Report on Govt School', 27 September 1854, CO 637.

⁶⁰ Albertyn and Wilshere to Col. Sec., 25 September 1854, *ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

It can be inferred that Mrs Day, at times in the Inquiry distanced by being referred to as ‘the Female’, was in fact well-known in Caledon. Her parents, Mr and Mrs Hendrik J. Uys, lived in the village where her father was active in local politics as wardmaster for his street,⁶² and many members of her extensive family were local artisans.⁶³ As a member of the Dutch Church, she would have been well integrated into the community. It would also appear that controversy was not new to her, as she had married the father of her daughter Jane a few weeks after the child’s birth in 1846.⁶⁴ Eight year-old Jane Day was a pupil at the government school and, on the school register, Jane Day’s father is recorded as a ‘Shoemaker, Agent &c’⁶⁵ – although the school commission’s initial letter of complaint pointed out that Mr Day had been absent from Caledon for many years. The act of marriage would have returned Mrs Day to the territory of female morality, but her subsequent abandonment by her husband compromised her again.⁶⁶

The village was small, the main residential area embracing three streets, and it is likely that Golding’s house and school were situated in the main road and easy for all to observe. It was the itinerant priest and newcomer to the village, Wilshere, who had in fact slipped up. He had been unaware of Mrs Day’s avoidance of the discipline of her church and assumed all was well if the baptism was arranged by the teacher/church warden. That the same building and font were used for both Dutch and English church baptisms may have allowed for an ecclesiastical sleight of hand in a community where an unbaptised child was anathema. But what had occurred was ‘an irregular christening’ for which Wilshere ‘and others still consider Mr Golding responsible’.⁶⁷

Wilshere was able to draw on his congregants’ observations, and this is recorded in the four notes presented after the Inquiry but before the final report was submitted. He had asked: ‘Do you know or recollect anything of this Christening?’ Three mentioned seeing Golding going up to the font with the baptismal party, three believed he did so as he was a sponsor or godfather to

⁶² Innes, ‘Report on Govt School’, *ibid*; Minutes of the Caledon Municipality, 3/CAL/1, 2 and 54, record Hendrik Uys as owning a humble property in 1840 in the ‘Street behind the Church’ and as wardmaster for Ward No. 1 from December 1847.

⁶³ GISA, *South African Genealogies 13* (Stellenbosch: GISA, 2006), 493-4 shows Wilhelmina Magdalena Uys (Mrs Day) to have been one of 12 living siblings, with two brothers listed as wagon makers and another as a smith.

⁶⁴ Heese and Lombard, *South African Genealogies 2*, 38.

⁶⁵ Annexure 4, Innes, ‘Report on Govt School’, CO 637. See *Figure 6.1* above.

⁶⁶ Candy Malherbe points out that couples who married after the birth of a child were not cause for scandal in the VOC period, but that the advent of British rule brought about ‘changes with respect to moral governance’. This included an emphasis on respectability allied with legal marriage. V.C. Malherbe, ‘Paternity and Illegitimacy: a Problem for Church and State at Cape Town in the Mid 1800s’, *South African Historical Journal* 55 (2006): 68, 85; V.C. Malherbe, ‘Ten Reasons for Not Marrying: Sex and Illegitimacy in Mid-Nineteenth Century Cape Town’, *Historia* 52, 2 (November 2007): 188- 9, 196-8.

⁶⁷ Albertyn and Wilshere to Col. Sec., 25 September 1854, CO 637.

the child, and three felt it a strange act 'considering the reports in Circulation'⁶⁸ – more specifically, 'having heard a member of her [Mrs Day's] Family state that Mr Golding was the father of the child'.⁶⁹ The testimony of James White,⁷⁰ probably father of two of Golding's young pupils, Betty and Sally,⁷¹ sets out the common view most baldly:

I the undersigned hereby declare that I was present when Mr Wilshere christened the child of Mrs Day and that I saw Mr Golding go with the parties to the font which surprised me, as it was said he was the father of the child. I have regularly attended service in the English Church but have never seen Mr Golding as churchwarden attend Christenings.

Caledon 25 Sept 1854

James White

X my Mark

For the witnesses, Golding and Mrs Day standing at the font together was the symbolic act that confirmed the long-voiced suspicion of an adulterous relationship.

Excommunication: The Teacher is Barred from the Sacrament

Let us return to the day of the Inquiry and to the fourth charge – that the minister of the English Church, in consequence of the information he received, advised the teacher to abstain from receiving the sacrament. Who alerted Wilshere to the rumours about Golding is not clear. What is clear is that Wilshere had never engaged personally with Golding on the matter, but, having discussed the matter with his 1854 church wardens,⁷² used J.S. Needham as the intermediary. It could well have been that this older man, with enough influence to have regarded Caledon as something of a personal fiefdom,⁷³ may have played a greater role in affairs than is immediately evident. Golding's unanticipated response in barring Wilshere from the quarterly examination of his school alarmed Needham, but the flurry of notes between him and the teacher caused no retraction and in fact precipitated the school commission's communication with the government on 5 August. By the time of the Inquiry, in a case of life being stranger than fiction, Needham had had an accident in his carriage⁷⁴ and died shortly afterwards.⁷⁵ This meant that Innes did not pursue the issue of exclusion from the sacrament, nor report any conclusions about it.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, attached: Mart. Bergh, 25 September 1854.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, attached: G. West, 26 September 1854.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, attached: James White, 25 September 1854.

⁷¹ See *Figure 6.1*.

⁷² Wilshere to Mackay, 4 September 1854, CO 637.

⁷³ Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 94, says that he was known as 'Caledon's first magistrate' without ever holding that official position, and probably continued with much magisterial business while the incumbents were otherwise occupied as active farmers.

⁷⁴ Annexure 5, J.S. Needham to Golding, 27 June 1854, in Innes, 'Report on Govt School', CO 637.

Official Judgment is Passed on the Government Teacher

Innes submitted his findings within a week. He concluded that the school was not failing, and that no evidence could be found of immoral actions on the part of the teacher. Despite this, there had clearly been rumours to the effect for some time. Of Golding he wrote,

no conduct more likely to call for remark and to expose his character to conclusions prejudicial to his standing and influence as a Teacher, could have been pursued by any man than that followed by Mr Golding; while his statements, it must be owned, greatly modify and account for the rumours afloat.

Innes finally informed Lieutenant-Governor Darling that he had given Golding permission to take early leave to seek legal advice in Cape Town,⁷⁶ permission he does not seem to have acted upon.

Rumour, Lies and Scandal in Caledon

We return to Ross's work on status and reputation, and on respectability as the naturalised manifestation of class ideology at the Cape.⁷⁷ Being respectable offered access to higher status, and loss of respectability could result in social exclusion. Kirsten McKenzie notes that one's reputation was 'a resource for individuals in a highly competitive social world',⁷⁸ while there was an ever-present danger in colonial society of 'slipping back from a position of respectability and status'.⁷⁹ Gossip and rumour became a means of policing the boundaries between respectable and unbecoming, even scandalous, conduct in a community. How far the class values of a growing mercantile society in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet had penetrated small villages like Caledon still needs to be investigated, but it appears to have been a town in transition, both economically, with the growth of the wool industry, and administratively, by being incorporated within the network of regulatory colonial practices. It was a community whose municipal representatives were to be seen toasting the Queen and naming the road to the Baths 'Constitution Hill' when afforded parliamentary representation in 1853.⁸⁰

Golding's status there as a teacher was 'middling'. On the one hand, he was part of the village élite, better educated than most and a good elementary school teacher. The SGE and most

⁷⁵ Innes, 'Report on Govt School', *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.

⁷⁸ McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, 10.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁰ Minutes of the Caledon Municipality, 24 May 1853, 3/CAL/1.

residents seemed agreed on this. The Lieutenant-Governor regarded this public servant as worthy of defence from ungrounded accusation. On the other hand, Golding's income was low, even by the standards of poorly paid teachers, earning the least of all government teachers. His struggle to improve his income and status was marked by attempts to pass both the examinations of the Clerks' Board and those to be a first-class teacher. He failed both, and this thwarted his attempts at promotion.⁸¹ This fed into his sense of personal powerlessness, but is unlikely to have affected his status in Caledon. Rather, it was his sexual conduct that was focused upon. His living in Caledon without a wife for many years undermined the respectability that accrued to his being a married man. In addition, as we have seen, even Innes was moved to comment that his conduct with regard to Mrs Day had invited 'conclusions prejudicial to his standing and influence as a teacher'.

Civil Commissioner Mackay maintained that the rumours were widespread. Meeting privately with Innes at the time of the Inquiry, he told him that the commission would have confined its attention to Golding's exclusion of the clergyman from his school if the teacher had not linked this with his own excommunication. Innes reported the civil commissioner's views:

[H]e does not mean to say that the rumours in circulation did not justify inquiry in order to prevent injury to the School, but he abstained from taking notice of them because no individual came forward to substantiate the Reports so long in circulation.

In respect to the Female alluded to in the Letter of the School Commission, verbal statements affecting Mr Golding's character had been frequently made, but these the Civil Commissioner determinedly refused to entertain without some proof being adduced – as he has always set his face against gossip and Scandal, being calculated to do more harm than good.⁸²

Whatever Mackay's views on the impact of gossip and rumour, they offer an opportunity to reflect on the views of the Caledon residents on matters of morality and reputation. Despite the 'rumours afloat', Golding seems to have had most of the important male residents on his side. His actions had generated comment but not a large-scale removal of residents' children from his school. Furthermore, he was able to mobilise many of the 'respectable citizens' to sign an affirmation of support for him. Did they think him innocent? Or if not, was it a case of the double standards of a patriarchal community regarding morality of women as more seriously compromised by sexual infidelity than that of men?

⁸¹ In 1851, he failed the examination for clerkships in the Public Service, Clerks Board to Col Sec, 11 August 1851, CO 594; Innes to Rawson, 9 February 1857 and 20 March 1857, A1SC-1857.CGH. *Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee on the Subject of Education*, 21–2.

⁸² Innes, 21 September 1854, Annexure 1 to 'Report on Govt Teacher,' CO 637.

Perhaps the question to ask is: to whom did the rumours really matter? It seems to have been the two clergymen who most felt the need to deal with Golding (although their 'confidential' approach to the governor left their accusations in the domain of rumour at first). Why were they reluctant to specify their initial charges and then willing to resign from the school commission rather than voice them? Did they find Golding's irregular relationship with Wilhemina Day scandalous but lack firm evidence of overt misdemeanour? This being so, were they reluctant to put *their* reputations on the line and content merely to sow the seeds of scandal? Was the strong response by government to their quiet request for confidential advice on how to proceed a shock to the clergymen, and even to the magistrate?

Golding himself may help us to understand this first conundrum. There is a startling letter from Golding to Innes, dated 26 April 1854, thus written a few months before the Inquiry. It was not included in all the documentation concerning the Inquiry and remains filed with 'Letters Received' by the SGE from peripheral locations such as 'Fraserburg, Victoria West, Beaufort West, Prince Albert, Caledon & c, 1851-9'.⁸³ He wrote:

I deem it incumbent on me to transmit to you in confidence a report of the following aspersions made by detractors, upon the public servants of this locality ... An epitome of the scandal calumny and slander, which always take a dark method of diffusing their venom, and which occurred in the Village of Caledon against the public officers.

Golding thus became a purveyor of gossip himself; which if it had been made public, would have opened him to charges of slander. He itemised seven instances of rumoured misconduct committed by public servants in Caledon between 1849 and 1853, two of them his own! Only his predecessor, Samuel Goldsbury, was exempt from sexual slander, but accused of 'forming improper connections' and neglecting his duties to the school's children (by implication while carrying out those of secretary to the municipality). For the rest, Mackay himself, former Dutch Church minister Revd Cassie and former Church of England minister Revd Sandberg were accused of adultery with the wife of the head constable, his housekeeper, and Miss Fabricius respectively. Cassie and secretary to the municipality (since Goldsbury's departure) P.C. Blommestein, were also alleged to have parented 'bastard' children, Blommestein's with a 'Hottentot girl of the Village'.

⁸³ SGE 1/3, Letters Received by Superintendent-General of Education from Fraserburg, Victoria West, Beaufort West, Prince Albert, Caledon & c, 1851-1859.

Inserted in this list is the assertion, number 4: 'In 1851, Mr Golding was vilified as having exposed himself indecently to his Schoolchildren.' The seventh is the rumour with which we are familiar, stating that: 'In 1853 Mr Golding was defamed as having stood Godfather for an illegitimate child.'

It is not possible to tell whether these assertions are inventions to cover his own actions, whether he was using current items of gossip and rumour which had some ground in reality as a smokescreen, or whether there were elements of both. Gossip has widely been regarded as the domain of women, creating intimacy while at the same time functioning socially and politically in patriarchal communities to give expression to their views and even shaping public opinion.⁸⁴ Did Golding gain access to these rumours through the homely intimacy he had with Mrs Day and her sisters in the confines of his own residence? Why did he elevate these, including those adverse to himself, to a level of more public knowledge by writing this letter to his superior? Herein lies the second conundrum.

Was Golding lashing out at the local leaders in a self-destructive way, fueled by frustration at his own precarious position? Was there a more cunning aspect to implicating just about the whole 'respectable' sector of Caledon society? Luise White's work on the social function of secrets and lies reminds us that liars need to consider what will be persuasive in what they set out. In addition, their choice of audience is made in the hope of creating an alliance useful in the purposes of the lies.⁸⁵ By slipping in two rumours about his own conduct amidst allegations of misconduct of a largely sexual nature among Caledon's public servants, was he hoping to persuade Innes that they lacked credibility? What did he hope Innes would do? Was it a pre-emptive act aimed at countering possible official revelations of the kind set out by the school commissioners in their letter a few months later? Was this his somewhat bizarre defence of his reputation?

Innes paid no visible attention to these allegations. Even if he had read them, he was, as we saw in the Graaff-Reinet case study, always reluctant to act on complaints by or against his teachers unless given concrete evidence for doing so. It is unlikely that Innes had seen the letter at all before coming to Caledon. There are none of his usual annotations on it and in the early months

⁸⁴ S. Hindle, 'The Shaming of Margaret Knowsley: Gossip, Gender and the Experience of Authority in Early Modern England', *Continuity and Change* 9, 3 (1994): 393.

⁸⁵ L. White, 'The Most Telling: Lies, Secrets, and History,' *South African Historical Journal* 42 (May 2000): 11-25.

of 1854, he was recovering from heat stroke and exhaustion as well as being overwhelmed with work.⁸⁶ This may well represent another case of failed surveillance by the state head of education.

Regardless of the personal motivation for dredging the depths of local gossip, does Golding present a picture of prominent villagers flouting conventions of marital fidelity which was recognisable and a matter of concern to some of Caledon's respectable citizens? It is instructive that it was the two clergymen who seem most to have been acting to rein in the immoral conduct, as they saw it, of Golding and Day. Their religious convictions must have been part of it, but there was surely more. Wilshere had been hoodwinked into an 'irregular baptism' which clearly damaged his reputation and the authority of his church. He had unwittingly trespassed into the spiritual domain of a colleague. From the way in which the ministers acted in concert over the conduct of Golding, they seem to have formed an alliance – one which lasted many years after the affair. Later, for example, both were restored to the school commission and worked to promote aided schooling in their town and district.⁸⁷

Henry Wilshere was also a priest who saw church discipline as important and his line of authority in such matters to his bishop, rather than to the acting governor. It was to Bishop Gray that he reported the circumstances of Golding's excommunication.⁸⁸ Gray, in turn, had arrived at the Cape in 1848 anxious to 'upgrade' the quality of Anglican clergy in the colony in much the same way that the New System of education was concerned with upgrading the standard of teachers. To that end, he carefully selected and supervised a new cohort of clergy for the Cape, Henry Wilshere's brother, Ebenezer (E.S.) Wilshere among them.⁸⁹ If government was seeking to achieve regularity in its domain, the Church of England was attempting to achieve the same; all the more so if Wilshere's predecessor at Caledon, Revd Samuel Sandberg, had erred more seriously than in the commonly known limitations of being hard of hearing and bad tempered.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ His work included writing rules for the use of convicts on public works, and reports on public roads and prisons: Innes to Col Sec, 17 July 1854, CO 637; Innes to Col Sec, 19 March 1857 and attached Dr James Abercrombie, 19 March 1857, John Laing, Surgeon, 19 March 1857, CO 695.

⁸⁷ For example, Wilshere to SGE, 14 October 1859, 20 December 1859, SGE 1/3.

⁸⁸ Wilshere to Mackay, 4 September 1854, CO 637.

⁸⁹ T. Gutsche, *The Bishop's Lady* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1970), 68, 138.

⁹⁰ Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 95–6.

Miss Fabricius, daughter of the former *koster*,⁹¹ and with whom Sandberg 'was stigmatized as having connections', was identified in the Inquiry as a respectable resident. She, like Mrs Day, would have been a member of the Dutch Church congregation. Golding gives the date 1850 to the slander that the Scottish dominee, Revd Cassie, 'kept with his housekeeper and his child was his bastard'. The year 1850 is when his successor Revd Dr Albertyn first appears on the list of Caledon ratepayers.⁹² E. Burrows's interpretation of Cassie's career is that he was 'unable to adapt and failing to marry, ... spent seventeen years in Caledon and then returned to Scotland'.⁹³ Was the reputation of his bachelor predecessor a concern to Albertyn as he set about ministering in Caledon? He was the only resident who unequivocally said that he had withdrawn his sons, Christoffer and John, from the school because of Golding's rumoured adultery; and perhaps of even greater concern to him was the other party in this act, his errant church member, Mrs Day. Her avoidance of church discipline was a serious matter, when she could be seen to have married under compromising circumstances in the first place and then been abandoned by her husband. Marjorie Theobald notes an increasing emphasis in the nineteenth century on a biological discourse of sexuality. In terms of this, men's sexual conduct may have been important, but a woman's role was increasingly defined as fitted by nature as 'help-meet' of her husband and 'moral guardian of the family'. Central to this was her moral purity.⁹⁴

Gerald Groenewald points out that, from the late eighteenth century, in the context of social and political uncertainty at the Cape, there had been a growing Pietist influence in the Dutch Reformed Church (as with the English Protestant churches). This was marked by more concerted attempts by Dutch Reformed clergy and elders to achieve the moral regulation of their congregations, women in particular. While baptism had never been denied to the child of any white colonist, being seen as automatically belonging to Christendom, greater steps were taken to regulate women who were breaking important boundaries by having children before marriage. So too, mothers who were neglecting their sacred role.⁹⁵ Candy Malherbe, too, notes the advance of British influence at the Cape as encouraging Dutch Reformed clergy to take a stronger stand against 'depravity'.⁹⁶ It can, thus, be suggested that Albertyn, like Wilshire, was concerned with moral regulation in the Caledon community.

⁹¹ Minutes of Caledon Municipality, 3/CAL/1, 16–17, records the Church Clerk, G. Fabricius, as residing next to 'the Pastory occupied by the Revd Cassie' in Church Street.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 88.

⁹³ Burrows, *Overberg Odyssey*, 93.

⁹⁴ Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 18–19.

⁹⁵ G. Groenewald, 'Een Spoorloos Vrouwspersoon: Unmarried Mothers, Moral Regulation and the Church at the Cape of Good Hope, circa 1652–1795,' *Historia* 53, 2 (November 2008): 5–32.

⁹⁶ Malherbe, 'Paternity and Illegitimacy', 85.

That leaves Mackay. Whether or not his own behaviour had been suspect, he represented civic order in Caledon. He made a significant observation early on in the correspondence between school commission and government, before any specific allegations had been made:

His Honor will be aware that a public School attended by young females as well as Male children may be very easily hurt by rumours and reports which may not be quite susceptible of proof, and that even if they were so, the relatives of young females might, for good reasons, be unwilling to adduce it, and might moreover, for the like reasons, be deterred from appearing at all in the matter. 4th September 1854.⁹⁷

If Golding had betrayed his married status, and that of Mrs Day, in committing adultery, then the moral example that he should have presented as teacher was shattered. Not only that, but might he not also be a danger to the young girls in his school? Reading this in the light of Golding's protestation about rumours of his indecent exposure, one is made uneasily aware that his conduct was suspect in more than his adult relationships.

Finale

Exonerated by Innes's report in September 1854, John Golding continued to teach at the Caledon Government School until the beginning of 1858. Then, in May 1858, the town must have been riveted, surely saddened and angered, by a scandal which would have affirmed every earlier rumour about the teacher. After a preliminary hearing before the acting Resident Magistrate on 18 May, Golding was prosecuted in September 1858 by Attorney-General William Porter himself in the Circuit Court for the Division of Caledon. The charge was assault. Porter's description of the crime was one of indecently exposing and having or attempting to have 'carnal connexion' with twelve year-old Honora Linnahan. Golding was, at the time of the rape, at the home of the victim, supposedly giving this blacksmith's daughter and her sister additional tuition. The verdict, based on evidence from the victim and her three sisters, was 'guilty' and the sixty year-old teacher was sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour.⁹⁸

The school was left without a teacher from May 1858, but an analysis of this scandal and Caledon's further educational history lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice to say that the two clergymen played a prominent role in subsequent developments, representing a victory for respectability in the village. Late in 1858, Caledon's 'Resident Inhabitants' met to consider how to raise money to supplement the government salary so that they could set up a first-class

⁹⁷ Mackay to Col Sec, 4 September 1854, CO 637.

⁹⁸ Records of Circuit Court for the Division of Caledon, 1/CAL/1/1/3, Folder 337, 1858.

school in the town. This would be *'on condition of the nomination of the Teacher resting with them'*.⁹⁹ In other words, the goals of a first-class education were aspired to and considered worth paying for, but the teacher needed to be under the control of the community. This was indeed accomplished after the closure of the government school in 1860 and its replacement by an aided public school.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Let us, in conclusion, return to McKenzie's link between the small world of private scandal and the larger political world. While Golding's battle to secure his professional and moral reputation makes for absorbing reading, it is its elevation from the sphere of local gossip to that of public scandal that had a wider effect. This was on the future of state schooling in the town and ultimately the colony. Many factors contributed to the demise of the New System of education. They included its lack of accountability to local communities, expense to the state and failure to cater to any extent for the poorer members of society.¹⁰¹ In looking to justify the call that the established schools be jettisoned, however, it was simpler for some to frame their dissatisfaction in terms of failed teachers. As noted earlier, Revd Prof. Hofmeyr reported general opinion at Caledon to be that the Established school had failed through *'the inability of the teacher'* and in this instance it was undoubtedly attributed to *'moral ... causes'*. Teachers such as Golding came to personify the failure of the New System.

⁹⁹ SGE to Civil Commissioner, Caledon, 26 November 1858, 2 September 1859, SGE 1/3.

¹⁰⁰ Langham Dale to Col. Sec., 23 January 1860, CO 767.

¹⁰¹ G. 24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*. This sets out fully the reasons for allowing the New System to wind down.

Chapter Seven : Worcester - The Government Teacher-Land Surveyor

Watermeyer Commission, 1863: The school at Worcester appears to be complete in its organization and efficiently conducted, both in the boys' and girls' departments. The levying of school fees has proved successful, and thus competent assistants have been provided, male and female. The attendance is 100; the buildings are good; there are separate class-rooms for the boys and girls, who meet only for certain subjects of instruction. The school-rooms are thoroughly furnished.¹

The Worcester case study presents us with Albert Nicholas Rowan, a second-generation government teacher who, between 1856 and 1872, both built the most complex of the government educational establishments and kept it going long after most of the other government schools had closed. He may thus be viewed as a success although he regarded the way in which the New System was implemented as a failure of its original vision and success, something earned by a great deal of personal sacrifice and hard work. This teacher was a person who felt capable, knowledgeable and respectable but became preoccupied with a quest to achieve financial 'recognition' and security. He revealed little of his personal world in his abundant correspondence, other than an ongoing concern to pay for the increasing costs of supporting his family.

Rowan recognised that his achievements were to no small extent a result of his co-operation with the local inhabitants, and this case illustrates how he drew on the social capital provided by the Worcester Dutch Reformed Church community. The most vehement correspondence to emerge from his tenure was elicited by the perceived threat to this support. The cost of this embrace by the masters of Worcester was an unquestioned and therefore unvoiced construction of a school that excluded the coloured population, mostly former slaves, despite the intention that the New System to be free and open to all (who were 'clean and neatly dressed').

When frustrated in his goals of establishing a viable government school and a decent living for himself, Rowan sought to supplement his income through that most colonial of occupations, land surveying. He also resorted to a direct correspondence with the highest executive officer in government, Colonial Secretary Rawson W. Rawson, seeking an almost pre-modern form of personal patronage. This in turn offers a view of the failure of the British colonial state to achieve the kind of regularity and efficiency in education that the New System was intended to promote. At the same time the emergence of a colonial Parliament and local government structures shifted

¹ G.24-'63. CGH. *Report of a Commission Appointed, in Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to inquire into and report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony* [hereafter *Watermeyer Commission*], xlvii.

power over education away from the governor and Colonial Secretary in important ways. Rowan's enterprise reflects a changing context as the state's initial conception of the workings of the New System was modified, and Worcester, both its government school and the aided Rhenish mission schools, pointed to new ways of managing education by the 1860s. From 1872, as one of the first two Deputy Inspectors of Schools in the Cape Colony, Albert Rowan then became an instrument in the more efficient regulation and surveillance of educational enterprise.

Worcester



Church Square, Worcester c 1833. View from behind the Dutch Reformed Church with Rhenish Mission across the square and the Drostdy in the distance.²

Situated 120 kilometres north-west of Cape Town, Worcester was laid out as a sub-drostdy in 1819 at the behest of Lord Charles Somerset's administration. It took over the role of district capital from Tulbagh in 1822.³ This Boland town lies in the Breede River valley at the edge of the arid Karroo, separated from the capital and surrounding wine lands by a series of towering mountain ranges. By the 1840s it was the centre of a vast district of mixed farming and, despite the scrubby nature of much of its terrain, Dooling's claim that 'there was nothing "backward"

² H. Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages of the Cape: A Survey of the Origin and Development of Towns, Villages, and Hamlets of the Cape of Good Hope* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2006), 174.

³ C.D'Oyley watercolour, in Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages*, picture 61, 177.

about Cape farming when viewed in wider comparative perspective', applied to Worcester.⁴ When the New System was introduced to its main town, the district had a population of 8 845, made up of roughly equal numbers of white (predominantly Dutch) and coloured residents.⁵ The latter were largely descendants of Khoisan servants and the significant number of slaves who had laboured on the district's farms before emancipation.

Worcester was a carefully planned town with wide streets and gardens irrigated with 'leiwater' from the Hex River. At its centre was a 'very large common – or market-place' comprising two blocks, and known as Church Square.⁶ For someone approaching from the countryside, a first sighting of Worcester itself would be the tower of the Dutch Reformed Church on one side of the square; no accidental marker of the identity of the town in which this final case study is located. Across the square from the Dutch Reformed Church was the Rhenish Mission, with its complex of schools under missionary Louis Esselin.⁷ At the western end of the town was the drostdy.

Fransen comments:

From an early stage, the four streets closest to the drostdy were extended southwards as working-class quarters (for the 'Hottentots'), their erven only a fraction of the size of those in the main grid ... This ... was an innovation for the Cape at a time when no particular provision in the designs of new towns was generally made for the 'non-white' sections ... many of them still slaves. These were usually accommodated on their masters' properties or, when free, in makeshift, informal accommodation on the fringes of the town.⁸

Schooling at Worcester

To review the history of schooling at Worcester is in part to reprise the features of schooling covered in the chapters of this thesis. As well as having a number of small private enterprises

⁴ W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2007). He also cites Worcester immigrant Thomas Heatlie as an example of a modernizing, mechanizing farmer in the 1860s, 171-2.

⁵ 'Return of the Extent, Population and Stock of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope for the Year 1841' shows it to be 4 044 whites and 4 801 coloureds in an area of 20 000 square miles. In W.L. Nell, 'James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), 497.

⁶ *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years ago, by a Lady* (Cape Town: Struik, 1963), 92-3.

⁷ The first Rhenish Missionary Society missionaries began their work in the Cape in 1829, in Stellenbosch, Tulbagh and the Cedarberg. J. Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa* (London: Longman, 1911), 202-4. A Worcester mission seems to have been established within a few years, J.S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People 1652-1937* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1957), 246-7; Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages*, picture 61, 177.

⁸ Fransen, *Old Towns and Villages*, 175.

that blossomed and faded on the educational landscape,⁹ Worcester was the site of one of Governor Lord Charles Somerset's free schools dating from 1822. Its teacher, Robert Blair, was a member of the same party of Scottish pedagogues and clerics as James Rose Innes, William Robertson and Andrew Murray sen.¹⁰ (The Scottish Presbyterian minister, Revd Henry Sutherland arrived in Worcester in 1824 as a result of the same recruiting expedition.¹¹) By 1837, when Colonial Secretary Bell, Fairbairn and Herschel were conceiving of the New System, it was the poor performance of free schools such as that at Worcester that persuaded them of the need for change. As with Turpin at Caledon, the free school teacher at Worcester, Thomas Bayly, was judged unqualified to head a first-class school of the New System and, in 1841, removed to take charge of the small second-class government school at Clanwilliam.¹²

Despite the modest performance of the free school in the 1830s, there were among its twenty or so pupils a number from families whose names appear regularly in the annals of Worcester, among them the Meirings and Lindbergs.¹³ This shows a certain willingness in the Dutch community to avail itself of a basic English education,¹⁴ as well as to participate in a local school commission. The school commissioners noted, however, that in terms of punctuality and regularity, the free school compared unfavourably with the 'far inferior persons' at the Rhenish Mission School.

Under the New System, Revd Patrick Black, an Innes recruit from Edinburgh University, was despatched to Worcester, his allocation a result of coming fourth in the competitive trial.¹⁵ In July 1842, there were 140 white and 434 coloured children under the age of fourteen in the town of Worcester. Of these, 173 were at or had been to school.¹⁶ The institution of a first-class government school at Worcester under the New System would result in a steady improvement in the educational dispensation for white boys and girls. The education of coloured children under

⁹ See 1/WOC 19/122, Proceedings of the Worcester School Commission, 1834-1854, for some information on the schools of the period.

¹⁰ E. Bull, 'Rattray and Black: Two Scottish Schoolmasters,' in *Familia* XXVII, 3 (1990): 54.

¹¹ *Dictionary of South African Biography II* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1972) 723-4.

¹² He appears to have died soon after his transfer and, until 1855, 'Mrs Bayly' appears on Innes's Estimates of expenditure for government schools, having assumed her husband's position.

¹³ J. Meiring and F.L. Lindenberg were among the first Municipal Commissioners, R.G. Grebe, 'Worcester, Suid Afrika' (BA Hons research report, University unnamed, nd), 34.

¹⁴ By the 1830s some Dutch was used in many free schools in order to retain pupils, and this appears to have been the case in Worcester. 'Examination of the Free School 30 June 1835,' 1/WOC 19/122, Proceedings of School Commission.

¹⁵ Innes to Col Sec, 22 May 1841, CO 499.

¹⁶ 'Return of White and Coloured Children in the Town of Worcester under 14 year of age, in the month of July 1842,' 1/WOC/19/122, Proceedings. This is a useful source as it lists all Worcester households in July 1842.

the Rhenish Mission would continue to win approbation throughout subsequent decades, occasionally to the irritation of the government teacher. The bifurcation in local provision of schooling in the 1830s thus continued, and although school commission reports throughout the 1840s noted that no coloured pupil was prevented from attending the government school, they also noted that none did.¹⁷ In this former slave-owning community, the inclusive intentions of the New System did not resonate with local leaders and in a response to 'Questions' posed to it by the Legislative Council in 1848, the school commission finally stated: 'No mixture of Classes and Races has taken place in the Government Free [sic] School in this Town and in our opinion a mixture of Classes and Races would prove disadvantageous.'¹⁸ Thus it was that the government teachers were spared the challenge faced by Bremner at Graaff-Reinet of persuading the town's gentry of the desirability of a school embracing all members of society.

The New System and the Worcester Government School, 1841-1856

The advent of Patrick Black in Worcester saw the introduction of the *Chambers's Educational Course* to the thirty-five to fifty boys and girls of a co-educational school. The Dutch origins of most pupils were not overlooked, with attention also being paid to 'Exercises Dutch & English. Dutch Grammar & Conjunctions'.¹⁹ By September 1844 Black's career was being disrupted by the heart problem that caused his death in 1847. During a period of absence in Scotland, his temporary replacement was another young Stellenbosch assistant teacher, John Hugo.²⁰ Barely out of his teenage years, Hugo impressed the Worcester school commission and parents so much that they requested that he remain at the school after Black's death. This was approved, but, because of Hugo's youth and inexperience, Innes reduced his salary from £130 to £100 pa (plus the usual £30 house rent) instead of keeping to his own principle of attaching the salary to the status of the school.²¹ This was a decision that would subsequently cause immense dissatisfaction.

¹⁷ '1843: Return of Day Schools, Public and Private'; July 1845-1846 – Queries answered: [The teacher] Mr Hugo states, 'No distinction is made on account of colour and none excluded,' *ibid*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ 'Report of School Commission' on examinations 5 April 1842, 24 June 1842, 11 October 1844, *ibid*.

²⁰ *Ibid*; Bull, 'Two Scottish Schoolmasters', 60. Innes estimated Hugo to be between 18 and 20 at this stage. A1SC-1857. CGH. *Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, 32.

²¹ J.D. Hugo to Col Sec, 9 October 1854, CO 637; Innes to Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 32.

Hugo continued to impress the residents of Worcester, with numbers at the school growing to 96 by 1853.²² Although he had few pupils in the higher branches, he added music and drawing to the curriculum and excelled at working in both English and Dutch.²³

Hugo was clearly a very industrious young man, making use of the opportunities in the modernising town to develop the civic identity that would be his long after he had ceased to teach. 'Being a public servant', he wrote, 'I considered the Public had a right to claim my services whenever required.' This involved him in working zealously to establish a regular 'omnibus' link with Paarl, a better postal system, and both the Worcester Agricultural Society and 'our Bank'.²⁴ In addition to these activities and to teaching nearly 100 children, he also became organist for the Dutch Reformed Church.

Hugo officially worked as government teacher until early 1856. As with so many government teachers, he remained confident of his abilities but became indignant at the lack of support and the toll that his work took on his body. In October 1854 he wrote to Colonial Secretary Rawson that 'over exertion has, I almost fear, irreparably injured my constitution, strong as it originally was,' and asked to be removed to 'a situation less exhausting before it be too late'.²⁵

Hugo was one of very few teachers permitted to move from teaching into the civil service because, as we have noted with McNaughton at Wynberg and Bremner at Graaff-Reinet, the SGE and Colonial Secretary recognised that they were likely to lose many of the scarce qualified teachers if this became precedent. Nonetheless, he took up the far better paid and less taxing position of clerk to the Resident Magistrate of Worcester and for some months tried to balance his new duties with those of schoolmaster.²⁶ This, the news of Hugo's imminent departure, and the opening of a private school by a Dutch teacher with an English assistant caused government school numbers to decline. As in Colesberg, a young woman who was also a senior and 'far advanced' pupil in the school, Johanna Meiring, was appointed pupil-teacher in late 1855 for an honorarium of £15 pa. It was she who kept the school functioning while arrangements were being made in the familiar bureaucratically messy fashion to replace Hugo.²⁷

²² 'Report of School Commission', 24 March and 22 December 1853 which also noted the urgent necessity for assistance in instructing the junior classes. 1/WOC 19/122, Proceedings.

²³ *Ibid*, June 1847; Innes to Select Committee, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 32.

²⁴ Hugo to Col Sec, 9 October 1854, CO 637.

²⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁶ Innes to Select Committee, 12 May 1857, 28, A.N. Rowan, 'Worcester School' in A1SC-1857. *CGH. Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, 5-6, A.N. Rowan to Col Sec, 16 September 1857, CO 695.

²⁷ Innes to Col Sec, 26 February 1857, CO 695; Innes to Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857, *Report of Select Committee*, 28-30.

The Career of Albert Nicholas Rowan, Government Teacher at Worcester, 1856-1872.

Albert Rowan was born in Stellenbosch, the son of William Rowan, an Irish land surveyor, and Johanna Smit.²⁸ He was schooled there at the government school where he was well instructed in the higher branches by Humphrey McLachlan.²⁹ Like John Hugo before him and James Rait soon after him, he was an assistant to his schoolmaster, in Rowan's case for three years. He then assumed the position of government teacher at the Malmesbury Government School between February 1848 and May 1856.³⁰ In 1856 he took a sideways transfer to Worcester, receiving the same salary and house rent as at Malmesbury, but assuming what Innes regarded to be a more important position.³¹

An Efficient Teacher Re-establishes and Advances Government Schooling at Worcester

When Rowan arrived in Worcester in May 1856, he was not particularly impressed by what he found but moved briskly to render his school efficient and inviting. The first issue he tackled was the unimpressive physical environment of the school. A few years later, in 1861, he was to write:

Let us make our school-buildings superior to our prisons, both as to the external appearance and internal arrangements. Let us provide them with proper furniture and appliances, and above all, with an efficient staff of teachers. In short, let us make the education afforded in the Government schools worth having ...³²

The school building on High Street [between Baring and Stockenström Streets],³³ leased since 1844 from Widow Erasmus,³⁴ was in a dilapidated and filthy state. Until 1859 it doubled as the Anglican Church on Sundays and its furniture, much of it church benches, was inadequate. Rowan, with the backing of Civil Commissioner J. Le Sueur, thus immediately set to cleaning, repairing and refurnishing the school.³⁵ More was needed, however, as pupil numbers grew to 140 within the year. Like McNaughton at Wynberg, Rowan appears to have begun to explore various options for acquiring a new building. He was eventually forestalled in carrying out more

²⁸ GISA, *South African Genealogies 10* (Stellenbosch: GISA, 1986), 231-2.

²⁹ Innes to Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 32.

³⁰ Innes to Col Sec, 1 February 1848, CO 574.

³¹ Innes to Col Sec, 7 April 1856, CO 676.

³² A.N. Rowan, 'Teachers' Answers,' in G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 35.

³³ Grebe, 'Worcester Suid-Afrika,' 95.

³⁴ Innes to Col Sec, 6 January 1846, CO 550.

³⁵ Civil Commissioner J. Le Sueur to Innes, 10 July 1856, CO 676; Rowan to Innes, 11 August 1856 and 1 June 1857, SGE 1/2, Letters received by Superintendent-General of Education, Clanwilliam, Tulbagh, Ceres, Worcester, 1851-1859 .

ambitious plans by Innes, who decided that the addition of a second room to the existing schoolroom would suffice.³⁶

A second cause of dissatisfaction on his arrival was the neglectful treatment of his assistant, Johanna Meiring. She had, he argued, done her best to keep the school going in the absence of a teacher, but had not received the 'miserable pittance' that was her salary since her appointment the previous year. Recognising the importance of retaining her 'valuable services', he immediately agitated for this to be paid.³⁷ With Innes agreeing that the high proportion of female pupils made Johanna Meiring's services desirable, the fortuitous support of a female assistant continued.³⁸ Rowan thus did not suffer from want of help in quite the same way as other teachers although he was soon agitating for a male assistant as well.

Although government appears to have agreed that his numbers justified the appointment of an assistant, the difficulty of obtaining one led Rowan to come up with a solution of which he was rather proud; the use of paid pupil-teachers. Rowan suggested that the £40 salary of a qualified assistant be divided between three of his senior pupils, James Jooste, James Meiring and Antony de Wet:

By this means I would always have a staff of young lads from which I could supply my assistants when required. The lads I have selected are all of the age of 16 years, and are of poor parents who are anxious that they should be trained up as teachers ... One of the greatest difficulties the Govt Teacher has to contend with in supplying himself with assistance from among his own pupils is the short time they are suffered to remain at school. By offering however the trifling inducement I have already mentioned, this difficulty may in time be greatly obviated.³⁹

The third cause of immediate dissatisfaction for Rowan on his arrival at Worcester was his salary. This became a major point of contention and will be discussed more fully below.

The general improvements in conditions at the Worcester Government School were not implemented without the usual bureaucratic hitches. This resulted in numerous letters of complaint from Rowan about delayed payment of salaries for assistant and pupil-teachers, delays in responses from Innes to his letters, non-payment of £4 for cleaning of the schoolroom and the like.⁴⁰ Some of Rowan's requests of government were rebuffed, as well. Colonial Secretary

³⁶ Innes to Col Sec, 15 August 1857, CO 695.

³⁷ Rowan to Innes, 11 August 1856 and 12 October 1856, SGE 1/2.

³⁸ Innes to Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 30.

³⁹ Rowan to Innes, 3 June 1857, SGE 1/2.

⁴⁰ For example, Rowan to Innes, 13 September 1856, 12 October 1856, 15 October 1857, SGE 1/2.

Rawson pointed out that there were matters 'which it behoves the parents or inhabitants to supply – the Govt not undertaking to provide more than the salaries of the teacher & an assistant, & rent of the Building'.⁴¹

All indications are that Rowan then turned to the community for assistance, for, again like McNaughton at Wynberg, he was prepared to take matters into his own hands rather than become incapacitated by the system's inefficiency or limitations. In 1861 he commented of his school:

By rendering my school as efficient as circumstances permit – by sparing neither my time, purse, nor person – by consulting the principal inhabitants of this place about the best means of improving my school, and calling in their assistance when I required funds to carry out my plans, - my school has never suffered much from the establishment of private schools. When I undertook the charge of my present school, a flourishing private school already occupied the field. A year afterwards it broke up. Several attempts have since been made to establish private schools, but without success.⁴²

Thus, despite growing irritation on his part with Innes's erratic supervision of his school, we find at Worcester a teacher who managed to work with the 'principal inhabitants' of the community in a way that was unparalleled by the other teachers examined. They were to be found in, for example, the Consistory of the DRC, the Divisional Council and Worcester Municipality. As sometime Dutch Reformed deacon in Worcester,⁴³ Albert Rowan would become an insider with access to the resources of the dominant church that the other teachers we have examined lacked. This, too, will be explored further in the course of the chapter. In so doing, he established Worcester Government School as the educational institution in the town for its white population. Unlike at other major educational centres - Swellendam, Stellenbosch, Graaff-Reinet, Port Elizabeth and Graham's Town - in Worcester 'the only school which the European children [could] ... attend, [was] the first-class Government school'.⁴⁴ While many of his pupils seem to have come from what he described as 'the class immediately above the poorest' and were in need of free education,⁴⁵ he was not in competition with private establishments for the patronage of Worcester's respectable citizens.

⁴¹ Margin notes on Innes to Col Sec, 23 May 1857, CO 695.

⁴² A.N. Rowan, in 'Teachers' Answers', Appendix II, G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 34.

⁴³ Memorial of Barnard van Biljoen, 22 July 1868, CO 4150, Memorials received by the Superintendent-General of Education, A-B, 1868.

⁴⁴ Innes to Select Committee, 12 May 1857, A1SC -1857. *Report of the Select Committee*, 28.

⁴⁵ Rowan to SGE Langham Dale, 29 August 1861, SGE 1/9, Letters received, 1861 (all districts).

Central Performances of the Identity of the Government Teacher at Worcester

The appointment of Rowan to Worcester coincided with the important changes in the educational landscape that we have noted in earlier chapters. The first was the increasing role played in education matters by the representatives of the colonial population through Divisional Councils which took over local supervision of schools, and Parliament which now held the purse-strings.

The second change was the worsening state of health of Innes which kept him out of the 'field' for much of 1856 and led to him submitting his first letter of resignation in March 1857. As at Graaff-Reinet, so at Worcester the government teacher grew increasingly frustrated essentially by Innes's poor communication which left his intentions open to suspicion. They stumbled along in an irritable bureaucratic dance, drawing the Colonial Secretary into dealing directly with matters that lay in Innes's province. What outraged Rowan most in his early years at Worcester was the perceived lack of support from Innes in re-establishing the Worcester salary at the original amount attached to the post. This became the central issue in his first flurry of correspondence, going on over Innes's head, with Rawson and the Governor himself and is one of three central issues to be focused on in investigating the performances of identity of this government teacher. The second is related to this – a perceived lack of recognition of his efforts by his SGE, most strongly symbolised by being ignored in Innes's 1858 *Report of the Superintendent-General of Education on a Tour of Inspection of the Schools in the Western Divisions of the Colony*.⁴⁶ This lack of recognition as teacher (which always had a financial side to it) led Rowan to consider a complete change of career to fulltime land surveyor.

Finally Innes resigned in late 1859, and the appointment of Langham Dale as the second Superintendent-General of Education found a man not only more efficient than Innes, and more willing to act decisively to support the teachers, but also a man who was unconvinced of the Herschel vision – and moved to end it. His superintendency was marked by a retreat from free state managed education, to gender-segregated aided schooling for the better off; and mission schools (also aided) for the poor. During Dale's tenure, Rowan's school stood out as a beacon of efficiency – but not before an intense spat over a special inspection had occurred. In this we find our third major issue, as Rowan saw in this inspection a challenge to his carefully achieved working relationship with the local community, and fought with great emotion to protect it.

⁴⁶ G.29-'58. CGH. *Report of the Superintendent-General of Education on a Tour of Inspection of the Schools in the Western Divisions of the Colony*.

The context of Rowan's actions can be understood as one of faltering governmentality. If the achievement of government regularity may be productive and enabling as well as disciplinary, then failure to maintain the necessary gaze would allow for breakdown. The unrealistic demands on Innes to maintain unassisted oversight over not just the government schools, but also the rapidly increasing number of aided schools, meant that he could not cope, that his body gave in and his teachers were left to their own devices without necessary resources. Colonial Secretary Rawson W. Rawson stands as representing a will to government regularity and efficiency. The dominant role of the Colonial Secretary, given the regulatory weaknesses of the SGE, is crucial for, as Alistair Davidson asks of the institutions of state surveillance, who would watch the watchman?⁴⁷ Rawson held a particularly powerful position in the last throes of an executive-dominated colonial government, watching over multiple portfolios. Although Representative Government was in place, and gradually brought an official settler gaze to the system of education, Parliament was very much under his tutelage during its first session, beginning in 1854.⁴⁸

The Government Teacher Seeks Financial Recognition

Even before Rowan took up his new position he began to request that his salary be increased to £130 pa along with the £30 house rent. Once in Worcester, he repeatedly wrote to Innes about the matter.⁴⁹ As noted, by 1856 Innes was not coping well with his overwhelming paperwork and general ill health. So much so that, much to Rawson's annoyance, he failed to set off on his intended tour of inspection in 1856. This would have taken him to Worcester by 25 November⁵⁰ and its cancellation marked a lost opportunity to become acquainted with conditions there. Innes did, however, have a high regard for Rowan's skills⁵¹ and in fact recommended, in a letter to the Colonial Secretary dated 20 May 1856, that Rowan be awarded the higher salary. He failed, though, to submit a formal 'Report' advocating this. In any case, by this time, the estimates for education had to be approved by Parliament and the education budget for 1856

⁴⁷ A. Davidson, *The Invisible State: The Formation of the Australian State 1788-1901* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 15.

⁴⁸ 'R.W. Rawson', *Dictionary of South African Biography II* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1972), 571-2.

⁴⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 20 May 1856, in A1SC-1857. *Appendix to Report of Select Committee*, 14-15; Rowan to Innes, 20 May 1856, 28 May 1856, 23 June 1856, CO 676.

⁵⁰ Clerk in Office of SGE to Col Sec, 15 October 1856, Innes via Clerk to Acting Col Sec, 28 November 1856, Rawson's margin note on latter, 4 December 1856, CO 676.

⁵¹ A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, 29.

was already overspent.⁵² Innes thus incurred the ire of his Worcester teacher somewhat unfairly – but lines of communication were long. It took until the Parliamentary review of salaries in 1857 for matters to be rectified, by which time Rowan had submitted three memorials to Governor Sir George Grey (28 May 1856, 10 December 1856, 15 January 1857) and a lengthy disputatious letter to Rawson challenging the Colonial Secretary's explanation of why he was not succeeding in his quest.⁵³ These were significant appeals to higher authority by a public servant who was seeking recognition, respect, and just reward for fulfilling his duties and obligations.

This correspondence becomes a literary performance of identity through which Rowan staked his claims for the financial marker of recognition, an improved salary. He felt the full salary attached to the Worcester post from the beginning of the New System to be his due. He was, he argued, 'not behind any teacher in the establishment in the faithful and zealous discharge of my duties, and under the most disadvantageous circumstances'.⁵⁴ His interpretation of the lack of action to improve his salary was that Innes had acted arbitrarily and unjustly in supporting an improved salary for James Rait at Colesberg, but not for him. For this reason Rowan memorialised the governor, making 'a direct appeal to Your Excellency, from whose known impartiality he expects that justice which has been denied to him by his superior.'⁵⁵ This injustice was compounded by the strength of his merits, both his character and his service. Three years as an assistant teacher at Stellenbosch and eight at Malmesbury gave him a superior length of service to Rait. He had, moreover, been utterly dutiful, 'unwearied' in his zeal, and wholly satisfactory in his efforts at 'forwarding the improvement of the pupils under his charge'.

At Malmesbury, he said, he had overcome many obstacles to educational progress: a 'ruinous and dilapidated school-house' that endangered all its occupants' lives; a community whose appreciation of 'a thoroughly English education' was only just beginning to develop, and competition from the [church-clerk] school of the Dutch Reformed Church. He had, nonetheless, 'gained the esteem and confidence of the people'. He could furnish testimonials from respectable gentlemen to confirm this – the Stellenbosch teacher; Mr Bosman, the Member for Stellenbosch; Mr Loedolff, Member for Malmesbury; and the SGE himself.

⁵² Innes to Col Sec, 20 May 1856; Rawson to Innes, 29 July 1856, A1SC-1857. *Appendix, Report of Select Committee*, 14-15. Pages 14-20 in this Appendix contain the full correspondence.

⁵³ Rowan to Col Sec, 23 June 1856, in response to Col Sec to Rowan, 10 June 1856, *ibid*, 16-19.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ Memorial of Albert Nicholas Rowan, 28 May 1856, A1SC -1857, *Appendix to Report of Select Committee*, 15-16.

Rawson's sharp refutation that Rowan's position could be equated with that of the Colesberg teacher⁵⁶ led Rowan to attempt to clarify his claims and retreat somewhat. He stated that he was content to await the intended review of the New System, and trusted that his 'claims will not again be overlooked.'⁵⁷ Rowan appears to have decided to seek other ways in which to supplement his income; through taking in boarders, teaching extra pupils and, around this time, beginning to study for a qualification in land surveying. It was after this period that he became known as Worcester's land surveyor, as well as her government teacher.

Despite his resolve not to bother the Colonial Secretary further, Rowan presented two more memorials to Governor Sir George Grey on the grounds of simple financial need. He could not come out on his 'small salary'. In the first he stated that the cost of living was such that he had, by the end of 1856, begun evening classes for private pupils to supplement his income. But the growth of his day school to 130 pupils meant that he was exhausted. A final appeal in January 1857 followed similar lines, and ended with the request that the Governor 'refer his case to the committee now sitting on educational matters...'⁵⁸

The 1857 Parliamentary Select Committee on Education was presented with Rowan's memorial as well as hearing, among other evidence, of the strain on teachers like Hugo at Worcester and Rait at Colesberg. This prompted its chairman, John Fairbairn, to proclaim: 'I speak with all respect of the Government, - I think they are acting oppressively towards this class of men.'⁵⁹ The select committee recommended the continuation of the New System but recognised the need to provide more support for teachers. For Rowan, too, came some sort of justice, as in June 1857, the chairman reported:

[I]n the case of Worcester, we are of opinion that the present teacher, Mr Rowan, should have had the salary of £130 formerly attached to that office at Worcester. We submit that provision should be made for back pay in this case.⁶⁰

Parliament responded by voting a general increase in salary for government teachers. Rowan was informed by the Colonial Secretary himself on 11 September 1857 that his increase was £50. Rowan wrote to Rawson of his gratitude to 'his Excellency the Governor for his Kindness and liberality' (although it was Innes who set the amounts) and thanked the Colonial Secretary 'for I

⁵⁶ Col Sec to Rowan, 10 June 1856, *ibid*, 16-17.

⁵⁷ Rowan to Col Sec, 23 June, 1856, *ibid*, 18-19.

⁵⁸ Memorial of Albert Nicholas Rowan, nd, *ibid*, 20.

⁵⁹ A1SC-1857. *Report of the Select Committee on Education*, 33.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, viii.

am confident that the increase we have received to our salaries for this year is mainly to be ascribed to your exertions on our behalf'. He then pled the cause of his Assistant. 'One act of hardy justice still remains to be done. I speak of my Assistant, Miss Meiring, who is at present in receipt of £20 per annum.' Commending her service he asked that her 'small pittance' also be brought to the notice of the Governor.⁶¹

Parliament had in fact voted £350 in July 1857 for augmentation of salaries of pupil-teachers and assistants in government schools; for those who might become trained as teachers 'and thereby supply the growing demand for this invaluable class of men.'⁶² Innes had, however, not reported on the allocation of this money by the time he received a reprimand from Rawson on 28 September,

conveying the expression of His Excellency the Governor's regret that the liberal and benevolent intentions of the Parliament ... have been delayed so long in their execution through neglect which I have shown in the matter – and requesting me to report at the shortest possible date.

Innes's lengthy list of recommendations on 29 September included an increase of Johanna Meiring's salary to £35 'in consideration of her age and the likelihood of her continuing until she qualify herself for conducting a female School'. The amount paid to the three Worcester senior pupils would be unchanged.⁶³ And so, for a few months at least, Rowan's financial campaigning came to an end, while he remained convinced that the way to get things done was to go directly to the Colonial Secretary, if not the Governor himself.⁶⁴

The Government Teacher's Reputation takes a Blow: 1858 Tour Report

As mentioned earlier, Innes planned to begin a tour of inspection of the western divisions of the Colony in September 1856. He then revised these plans in October to take in forty-three schools and school stations, planning to inspect the Worcester Government School on 25 November 1856.⁶⁵ In November, however, Innes decided that he would have to postpone his tour in order to rewrite the whole statistical part of his Report for 1855. Rawson fumed about the delays and appears to have had little sympathy for his SGE's growing distress. He recognised the problem of schools being left unvisited for eight months, not to speak of appointments in the country

⁶¹ Rowan to Col Sec, and margin notes, 16 September 1857, CO 695.

⁶² Innes to Col Sec, 29 September 1857, *ibid*.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

⁶⁴ This was eloquently stated by Rowan, writing to Rawson on another matter, 2 May 1857, *ibid*.

⁶⁵ Innes to Col Sec, 11 September 1856, Jervis to Col Sec, 15 October, 1856, CO 676.

dishonoured and wasted expenditure incurred on unused transport.⁶⁶ By March 1857 Innes was severely ill and felt unable to fulfil the duties of his position. As we know, his first letter of resignation was rejected by Government and late in 1857 he once again set his tour plans in motion.

In April 1858 Innes's *Report of the Superintendent-General of Education on a Tour of Inspection of the Schools in the Western Divisions of the Colony* was presented to Parliament. When a report on the tour was included in the *Cape Argus* newspaper in the same month, Albert Rowan was able to read about the state of education through his SGE's eyes. In December 1857 and early January 1858 Innes had visited a number of schools on his way to and from Clanwilliam in the north-west. [He had returned to Cape Town for a few weeks where his departure on the next leg of his journey was again delayed by a failure to secure suitable horses. He was on the road again in late January.] He had moved through Caledon, Bredasdorp, Napiersdorp, Mossel Bay and George. Intending to continue to Knysna which could only be reached on horseback, 'I was obliged, on account of what I suffer from exposure to the sun, to abandon the idea of visiting this district.'⁶⁷ His 'return tour' had taken him through Riversdale to Swellendam and finally to Worcester. Reading the *Argus* account, Rowan was 'very much hurt and surprised to find that, while honourable mention is made of the mission schools here, not a word is said about the Govt School under my charge'.⁶⁸ He was correct, for the sum of what Innes wrote was:

As on all former occasions, the result of the inspection of the mission school at Worcester was highly satisfactory. This institution, equal in extent and usefulness to that of Stellenbosch I recommend to be put on the same footing by receiving the maximum grant, namely, seventy-five pounds; ... I also recommend that the infant department be supplied with a complete set of apparatus, and that some mark of approbation be conferred on the female, in charge of the department, for her devotedness and untiring exertions for the progress of her school for many years.⁶⁹

For Rowan being omitted from the tour report was seen as undeserved neglect given the way he, though professing to be aware of his own shortcomings, put his fullest effort into his teaching. It indicated to those who did not support government schools that the SGE thought so little of his school that it was not considered 'worthy of a place in his report'. He professed himself willing to profit from any suggestions if the judgment on his school were unfavourable; and to be most encouraged if it were favourable. The omission appeared to negate his very being and he

⁶⁶ Rawson's margin comments, 4 December 1856, on Innes to Acting Col Sec, 28 November 1856.

⁶⁷ G.29-'58. *Report on Tour of Inspection*, 5.

⁶⁸ Rowan to Innes, 16 April 1858, SGE 1/2.

⁶⁹ G.29-'58. *Report on Tour of Inspection*, 6. The Rhenish Mission infant school teacher was in due course presented with a silver watch and key valued at five guineas, an exceptional mark of recognition from Innes's department. Innes to Col Sec, 7 July 1858, CO 720.

demanded the 'common justice' of an explanation. On a more material level, favourable mention in a published report, for example of his ideas about training pupil-teachers,

may have gained him a few more boarders. I can assure you that these trifling incidents in a country where the people cannot judge for themselves in matters of education often tell very much on the career of any school.⁷⁰

Innes appears not to have responded to these letters, and it is unclear why he omitted mention of the Worcester government teacher in his tour report. The report is lucid and detailed, with much written on affairs at Clanwilliam, Mossel Bay and Swellendam in particular. It also presents Innes's ideas on expanding the educational system through the provision of district elementary schools in every field cornetcy, and some new first-class schools in towns to be decided by Parliament. Nell points out that the Inquiry into the first-class schools in 1857 had resulted in increasing pressure in parliament for an expansion of aided schools and ending of free schools. This led to the framing of a short-lived Bill for Promoting Education in the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. It proposed the abolition of the existing free and aided schools, replacing them with a 'pound for pound' system of state aided education. Also proposed in the bill was the abolition of the position of SGE, given that one person was seen to be failing to accomplish the necessary administrative tasks, and instead a Central Board of Education under the *ex officio* leadership of the Colonial Secretary was put forward.⁷¹

The public furore raised by these proposals will be discussed in relation to Rowan's objection to SGE Dale's special inspection in 1860. Suffice to say, throughout 1857 there was a heated public debate over control of public education, and Innes was trying to show that first-class education could be expanded on a modified model. He had much on his ailing mind.

Perhaps Innes was tired of being by-passed on important matters by Rowan and gave him similar treatment. The explanation may have been as mundane as Worcester being the last town on his itinerary and, under pressure to get his report to Parliament, it may have been left out.

Whatever the reason, it was enough to persuade Rowan that there was no future for him in education and that his other occupation of land surveyor held out better prospects for an ambitious young man.

⁷⁰ Rowan to Innes, 16 April and 15 June 1858, SGE 1/2.

⁷¹ Nell, 'Innes as Educationist', 423-430.

The Teacher as Land Surveyor

The Salary I receive from Government is so inadequate to support my family, that were it not for my attachment to teaching I would have given up my situation long ago, and applied myself entirely to my profession as Surveyor

(Albert Rowan, 1 April 1861).

On 29 April 1858, deflated at having had no response from Innes, Rowan wrote the first of an increasing number of letters directly to the Colonial Secretary requesting to be transferred 'to another situation'. He cited the 'uncertainty enveloping the future of the Educational Establishment and the little prospect of advancement in it' as leading him to believe that he would do better to 'quit an Establishment which holds out no encouragement whatever to a young man'.⁷² Rowan was willing to take any promotion within the government service. Having, with Innes's knowledge, qualified as a land surveyor, he preferred that this be to the Land Surveyor General's Department. He had made personal acquaintance with the Colonial Secretary on Rawson's visit to Worcester the previous year, and Rawson at some stage promised him survey work in the area to add to his income.⁷³ It is perhaps no coincidence that Rowan wrote of his inclination to become a fulltime land surveyor at the time, in mid-July 1858, that the village of Rawsonville was being laid out in the Goudini Valley across the Breede River from Worcester.⁷⁴

Rowan had already begun to use his Saturdays and vacations to carry out 'small' surveys in Worcester and surrounding areas. Eventually his work included subdivision of farms around Worcester and Goudini, of residential plots in the larger town, and work for the Worcester municipality. The last included a survey of state land allocated by the Worcester municipality for a mill and the marking out of a new road to separate the English and Lutheran Churches from the remainder of Market Square.⁷⁵ Rowan was also responsible for the plans for 'the village of Rawsonville & Commonage'.⁷⁶ As he measured farmers' and townsmen's land and received briefs from municipal councillors, Rowan was drawing on a network of social connections in this work, as in building his school.

⁷² Rowan to Col Sec, 29 April 1858, CO 720.

⁷³ Rowan to Acting Col Sec [Richard Southey], 18 February 1861, CO 775.

⁷⁴ W.R. Laubscher, *Eeublad* (Hoerskool Goudini, 1958); A.P.Smit, *Genade Genoeg vir Goudini* (Kerkraad, 1979).

⁷⁵ Minutes of Worcester Municipality, 6 Mei 1857 and 2 May 1860, 3/WOC/1/1/1/3; Rowan to Acting Col Sec, 29 March 1861, CO 775.

⁷⁶ Rowan to Acting Col Sec, *ibid.*

He argued in 1861, when there was a temporary threat to continuing with his land surveying,⁷⁷ that this work did not interfere with his school duties. His school was given six hours of hard work every day, besides which surveying 'afforded me relaxation [and] brought me in some profit'. This was in contrast to his school duties which were 'laborious and anxious', and which

in so hot a climate as this, [are] already gradually undermining my constitution and ere long may cast me as a useless wreck upon society unfit for anything else but to drag out the miserable years of a premature age.⁷⁸

When Rawson did respond to Rowan's letter of 29 April, it was to quash any ideas of a transfer to another government department. In August 1858, Rawson sent off both an official letter and a private note to the anxious teacher. Rowan received these with 'mingled feelings of pleasure and pain. Pleasure at the kindly tone ... and at finding my application had not been totally disregarded, treated with indifference ...' The pain was because Rawson reiterated that the transfers as requested were not acceptable to government. Rowan was speaking for many of his colleagues when he continued:

Believe me Sir it is a mistaken idea to suppose, that if the other departments of the Public Service were made accessible to the Govt Teacher, he would, all other things being equal become dissatisfied with his situation and seek every pretext for leaving it. – It is only when they find their energies giving way that they cast their eyes for another situation in which the strain upon the mental faculties is much less, and the chances of improving their circumstances speedier and more certain.⁷⁹

As the special Inquiry into the Graaff-Reinet first-class school was at the time underway, it crossed Rawson's mind to suggest to Innes that Rowan be promoted 'to the projected Elementary School at Graaff-Reinet' and Bremner be brought to Worcester at his present salary, but nothing came of it.⁸⁰ Rowan was assured that 'the Government was in communication with the Supt Genl as to the best means of giving promotion' to him – but, having heard nothing further by May 1859, Rowan made a final bid to achieve an improvement in his material circumstances; for promotion and a liveable salary seem to have been the core issue. The size of his school and the excessive demands it made on his time, the twenty or more pupils to whom he gave free instruction in the higher branches, as well as 'Books &c to the children of poor families'

⁷⁷ Rowan was informed by the Examiner of Diagrams in the Surveyor General's Office that, as he was a public functionary, he was not permitted to work as a government surveyor and his plans could not be approved. Surveyor General Bell acknowledged that this had been Montagu's directive in the 1840s but felt it was an unnecessary prohibition. Eventually Governor Sir George Grey permitted any civil servant qualified as a surveyor to work as such provided it did not interfere with his other public duties. Margin notes on Rowan to Acting Col Sec, 18 February, 29 March, 7 May and 16 July 1861, CO 775.

⁷⁸ Rowan to Acting Col Sec, 7 May 1861, *ibid*.

⁷⁹ Rowan to Col Sec, 11 August 1858, CO 720.

⁸⁰ Rawson's notes on Rowan to Col Sec, 29 April, 1858, *ibid*; Rowan to Col Sec, 3 May 1859, CO 741.

were listed in his defence. 'I would not have troubled you just now', he wrote somewhat obsequiously to Rawson,

but would have been content to wait patiently until such time as the Govt would have seen fit to give me that promotion which, if it depended upon you, I am certain I would have received ere this, but the enormous price of provisions have obliged me against my will to take this step.⁸¹

Innes, who had not been privy to this correspondence, was now asked to report on it, and resubmitted a 'Memorandum on augmentation of salaries for Teachers on the Government Establishment,' dated 15 August 1857. According to Innes's plan, Rowan would receive a £50 increase – and did.⁸² Rowan's agitation and Rawson's patronage thus resulted in improved salaries for all teachers; for it is likely that the Colonial Secretary promoted this in Parliament.⁸³

Finally, shortly before Innes's departure, a more structured and official approach was taken to the long-held practice of using pupil-teachers in government schools. In line with similar practices in Britain, a 'Government Minute' dated 21 June 1858 made provision for the training of pupil-teachers *in situ* in both government and aided schools. Pupil-teachers accepted for the programme would be paid a stipend which would increase by £5 pa provided they have 'a creditable examination in any two subjects selected by themselves'.⁸⁴ This was a move welcomed by Rowan who immediately applied to enrol his three male senior pupils. While this was eventually accomplished, the road to doing so was not smooth, as the many letters on the subject point out.⁸⁵

It was then that Innes finally resigned, hopeful that the System that he had nurtured with all his energy would continue to grow, even in a modified form. This was despite the difficulties experienced by his carefully chosen, well-qualified and erratically examined teachers.

The Government Teacher Resists Arbitrary Surveillance: The 1860 Special Inspection

Innes resigned in October 1859 and Langham Dale, formerly professor of Classics and English at the South African College, became SGE in November.⁸⁶ He immediately determined to ascertain the state of the government schools. He compiled a report form and, on the advice of Innes,

⁸¹ Rowan to Col Sec, 3 May 1859, *ibid*.

⁸² Copy of Memorandum on salaries, 15 August 1857, attached to *ibid*; J. McNaughton to Col Sec, 18 June 1859, *ibid*.

⁸³ 'Rawson', *Dictionary of South African Biography II*, 571-2.

⁸⁴ 'Government Minute – Education, 21 June 1858', copy in CO 741, 1859, Innes to Col Sec, 14 April 1859, CO 741 outlines application of this minute.

⁸⁵ Rowan to Innes, 11 March, 2 October, 29 October, 3 December 1858, 29 January 1859, SGE 1/2.

⁸⁶ J. Murray, ed., *Mrs Dale's Diary* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1966), 10.

requested eminent men with some knowledge of education to carry out a once-off special inspection of the Established schools. Many of inspectors were local clergymen, including the DRC's Revd Professor John Murray at Stellenbosch and the Anglican clergyman, Revd John Maynard at Worcester.⁸⁷ Time being short, he failed to inform the teachers in advance of the limited information-gathering nature of the inspections,⁸⁸ leaving them to learn from the inspectors that they were intending to visit the schools. This precipitated a new crisis for Rowan and again offers an instructive view of the connection between the small world of the schoolroom and wider society.

Having been optimistic that Dale's appointment as SGE would be good for education, Rowan now professed himself to be 'crushed' and government schooling to be doomed by 'the interference of Episcopalian clergy'.⁸⁹ What he objected to was the 'irregular way in which the appointment has been made' and of 'the clergyman of any particular religious denomination to the exclusion of other'. This, said Rowan, 'was far from prudent in a place where so few belong to the Episcopalian religion'⁹⁰ and was

likely to provoke that worst of all feelings, religious jealousy, which when once made rampant in this colony will swallow up the present system of Education, and prevent the establishment of any other however liberal and enlightened it may be.⁹¹

Rowan's reaction to the prospect of a once-off inspection was out of proportion to the nature of the intended visit, increasing in intensity as Dale and Rawson failed to heed his initial protestations against the proposed inspector. In various letters he used words like 'offensive' and 'repulsive' to describe the act of inspection; that it was a 'blow' to his school, the sure cause of the 'downfall of all his hopes' and that his 'usefulness as a teacher [there was] completely gone'. Surprise, grief and loss were all associated with the intended action.⁹² In a familiar pattern of appeal to the highest authority, he sent all of his correspondence either to the Colonial Secretary, or made sure that Rawson received copies of his letters to SGE Dale. He felt that 'I have ... no other alternative but again, as of old, to take myself to you to request your interference and protection'. Rowan again appealed to be removed from his teaching position.⁹³

⁸⁷ Dale to Col Sec, 5 and 9 January, 1860, CO 767. Innes was to inspect Wynberg Government School, the Civil Commissioners of Graaff-Reinet and Colesberg their respective government schools. Caledon Government School had just closed, but Revds Albertyn and Wilshire inspected the mission schools there and at Genadendal.

⁸⁸ Dale designed a return based on but omitting many items from one used in Scotland. Dale, 22 October 1861, 'Evidence Taken Before the Education Commission.'G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 47.

⁸⁹ Rowan to Dale, 18 and 20 December 1859, SGE 1/2.

⁹⁰ Rowan to Dale, 2 January 1860, CO 767.

⁹¹ Rowan to Col Sec, 2 January 1860, *ibid*.

⁹² Rowan to Dale, copied to Col Sec, 2 January 1860, Rowan to Col Sec, 27 January 1860, *ibid*.

⁹³ Rowan to Col Sec, 9 January 1860, *ibid*.

Dale was flummoxed by the outcry, pointing out to Rawson that he had himself inspected 'all the Schools in Cape Town, established and aided', and proposed to visit more schools. Special inspectors had been chosen to assist him⁹⁴ and Maynard had both proven helpful 'as Assessor in the Examination of the School in Beaufort West' and for some years since arriving at Worcester

had been in the habit of attending the Examination & of examining personally some of the Classes: the Dutch Clergyman [Henry Sutherland] has retired from Public Service & ceased for some years to attend the School Examinations: he, therefore, could not even be associated with Mr Maynard, had it been desirable.⁹⁵

It seems as if at the heart of the furore was Rowan's fear that he would sacrifice hard-won support from the Dutch Reformed leaders and the wider church membership for a somewhat alien educational dispensation. Rowan was later to characterise the New System in this way: '[T]here was no bond of it between it and the people. It was too liberal and too Governmental; and, in addition, it was badly administered from its very commencement.'⁹⁶ The government system, with its prioritisation of the English language and liberal and classical curriculum, had hitherto been presented largely by Scottish Presbyterian teachers (or pupils of such) and superintended by a Scottish Presbyterian SGE. That the new SGE was English and a devout Anglican churchman⁹⁷ may not have been common cause in Worcester. The energetic efforts of Bishop Robert Gray to establish stable Church of England congregations and schools throughout the Colony was, much of the money for which was raised in Britain.⁹⁸

At the time of the proposed 'Bill for Promoting Education' there was significant agitation in both the English and Dutch press that this favoured the expansion of Anglican schools, and that the Bishop of Cape Town was behind it. Fairbairn argued that positioning the Colonial Secretary as head of the Board of Education would give to a government official powers that parliament should hold. For many, Rawson was an official who was in the thrall of an Anglo-Catholic bishop, to boot.⁹⁹ An editorial in *De Zuid Afrikaan* on 19 March 1857 expressed sentiments that would have been understood at Worcester where similar perceptions endured through to the 1860s:

⁹⁴ Dale to Col Sec, 5 January 1860.

⁹⁵ Dale to Col Sec, 9 January 1860.

⁹⁶ A.N. Rowan (1878), in E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa 1: 1652-1922* (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Juta, 1925), 95.

⁹⁷ Murray, ed., *Mrs Dale's Diary*, 60.

⁹⁸ T. Gutsche, *The Bishop's Lady* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1970), *passim*.

⁹⁹ Nell, 'Innes as Educationist', 425. Gray's connection with the Oxford Movement within the Church of England, which returned in some ways to Catholic roots and rituals, had not gone unnoticed. 'Oxford Movement', *The Columbia Encyclopedia 6th ed* (2008) accessed 20 December 2010.

Our alarms may appear groundless, but we think we can show reason for them. Hitherto the people had had to compete with a Government system which was under a Superintendent General who is a Presbyterian, a system which nominally at least admitted the necessity of teaching the Dutch language along with English ... If this Bill is allowed to pass, we shall have an Episcopal Superintendent, an Ordinance which does not so much as mention the Dutch language as part of the education of our colonial youth and ... an unlimited money from sources *at home*, that are always accessible to Governors and Bishops ... In short, pass this Bill, and you give the Government the monopoly of Education, which is virtually the same as giving it to the Episcopal Church.¹⁰⁰

Evidence of the bishop's progress stood in town after town in well hewn stone, as the construction of 'authentically English' church buildings designed by Sophy Gray proceeded; as at Caledon, so too at Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg and in Worcester. 1859 was the year in which the construction of St James, the Great Church off Market Square, was finally completed.¹⁰¹ The appointment of Maynard, rector of St James, as inspector of the government school was seen by certain Worcester residents as a mark of 'the intention of the Govt to throw the Schools into the hands of the Bishop and his clergy'.

Up to this point, Rowan had been confident that the public examinations of his school were persuasive performances for the Worcester public of the benefits of government education.

My object is not to throw any obstacle in the way of the Govt or the public to acquire as much information as possible concerning the Govt Schools – far from it. Ever since I commenced my career as Govt Teacher, it has been a fixed rule with me to invite by Note to my Examination both friend and foe, and afford them the fullest liberty to question the Pupils.

His vision, industry and financial sacrifice were, he argued, about to bear fruit. An interest in education was being awakened, and

I had already taken advantage of it at the last examination by impressing upon the minds of the parents and others who were present the necessity of assisting the Government in promoting education among them, when alas for human hopes and aspirations, the appointment of Mr Maynard as Inspector became known.¹⁰²

Rowan had carefully promoted 'a thoroughly English education' by consciously promoting a non-partisan relationship with English and Dutch residents. This was jeopardised as one of Bishop Gray's clergymen was made solely responsible to report on the school. Rowan indicated that this

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/IEI.Oxfordmo.html>. The Bishop fitted easily into upper class circles, and Gutsche notes his close friendships with Col Sec Montagu and Governor George Grey, as well as the access he had to colonial office information, Gutsche, *Bishop's Lady*, 69, 142.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in Nell, 'Innes as Educationist', 426.

¹⁰¹ D. Martin, *The Bishop's Churches* (Cape Town: Struik, 2005), 43.

¹⁰² Rowan to Dale, 2 January 1860, CO 767.

was not necessarily a fair perception, 'exaggerated perhaps by those, who from interested motives, are not favourable to the Govt School here' and that he himself respected Maynard. Nonetheless, the 'public mind here is strongly agitated – You have caused the worst of feelings – religious jealousy'.

The reaction of the Worcester local authorities and evidence of support for Rowan in this matter demonstrate both the extent to which the local Dutch residents were coming to regard the school as their own; and that the right to manage it was part of a greater issue of control of public space. Evidence of the agitation of the public mind was a special meeting of the Divisional Council held on 9 January to discuss the matter. These local representatives made the issue a matter of legal jurisdiction, resolving:

That the Council protest against the appointment of any particular individual as Inspector of the Government School, which the Council consider as an infringement of the rights and duties vested in them by virtue of an Act of Parliament.¹⁰³

Rawson responded quickly to the outraged teacher, asking why he had not soothed local feelings by explaining the 'object and intentions of the inspection'. This added to Rowan's outrage as he had still not personally been given any explanation of the purpose of the inspection by his superiors. He had only learnt of it from Maynard himself. 'I was not in the position to give any [explanation] – I wrote to Mr Maynard for a copy of his instructions but was not favoured with the sight of them until I saw them in the Govt Notice which appeared in the Govt Gazette of the 10th instant.'¹⁰⁴ The appearance of the official notice reassured no-one, with the Divisional Council deciding on 23 January (despite its Chairman's objection) to forward its resolution to the SGE.¹⁰⁵

Rawson had, in the meantime, received a similar protest on the same principle from Rowan's former school master at Stellenbosch, Humphrey McLachlan. With accusations that the SGE was acting 'ultra vires', introducing 'a new element of supervision', and 'an arbitrary regime'¹⁰⁶ adding to the agitation from Worcester, Rawson informed Dr Dale that he had better undertake the inspection of the Worcester and Stellenbosch schools himself.¹⁰⁷ This he duly did.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Office of Divisional Council, Worcester, 23 January 1860, enclosed with Rowan to Col Sec, 28 January 1860, CO 767.

¹⁰⁴ Rowan to Col Sec, 27 January 1860, in response to Col Sec to Rowan, 9 January 1860 (not filed), *ibid*.

¹⁰⁵ Members of Worcester Divisional Council to Superintendent-General of Education, 23 January 1860, attached to Dale to Col Sec, 28 January 1860, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁶ H. McLachlan to Revd J. Murray, 17 December 1859, CO 741.

¹⁰⁷ Margin note, Rawson to SGE, 31 January 1860, on Dale to Col Sec, 28 January, CO 767.

A few weeks later Rawson received another missive from Rowan – indicating that the furore in Worcester as a result of the proposed special inspection was not over. Requesting copies of all correspondence between Maynard, Dale and the government concerning the inspection, he claimed to need these ‘in order that I may have an opportunity of disproving any charges that may have been brought against me’. Attached were a copy of an affidavit from certain residents of Worcester, and a letter from Rowan to SGE Dale.¹⁰⁹ It was the latter that set out details of his ‘charge’ for the contestation of Maynard as inspector had now become a public matter of the honour and reputation of both men.

A letter from Mr Sharpe, a Worcester municipal commissioner and a member of Maynard’s church,¹¹⁰ had been published in the *Argus* on 6 March 1860. This presented Maynard’s position and basically accused Rowan of unbecoming conduct. With no instruction from government by 25 January to abandon his inspection, Maynard had informed Rowan ‘that if it were convenient to him, I would inspect his school on Friday the 27th. Rowan begged him ‘to postpone my visit for some time longer’. Maynard, feeling he had done all he could to carry out his charge, would have given up at this point,

And Mr Rowan, if he had possessed the proper feelings of a man, he would have let the matter drop. But instead of that, and after the receipt of my letter, he told all the children that if I came to the School on Monday they were to go out at one door while he went out at another.

Rowan denied, firstly, having instructed the children in this manner, and secondly having been involved in any way ‘in the late proceedings of the public of Worcester against the appointment of Mr Maynard as special inspector of my school’. Rowan felt that Revd Maynard had charged him publically with an accusation that ‘affects my character as a teacher very seriously’.

By this time Rawson seemed thoroughly tired of the whole affair and, writing on behalf of H.E., had the last word on the matter.¹¹¹ He reminded the agitated teacher that,

¹⁰⁸ Dale to Col Sec, 11 February 1860, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ Rowan to Col Sec, 13 March 1860, *ibid*.

¹¹⁰ Minutes of the Worcester Municipality, 20 June 1860, show him to be a municipal councillor involved in plans for the visit of Governor Grey and Prince Albert to the town, 3/WOC/1/1/1/3; J. Maynard to Dale, 3 April 1873, SGE 1/29, Letters Received by the Superintendent-General of Education from the Western Districts, 1873.

¹¹¹ Sir George Grey was absent from the Cape from August 1859 to July 1860, having been recalled to Britain. This left Rawson effectively in charge of government although Lieut-Gen Wynyard acted as governor, *Dictionary of South African Biography II*, 571.

it is only necessary to disprove charges which the Govt call upon him to answer... He greatly regrets that the late excitement has been kept up by a newspaper correspondence, in which he has taken a share without due reflection either as to the impropriety of such proceeding, or as to the tone and language of his letter. H.E. hopes that the matter may now drop as the correspondence which has already passed furnishes only cause for regret at the part taken by the several individuals concerned in it.¹¹²

As a postscript, evidence that Rowan and the community hoped to move beyond this impasse is twofold. At the time of the later establishment of a new Dutch Reformed Church school, a careful selection was made of members of all local churches for its school commission so as to achieve impartiality in its supervision. Rowan, too, was a member of this commission.¹¹³

Secondly John Maynard, presumably son of Revd Maynard, became Rowan's assistant teacher in 1862. Nevertheless events relating to Revd Maynard's supervision of the government school in the final months of its existence would show lingering denominational sensitivities and injury to reputations.

The Dale Administration – Adjusting the 'New System', 1860-1873

Determined to establish for himself the state of colonial education, Dale embarked in March 1860 upon an extensive 'tour of Inspection of the Schools, in the South-Western divisions of the Colony'. From discussions with government teachers, Civil Commissioners and the like, Dale came to the conclusion that significant changes needed to be made to the system of government education – some of which, as we have seen, Innes had already begun to consider. The context of the next decade of Rowan's work at Worcester was thus the review of the system of Established schools by the Watermeyer Commission which sat through 1861 and 1862 and the implementation of its recommendations after 1863. Of relevance for this chapter is its recommendation, made law in 1865, that the existing government schools be closed as their teachers retired or died.

Rowan is notable for operating contrary to this trend. He continued to grow the government school in Worcester into an assemblage of schools while his colleagues in the other government schools were seeing their establishments gradually close; first at Caledon under the circumstances described in chapter six. The Cape Town school was also closed in 1860, and so the closures continued throughout the 1860s. (See **Appendix A.**) Rowan remained head teacher at Worcester until 1872 when Dale's repeated request that he be given the assistance of the

¹¹² RWR 28/3 on Rowan to Col Sec 13 March 1860.

¹¹³ J.G. van H. Tulleken to Dale, 18 July 1861, SGE 1/9.

inspectors promised when he was first appointed SGE was finally implemented. Rowan was appointed, at an annual salary of £400, as one of two Deputy Inspectors of Schools from 1 October 1872.¹¹⁴ This affirmation by government and the SGE of his ability, zeal and status must surely have pleased him.

The Teacher Heads a 'Family' of Schools, 1860-1872

Dale visited Worcester three times between 1860 and 1862, and generally found the school to be 'admirably conducted'.¹¹⁵ Its enrolment of 132 pupils in March 1860 was the highest of all government schools.¹¹⁶ He also took the opportunity during his second visit to Worcester to examine the Rhenish Mission Schools superintended by Revd Esselin. The four divisions of the School embraced 418 children who were taught through the medium of Dutch in the junior divisions. His commendation of what he saw was added to that of many observers over the years. It also provided a model for changes in the education system that he was soon to facilitate.

These four large school rooms are built and fitted in a superior manner; the parallel system of arrangement, as recommended by the Committee of Council on Education, is carried out successfully: and the Infant School is furnished with all necessary Apparatus. They are strictly Model Schools, and are giving a fair Education to the large coloured population of Worcester, as well as setting an example, very worthy of imitation, to the rest of the Colony.¹¹⁷

While attention was paid, at the Worcester Government School, to practical matters of repairs and provision of 'offices', the most significant result of Dale's superintendency seems to have been the encouragement of organisational change. Dale returned from a year in England in 1858¹¹⁸ with a new model for Cape schools in his mind. This was set out in his first annual report as SGE when he presented his view that 'every established school should be conducted by a head-master, aided by an efficient under-master, and where there are girls, by a mistress also'. There should also be an infant department under a mistress – 'the whole series of schools forming one Government institution under the general control of the head-master'. Where a school was mixed, pupils could meet in class for common studies, but girls have separate

¹¹⁴ SGE 17/2, Schedule of the Establishment of the Superintendent-General of Education, 1863-1875.

¹¹⁵ Office of SGE to Col Sec, 12 July 1862, CO 791.

¹¹⁶ Appendix to the 'Special Report of the Superintendent General of Education of the Tour of Inspection', 12 May 1860, CO 767.

¹¹⁷ Dale to Col Sec, 12 May 1860, 'Report of Tour,' 49-51, *ibid*.

¹¹⁸ J.I. Janse van Rensburg, 'Die Lewe en Werk van Sir Langham Dale, 1859-1872' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1943), 64.

instruction for 'those branches which belong exclusively to girls, and in needlework, &c'.¹¹⁹ This 'family' model of a cluster of schools under a 'fatherly' headmaster¹²⁰ was gradually implemented in Worcester with the assistance of the local Dutch Reformed Church.

Rowan's anxious letter-writing appears to have ended by 1861, when a number of matters were settled. The first was the granting of permission for him to continue with his Saturday and holiday land surveying practices.¹²¹ This secured his extra personal income. The second was the implementation of a system of fees for all pupils in the government schools, introduced in the case of Worcester from 1 October 1861.¹²² These varied from 2/6 to 5/6 per month depending on the class to which pupils belonged and were used primarily to supplement salaries. (All Divisional Councils were permitted to give free admission to poor children.)¹²³ Rowan supported the levying of fees as the only way to make the schools efficient – but he also warned against making them too high and causing an outcry from those who might allege 'that the class immediately above the poorest will, in consequence thereof, be deprived of the advantages they have hitherto enjoyed'.¹²⁴ The third move that set his school on a path of consolidation and expansion from 1860 was a more clearly articulated relationship with the Dutch Reformed Church, coinciding with the arrival of Revd Andrew Murray jnr as minister in that year.

The retirement of long time Dutch Reformed minister, Revd Henry Sutherland, saw the eloquent evangelical Revd Andrew Murray jnr take up a four year tenure at the Worcester Dutch Reformed Church. Educated in Scotland and the Netherlands, he came to Worcester after twelve years as colonial chaplain to the Dutch population in the Transorangia.¹²⁵ He thus became Albert Rowan's dominee. It is interesting to contrast the constructive, if brief, partnership in education that he had with the government teacher - whose consciousness was shaped within the Colony - with that of his father and the outsider, Bremner, at Graaff-Reinet.

Murray and his English-speaking Anglican wife, Emma Rutherford, were both convinced of the improving value of education.¹²⁶ Prior to coming to Worcester Murray had been involved in the

¹¹⁹ G.15-'60, *CGH. Report on Public Education for the Year 1859*, 6.

¹²⁰ D. Jones, 'The Genealogy of the Urban Schoolteacher,' in S.J. Ball, ed., *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 65.

¹²¹ Margin note, Richard Southey, Rowan to Acting Col Sec, 16 July 1861, CO 775.

¹²² Rowan to Dale, 29 August 1861, SGE 1/9.

¹²³ Dale to Acting Col Sec, 24 August 1861, CO 775.

¹²⁴ Rowan to Dale, 29 August 1861, SGE 1/9.

¹²⁵ *Dictionary of South African Biography I* (Pretoria: NCSR, 1968), 574-583.

¹²⁶ Her family were Anglican, humanitarian liberals and supporters of John Philip and the 'missionary party'. J. Murray ed., *Mrs Dale's Diary*, 126-7.

recruitment of Scottish and Dutch teachers for Free State Schools¹²⁷ and they were both involved, in 1859, with the establishment of a seminary endowed by Governor Grey (and later called Grey College).¹²⁸ What Murray's specific views on education in Worcester were is not clear, but, influenced by moves in American evangelical women's education, in the 1870s he would establish the Huguenot Seminary in nearby Wellington. This was explicitly designed to provide secondary schooling and teacher training for pious Dutch-speaking women; an education of the 'head, heart and hand' that would equip them with a good academic training and mould their Christian character for service in society.¹²⁹

It is likely that the education of Dutch-speaking girls beyond the levels of basic domesticity was already something Murray favoured and he was probably influential in the offer by his church to assist Rowan in obtaining further assistance for the government school. Dale reported that, 'to meet the want of more efficient help in the Girls Department of the Established School' the Consistory had offered £100 for one year 'to secure the services of a Female Teacher' with 'the probability of this allowance being continued'. Miss Mills 'a superior Schoolmistress, trained at the Home & Colonial Society's Schools', was appointed. While appreciating this voluntary contribution to education, Dale emphasised that the arrangement was not to change the nature of the government school nor to continue if the financial support ended.¹³⁰ The first claim Rowan proposed to make on the newly levied school fees was to replace the DRC's voluntary subscription for Miss Mills with a regular annual salary of £100, an arrangement he considered less 'precarious'.¹³¹

With a schoolmistress to take care of female pupils, Rowan continued the process of improving their facilities while further promoting a decorous separation from the boys. In late 1861 he was trying to persuade the lessor of the school-house to build proper 'necessaries', one each for the boys and girls, and also to have the playgrounds separated 'from each other and from the street by walls'.¹³² He also hoped to add a room for a library to the school, stating:

In a place where so few of the Parents have private Libraries, a collection of useful and entertaining books in connection with the School is an indispensable requisite to encourage a taste for reading in the rising generation.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 101, 116.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 134 ff.

¹²⁹ Duff, S.E. 'Head, Heart and Hand: The Huguenot Seminary and College and the Construction of Middle Class Afrikaner Femininity, 1873-1910' (M.A, University of Stellenbosch, 2006).

¹³⁰ Dale to Acting Col Sec, 31 October 1860, enclosing A. Murray Jr to Rowan, 13 August 1860, CO 767.

¹³¹ Dale to Acting Col Sec, 14 August 1861, CO 775.

¹³² Rowan to Dale, 1 November 1861, 19 November 1861, SGE 1/9.

As part of an extensive tour of the eastern districts of the Colony, Dale made his third visit to Worcester in 1862.¹³³ Here he became acquainted with Isabella Rens, successor since February 1862 to Johanna Meiring. He appointed a male assistant teacher, John Maynard, in the place of two monitors, regarding the latter as 'a very inferior agency'.¹³⁴ This meant that by 1862, Rowan led a government school of three divisions with Miss Mills, a qualified woman teacher, in charge of the girls, Isabella Rens as female assistant and John Maynard assistant in the 'Boys Department'.¹³⁵

The next stage in the expansion of educational provision under Rowan's management came in July 1863. Pressure on the resources of the government school was now so great that it could not accommodate any more pupils and Rowan proposed the opening of an aided elementary Girls' and Infants' School in Worcester. These should be placed under his management, but 'strictly subsidiary to the Government School'. Dale supported this, asserting that there had been 'a great influx of pupils ... owing to the successful labours of Mr Rowan, as a Teacher' – so much so that he had 117 pupils. The government was prepared to provide an annual grant of £50 towards the new enterprise, and further assistance came, once again, from the Dutch Reformed Church. It 'placed at his disposal a newly built & well-furnished Schoolroom, on the Square' for the new schools and promised £50 from local inhabitants to pay for the school mistress'.¹³⁶ (The infant school teacher is subsequently described as 'a trained Mistress from the Home & Colonial Society'.¹³⁷) It is likely that the Girls' Department of the government school moved into these buildings, too, as by 1867 only boys were located in the original school buildings.¹³⁸ It is unclear whether any girls were taking the higher branches of study and their access to these affected by the move.

The final phase of expansion came when the lease of the existing government school building, originally hired from Widow Erasmus, expired in 1867. Widow Erasmus's heir strenuously fought for the lease to be renewed and regarded Rowan as the architect of his misfortune in losing it. It was the teacher Mr Rowan, he asserted, 'who is also a deacon of the Dutch Reformed Church at

¹³³ Dale to Acting Col Sec, 15 January 1862, CO 791.

¹³⁴ Dale to Col Sec, 11 February 1860, CO 767.

¹³⁵ Office of SGE to Col Sec 11 April, 20 May, CO 791.

¹³⁶ Dale to Col Sec, 11 July 1863, CO 809.

¹³⁷ SGE 13/1, 'General Register of Schools,' 1838-1875, lists staff of Girls & Infants' School, Worcester Div B Order II, under Mrs Davies (July 1863-December 1865?); Miss West (1 Jan 1866-Jan 1867, when promoted to Girls Department of Govt School; M. Hugo & A. Meiring (resigned); C. Gie & M. Quin.

¹³⁸ Dale to Col Sec, 26 June 1867, CO 870.

Worcester [and] has induced the church wardens to build another schoolroom'.¹³⁹ Despite van Biljoen's protestations, on 31 October 1857 the Colonial Secretary approved the plans for a new set of buildings, accepting Dale's argument that they would allow for better surveillance of pupils:

The present buildings offer accommodation only to the boys, the girls and infants occupy suitable school rooms on the Square, hitherto gratuitously allowed by the Proprietors, but the Head Govt Teacher can exercise no proper supervision over these divided schools, and as the inhabitants came forward and proposed to erect two commodious school rooms for the boys, adjoining those of the girls and infants on the Square, the offer was accepted, with the view of securing a settled tenure of the whole suite of school rooms, and concentrating the Schools under the eye of the Head-Teacher.¹⁴⁰

A five year lease at a rate of £60 pa for all of the buildings was entered into between the Colonial Engineer and the 'inhabitants', commencing from 1 July 1868. In undertaking this construction by private residents, probably all local Dutch Reformed Church members, the way was being paved for a smooth transition to aided schooling when the Worcester Government School ceased to exist at the expiration of the lease:

The object to be secured by this plan is the concentration of the whole Establishment in one commodious Institution, which, when the Established School is discontinued in the course of time, would be to a great extent a guarantee for the permanent maintenance of the series of schools on the Aided system.¹⁴¹

The English Church Minister Presides Over the Government School for its Final Three Months

Rowan's promotion to Deputy Inspector of Schools in October 1872 meant that he was absent from Worcester during the final months of the establishment in which he had laboured for sixteen years. The Girls' Department closed on 31 December 1872.¹⁴² In January 1873 the financial arrangements were in place for a fee-paying Undenominational Girls' Public School to be opened under the teacher Mrs Louisa Adelaide Hugo. £50 pa would be contributed towards her salary by both government and the residents.¹⁴³ The school's clumsy nomenclature reflected government desire to avoid the very denominational conflict evident in Worcester to some extent, but more specifically in the Eastern Cape.

¹³⁹ Memorial of Barnard van Biljoen, attached to Dale to Col Sec, 6 March 1868, CO 4150.

¹⁴⁰ 'Report', Dale, 6 March 1868, *ibid*.

¹⁴¹ Dale to Col Sec, 26 June 1867, CO 870.

¹⁴² Dale to Col Sec, 4 October 1872, CO 953.

¹⁴³ In an Undenominational Public School, the managers could arrange for religious instruction to be given outside of regular school hours, but pupils could not be forced to attend this. See chapter 8, page 213.

While the leading citizens of Worcester were deciding whether they would accept the heavier financial responsibility incumbent upon the managers of an aided first-class public school for boys,¹⁴⁴ Rowan's assistant, Johnson Partridge, held the fort. When Partridge accepted a post in Graham's Town in March 1873,¹⁴⁵ it was Revd John Maynard who was asked to supervise the school for its last months.¹⁴⁶ The school became a parody of a Benthamite panopticon as the unpopular former inspector attempted to regulate the boys. Maynard regarded it an honour to act as Head Master of the government school, even if only for three months, and welcomed the additional income it afforded him. He took his duties very seriously but it is evident that old wounds had not healed. When he attempted to discipline the few remaining pupils in the school, they absconded and it took the intervention of Revd William Murray, successor to his older brother as minister at Worcester, to persuade some to return.¹⁴⁷ Maynard's interpretation of events was:

When I took them over I must candidly say I never heard or read or found during many years of experience such an unruly vicious & demoralized set of boys in all my life. It is quite evident that a lot of them have conspired for the purpose of interrupting the work of the school in every conceivable way ... **I am thoroughly convinced that there is in my own case as a Clergyman of the Church of England some religious persecution handed down from the time to which I need not allude to you...**¹⁴⁸ [My emphasis]

Dale reassured the distressed cleric that he attributed the low attendance 'chiefly to the circumstances that the school being about to come under the local direction of Managers appointed by the Inhabitants, the Inhabitants prefer to wait for the new Master'.¹⁴⁹ With government making an equal contribution, the guarantees were signed by the nominated managers by June 1873. They promised an amount of £175 pa for the teacher, Revd Geo. T. Jeffreys, who had been nominated and selected by them. £50 pa was guaranteed to the assistant teacher, Mr Pieteron, under similar conditions.¹⁵⁰ The managers, who included former government teacher John Hugo, also undertook to fund or provide accommodation for the teacher.

¹⁴⁴ W. Murray to Dale, 2 June 1873, Maynard to Dale, 3 April 1873, SGE 1/29.

¹⁴⁵ SGE 13/1; 17/2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Maynard to Dale, 3 April, 28 May and 3 June, 1873, *ibid.* William Murray was also later involved in the establishment of schools for the blind and deaf in Worcester. H. Murray, 'The Andrew Murray Family Register,' (unpublished pamphlet, 1981), 10.

¹⁴⁸ Maynard to Dale, 28 May 1873, SGE 1/29.

¹⁴⁹ Margin note, L.D. 31 May 1873, on *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ FORMS OF GUARANTEE, Assistant Teacher and TEACHER, SGE 1/29.

The era of the Worcester Government School thus came to an end on 30 June 1873, and control of public schooling in the town came to rest in the hands of a local committee which had been joined at the last minute by Mr Henry Barclay. William Murray wrote in a final letter on the subject that Barclay was ‘certainly an acquisition because he belongs to the English Church else the whole Committee would belong to the Dutch Church’.¹⁵¹ The role of Albert Nicholas Rowan would now be to inspect the Undenominational Public School and ensure that he, together with the residents of Worcester, achieved the regularity in the Worcester Undenominational Public School that was both disciplinary and productive.

Conclusion

The Worcester teacher spoke often of his role in promoting a very English form of education in, by implication, a very Dutch town. He seems to have seen himself as a capable broker of good scholarship, and in this stood in the company of McNaughton, McLachlan, Bremner and Rait. All would have joined him in believing themselves to be expending their very substance in the best interests of ‘people [who] cannot judge for themselves in matters of education’.¹⁵² Rowan had acquired the discourses of the liberal, self-confident, British government teacher; as a deputy inspector of education he would be in a position to participate in their further, if modified, penetration of Cape colonial society.

Where he differed from the three Scots, one of them his own teacher, was in being able to straddle two worlds; the parochial and the colonial. He was able to draw on his identity as a Reformed churchman on the one hand, and interact confidently, if somewhat manipulatively, with the government leaders on the other. This became particularly important for the survival of government schooling in Worcester where there was evident sensitivity to a more assertive English educational presence represented by Bishop Gray’s initiatives. The furore around Revd Maynard’s inspection occurred when there was a leadership vacuum in the Dutch Reformed Church. The hiatus left by the retirement of the elderly Scottish dominee, Sutherland, had been ended by the arrival of the more cosmopolitan Revd Andrew Murray jnr, however, and the town’s Dutch Reformed élite were again willing to co-operate in the project of government education. The relatively smooth transition from free government schooling to aided public schooling in a complete suite of purpose-built schoolrooms was the legacy of Rowan, in partnership with the Dutch Reformed church, to the white residents of the town.

¹⁵¹ W. Murray to Dale, 2 June 1873, *ibid*.

¹⁵² Rowan to Innes, 16 April and 15 June 1858, SGE 1/2.

Chapter Eight : Conclusion

The task of this final chapter is to draw together the major themes identified at the beginning of the thesis in the light of the five case studies we have examined. The first of these concerns the nature of the colonial project represented by the New System of education. Accepting the principle enunciated by the system's architect, Herschel, that it was the duty of Government to provide for the education of the people, the New System began as an Executive-led project funded initially by the home government. In many ways an ambitious experiment, it was subject to modification from its inception and abandoned by the 1860s. The shift in government emphasis can most succinctly be summed up as a move from provision of government schooling to supervision of aided education. This occurred in the context of new local and international discourses concerning the duty of the state in educational provision. By 1863, the commission which recommended the abrogation of the system noted:

There is reliable testimony to the great benefits conferred on the community by the Government schools established in 1840 ... The growing interest now evinced by all classes of the community in the education of their children may be taken as an additional testimony to the good results of that system ... **The Government may ... consistently and wisely recede from the obligation to provide superior education, and limit its functions to the furtherance of the local efforts, now voluntarily made.** (*Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 1863. My emphasis.)¹

From Provision to Supervision – the Colonial Education Project, 1839-1865

Let us return to Ian Hunter's admonition to caution in evaluating school systems as 'the failed realization of a "higher" or "deeper" educational principle'; and so to avoid criticising the humble church of the New System for not being a cathedral. To judge it for falling short of stated intention is to fail to recognise the improvised nature of such systems, 'assembled from the available moral and governmental "technologies" as a means of coping with historical contingency'.²

There is no doubt that some saw the New System of Established Schools as a noble educational project providing a high quality free education to colonists of all races and stations. The 'Herschel

¹Report, 'G.24-'63. CGH. *Report of a Commission Appointed, in Accordance with Addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to Inquire into and Report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony* (hereafter *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*), lvi.

²I. Hunter, *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 2-3.

vision' was held before teachers and colonists alike by James Rose Innes. Educators such as James Rait and George Bremner could see it as a 'giant ... born to South Africa', or more simply, as 'a scheme of public education ... which promised much for the future benefit of the country'.³ The colonial project reflected by the New System is thus, in one sense, a discourse of possibility drawing on particularly Scottish notions of what constituted a high quality education.

Born at the time of slave emancipation, the New System envisaged moral and intellectual upliftment - 'of the heart and of the head'⁴ - of the colonial population. Its chosen teacher was a university graduate who could prove himself capable of delivering an ambitious curriculum with ambitious intentions to promote literate, rational, non-sectarian British subjects. Its texts were initially those of the *Chambers's Educational Course*, designed for British use. These eschewed what was regarded as irrational rote learning and promoted a love of knowledge embedded in pride in British achievements and civilization. The New System offered a possibility, Bremner was to reflect at the time of its evident failure, that depended on extensive financial investment in sound and well-furnished buildings, necessary equipment and good salaries for teachers and assistant teachers. With these, the New System may have had the status to rise above class and race differences and educate the colonial population in a 'superior' manner.

The New System can be seen, within the same discourses but without the explicit rhetoric, as part of the British colonial state's strategy of penetrating every town and village. It built on the failed system of free schools of 1822 whose purpose, Innes noted, was

so to extend a knowledge of the English language among the inhabitants of the inland districts as to prepare the colony for the adoption of the English language in the administration of justice and in the executive departments of the Government.⁵

Through its schools in each major town, linked to government through the combined surveillance of local élites and the Superintendent-General of Education, the colonial state was setting in place institutions capable of promoting the language of government and the practices of self-regulation required of an orderly colony. Preceded, accompanied or followed by circuit courts and new

³ G. Bremner, 'THE KARROO COLLEGE,' *Midland Province Banner*, 18 August 1858.

⁴ Innes, 8 October 1861, 'Evidence taken before Educational Commission', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 21.

⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

mountain passes and roads, the education system was part of a larger project. Yet, largely because the metropolitan government was unwilling to commit sufficient finances to make the New System operate effectively, it retarded the system from its inception. Glenelg's initial grant was limited to the salaries and accommodation of teachers for twelve principal schools, and he instructed that the amount should not be exceeded.⁶ No governor except for Sir George Grey (1854-1861) was willing to take on the challenge of making greater provision for education, but by 1854 the financing of education lay with the colonial parliament and it had different purposes from those who initiated the New System in 1839. In fact, as the New System was launched, it became policy in settler colonies for the British administrations to attempt to displace costs increasingly on the local populations by awarding them municipal and responsible government.⁷ From 1854 the new Cape parliament brought a middle class settler gaze to the education project; one that, among other objects, was concerned to keep an eye on how public money was spent;⁸ one that would eventually contribute to its change to aided education at every level.

There were continuities throughout the existence of the New System, but many adjustments as well, which support an interpretation that government was improvising to deal with historical contingency. The vision of quality education, the demand that first-class teachers meet a high level of qualification, and the predominance of the English language and a British curriculum continued. Government teachers remained accountable to the state in a centralised and largely state-financed system. The need to be inclusive of all races and classes was not lost, but the manner of fulfilling this changed.

From the inception of the system, it was recognised by Innes that the government schools were expensive. It was thus impracticable to expand the system on the scale needed to make a difference beyond a limited number of centres.

It was from the first manifest to the Superintendent-General that the first and second-class schools on the establishment ... although intended to provide elementary education to all classes of the community, could not effect that object: they could certainly not reach all localities.⁹

⁶ See Innes, *ibid*, 3-9 for details of the initial financial arrangements of the New System.

⁷ C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989), 246.

⁸ Fairbairn to Dale, 23 October 1861, 'Evidence before Educational Commission', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 47.

⁹ 'Report', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, xl.

Innes maintained that Herschel had recognised government as having a duty to assist mission schools and that aid to these should be used to expand the opportunities for education. Whether it was Herschel's original idea or Innes's,¹⁰ from 1841, given the financial constraint on extending the number of schools on the establishment, the Cape colonial government agreed to Innes's recommendation to aid mission schools. This was rapidly recognised as the prime means of achieving the education of the poor who they also identified as coloured.¹¹ This is seen in practice in Worcester, for example, where the aided schools of the Rhenish Mission complemented and outlasted the Worcester Government School. The further extension in 1843 of aid to farmer as well as church clerk schools was a shift away from initial intentions to make the established schools the model for the colony. The result was an inversion of the envisaged scheme so that by the 1860s,

what in 1841 constituted the principal portion of the Government system [i.e. the Established Schools] is now an accessory, - what was in 1841 considered subsidiary having, by natural growth, become practically the scheme itself.¹²

Whatever his faults as an administrator, there is no doubting Innes's commitment to expanding opportunities for schooling of all classes and in every part of the colony. The improvisations made in the system in order to achieve this had the same function of penetrating the colony with a programme that would assist the state in its goals of transformation. The conditions of aid included instruction in English, non-sectarian religious instruction (from Scripture alone) during regular school hours, and a gradual implementation of the same curriculum as was used in the established schools (something that was rarely achieved, however).¹³

The irony of this adaptation to the realities of a large number of poor and rural communities lying beyond the capacity of the New System was that the accompanying supervision of aided schools undermined that of government schools. The "indispensable personal inspection" annually by the Superintendent-General of all these schools ... became utterly impossible,' noted Innes:

¹⁰ J.I. Janse van Rensburg, 'Die Lewe en Werk van Sir Langham Dale, 1859-1872' (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1943), 108.

¹¹ 'Report,' G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, xl.

¹² *Ibid*, xli.

¹³ *Ibid*, xl; Dale, 23 October 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence,' *ibid*, 38-44.

My last circuit of the whole colony, which occupied from five to six months, could not have been short of from 2,500 to 3,000 miles of travelling, whilst the number of schools inspected considerably exceeded 100 ... It was impossible in any one year to take a circuit of the whole. And another great disadvantage, which increased long absence greatly aggravated, was the conducting of the business of the department while travelling on circuit and away from the records of the office.¹⁴

While the forms of central government regulation – returns, reports, improved financial procedures, inspections and examinations – were in place to achieve government regularity, the physical deterioration of its head of education, James Rose Innes, became symbolic of the system's incapacity.

By 1856, there were voices in parliament questioning the value of free education.¹⁵ Despite the recognition that aided schooling needed to be developed alongside the established government schools, the latter did remain the main focus of government investment. As late as 1857 the parliamentary Select Committee on Education, chaired by John Fairbairn, affirmed the continued role of the established schools, and attempted to improve their lot through higher salaries for teachers and assistants. At this stage Fairbairn seems to have seen government schools as an adjunct to the qualified system of representative government, affirming a project, 'which embrace[d] the whole population of the colony' and was designed to prepare young people who,

in the course of nature and time, [will] be the proprietors of all the lands in the colony, and inheritors of all its property; ... the electors and members of future parliaments – jurors ...; in a word will fill all the offices of trust and responsibility in the colony.¹⁶

No new government schools were established after 1846, but as late as 1858 Innes was still attempting to promote the extension of first-class education. Middelberg, Richmond, Burgher's Dorp, Alice and Queenstown stood on the cusp of gaining first-class schools in 1856 but fully funded government schools in these towns were vetoed by parliament under the circumstances described in the Worcester case study.¹⁷ Innes then looked to funding practice in Canada and certain states in North America, where, he noted, free elementary schooling was provided by means of a combination

¹⁴ Innes, 8 October 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence,' *ibid*, 5.

¹⁵ W.L. Nell, 'James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859' (D.Ed thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), 422.

¹⁶ J. Fairbairn, 'Report,' A1SC-1857. *CGH. Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Subject of Education*, v.

¹⁷ Innes to Col Sec, 20 April and 16 May 1856, CO 676; 26 April 1858, CO 720. See Chapter 7, page 184.

of government grants and a 'local rate'.¹⁸ As he moved from town to town on his tour of inspection in 1858, Innes met with residents and explored the possibility of forming a financial and managerial partnership with them in setting up new government schools. He envisaged inhabitants of towns like Richmond raising funds for the schoolroom and to subsidise teachers' salaries – while the elementary classes of the system would remain free and open to all.¹⁹

One of the contingencies affecting the implementation of the project was Innes's illness and his replacement in late 1859 by Langham Dale as Superintendent-General. A somewhat impetuous Englishman, thirty-three year old Dale had himself been recruited by Sir John Herschel to teach at the South African College.²⁰ Although probably more capable than Innes of administering the New System, Dale concluded that the Herschel vision was not sustainable. He spent six months in 1860 moving around the colony on tours of inspection. He made use of the opportunity to consult the teachers and local civic leaders, becoming aware of the attraction to the latter of aided schools where they had more control over the teacher and school.²¹ He reported that the country schools, government and aided, were in a 'destitute state' and rapidly spent the money allocated by parliament on renovations to school buildings and arrangements to facilitate the easier provision of schoolbooks.²²

Dale had spent time in England in 1859, prior to his appointment as SGE, investigating normal colleges and well-managed schools.²³ Once in office, he was quick to make recommendations about adjusting the system further, and drew upon educational discourses which were emerging strongly in Britain at the time. This included the unfolding system of aided schooling and the key role of effective inspection in a system of public education.²⁴

In his first report as SGE, Dale emphasised 'the gradual enlargement of the present established schools into ... complete institutions,' comprising:

¹⁸ Innes, 8 October 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 17.

¹⁹ Innes to Col Sec, 23 September 1858, CO 720.

²⁰ Janse van Rensburg, 'Lewe en Werk', 48, 124.

²¹ Dale to Col Sec, 2 May 1860, CO 767; Dale, 16 October 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 34.

²² Dale to Acting Col Sec R. Southey, 12 October 1860, CO 767.

²³ In November 1858 he was requested by the Cape Government to investigate these. 20 September 1858, CO 720.

²⁴ Janse van Rensburg, 'Lewe en Werk', 61-65.

1. Higher department ... Head-master
2. Elementary department Under-master
3. Girls' department Mistress
4. Infant department Mistress.²⁵

David Stow's model of the school as a 'family system' - with the head teacher exercising the moral authority of a father figure - was gaining popularity in Britain.²⁶ Dale saw the applicability of such a model at the Cape and encouraged its implementation, as we have seen at Worcester. Through an infant section, an early education would be possible for young children, 'a matter of importance, as the labour of the children is so early turned to account here by the parents'. Dale felt particularly strongly that the education of girls should be 'separate' from that of boys. Separate schools were preferable, separate departments under female teachers a minimum requirement.

[M]ixed schools in thinly inhabited places must, perhaps, from economy and from other motives be maintained; but I must express my doubts (and here I am strengthened by the testimony of many experienced men) whether the mixture of the sexes in so many of the established schools, with the scanty surveillance that one master with but little aid can exercise, has not a tendency to depress the moral tone of our youth. I am aware that in Scotland, generally, and in a few well-conducted institutions in England, young people of both sexes to the age of fifteen or sixteen years are educated together; but apart from the advantages which they possess there, in separate entrances and play-grounds, and other details of school organization, there is some weight to be attached to the relative physical development of youth in that climate and in this, and it is particularly in this physiological point of view that I have thought fit to refer to the subject; the greater or lesser intimacy into which European children, especially in the country, are thrown with the unrefined nature of habits of the native calls us to be watchful in regulating and maintaining a proper standard of morality.²⁷

Constructions of race, gender, class and the 'colonial other' course through this pronouncement on how to order the school so as to protect refined young 'European' girls from 'immorality'. Writing to Colonial Secretary Rawson on 'the subject of affording Government aid to Girls' Schools' in March 1860, Dale further noted:

To encourage the careful education of the female portion of the Colonial youth in all useful and suitable learning and in habits of neatness and industry, and to inculcate modesty both in dress and demeanour, are great and necessary objects: but they cannot be fully attained in a system of mixed Schools.²⁸

²⁵ Dale, 6 March 1860, G.15-'60. *CGH. Report on Public Education for the Year 1859*, 6.

²⁶ D. Jones, 'The Genealogy of the Urban Schoolteacher', in S. Ball, ed., *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 65.

²⁷ Dale, 6 March 1860, G.15 -'60. *Report on Public Education*, 5.

²⁸ Dale to Col Sec, [-] March 1860, CO 767.

Probably without any clear intention to do so, the New System, as originally devised, lacked notions of education suited to girls. It offered the opportunity for colonial girls like Eliza Arnot and Johanna Meiring to gain access to dominant male educational discourses. Dale, however, set out a curriculum for the girls' section of the Established school and the highest grade of girls' aided schools where,

in addition to the elementary subjects (Reading, Writing, Arithmetic), provision is made for superior Instruction in the English Language & Composition, Outlines of general History & Geography, the higher branches of Arithmetic; Plain Needlework; and Domestic Economy as far as is practicable.²⁹

What Dale's early pronouncements did point to, was greater state assistance for the education of girls, and in this it is likely that Bishop Robert Gray and his Church of England clergy were influencing government policy.³⁰ Gray was convinced of the value of educating girls and of bringing out qualified women teachers from Britain to do so. He lauded women teachers whose religious zeal both motivated them to hard work and made them willing to work for lower material rewards. The principle of voluntarism counted a great deal with him, and he was unimpressed with the achievement of most schools of the state's New System, which he advised should be allowed to wind down.³¹

In addition to his recommendations on adjusting the structure of the government schools, Dale moved to draw on parental support in financing them. He recognised the impossibility of one underpaid teacher keeping both elementary and secondary sections of schools going, and he sought approval for a system of school fees to augment teacher and assistant teachers' salaries, as well as pay for 'school materials'. This 'would tend to make each School efficient' and teachers 'their interest in the Schoolwork more fully sustained'. He suggested that ten 'Free Scholarships should be [placed] at the disposal of the Divisional Council, subject to confirmation of the Governor'.³²

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ See Dale to Col Sec, 29 May 1860, *ibid*; Janse van Rensburg, 'Lewe en Werk', 80, 88. Dale was a lay Anglican preacher and part of Bishop Gray's social circle, but he also had his disagreements with the Bishop, possibly over the treatment of Bishop Colenso. J. Murray, ed., *Mrs Dale's Diary* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1966), 19, 24, 60, 64, 78.

³¹ Bishop of Cape Town, 13 November 1861, 'Evidence to Educational Commission', G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 78-87.

³² Dale to Col Sec, 2 May 1860, CO 767; margin note, RWR 29 June, which also instructed Dale to prepare a copy of his recommendations for the 'H of A'. Dale would have been familiar with the system of limited free scholarships for poor boys at the South African College, where he had previously taught.

Rawson's response to the proposed introduction of fees is interesting, marking a continued commitment to the 'character' of state education as inclusive. This though, may be seen as largely symbolic, with policy adjusted in the light of the reality that the state was subsidizing the very colonists who were considered able to pay for their own education:

Write and approve – as these schools, as at present constituted, afford instruction not to the children of the poorer classes, but to those of the middle & upper classes who can afford to pay.

At the same time care must be taken that the children of the humbler classes shall not be excluded & that the character of our schools shall be changed so as to establish or increase its exclusive character. Care must also be taken to ensure that the Free Scholars are named on account of the poverty of the parents - & not as a matter of favor. RWR³³

Later in this chapter consideration will be given to how a town's residents shaped the New System's implementation at a local level. What emerges throughout the case studies is the limited embrace of coloured pupils by the government schools, although some attended the George, Colesberg, Graham's Town and Simon's Town Government Schools in the 1860s.³⁴ By then, however, even liberals in parliament like Fairbairn and Saul Solomon acceded to the *de facto* recognition of separate schools for white and coloured children.³⁵ When James Rose Innes commented that a coloured parent 'could no more be deprived of the privileges of the Government School than of the court of justice when he had to plead his rights'³⁶ he was speaking in terms of the strong philosophical wave that supported the abolition of slavery and the launch of the New System. Andrew Bank argues, however, that

the early optimistic liberalism of the 1820s and 1830s, expressed at both a general philosophical level and a more specific concrete level over slavery, Khoikhoi rights and frontier policy, gave way to a deep sense of disillusion and failure in the 1840s.

Egalitarian, humanitarian liberalism was replaced by the 'callous liberalism of political economy'.³⁷ A loss of faith in the civilizing mission occurred among key leaders of society and government in the Cape. The same occurred in other colonies of settlement as well as in Britain itself in the post-emancipation era. Partly this was the result of 'the unwillingness of ex-slaves to reconstitute

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ 'Teachers answers', Appendix II, G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 13, 19.

³⁵ They were signatories of the *Watermeyer Commission* 'Report' to be discussed below.

³⁶ Innes for Commissioners, 4 December 1861, G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 124.

³⁷ A. Bank, 'Liberals and their Enemies: Racial Ideology at the Cape of Good Hope, 1820-1850' (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1995), 348. See Bank's chapter 8 more generally.

themselves as an ordered and industrious working class'.³⁸ At the Cape, the context of eastern frontier warfare (particularly the War of the Axe, 1846-7), as well as the Kat River Rebellion of 1851 saw a waning of the reformist zeal of local egalitarian humanitarian liberals - including John Fairbairn. The influential Attorney-General William Porter warned against a 'romantic' application of principles of Christian equality to Khoikhoi and Xhosa.³⁹

Bank emphasises Porter's influence on the low-franchise qualification for representative government in 1853. This was partly as 'a desire to reward an improving Khoikhoi élite', as well as a pragmatic move to 'attach to British rule' both the less affluent Cape Dutch as well as a small, select group of coloured voters. 'The low franchise alliance between liberals and Cape Dutch farmers was arguably only possible in the context of the more conservative nature of mid-century Cape liberalism.'⁴⁰ It provided a mid-century 'intellectual consensus'⁴¹ which, from the findings of this thesis, appears to have been evident in attitudes to education as well as representative politics. This was that the 'lower classes' (mainly, but not exclusively, coloured) had distinctively different educational needs from middle class colonists.

The colonial government paid lip service to some of the deserving poor gaining access to quality education through bursaries, as Rawson's comments on the application of fees in government schools shows. How deep this commitment was is not clear. In practice government had come to see the expansion of aided mission schools – under more effective supervision – as the means of including most of the poorer members of Cape society within the education system. If efficiency were measured by cost and capacity, the aided schools easily outranked the government schools. In 1859, there were 19 government schools with a total enrollment of 1 593 (and average daily attendance of 1 109).⁴² In 1858, 99 aided mission schools had 10 388 pupils on their rolls and an average attendance of 7 133.⁴³ Many residents and parliamentarians argued that aided education made more sense, even for the more affluent members of society. A government grant of £75 pa could achieve as much, in partnership with the local inhabitants, in keeping a first-class aided public

³⁸ *Ibid*, 360.

³⁹ In *ibid*, 364-366.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 368.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 374.

⁴² 'Report,' G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, xliii.

⁴³ Nell, 'Innes as Educationist', 462.

school operating as the £300 or more that it cost to pay the salary and rent of one government teacher.

The time had come for a decision to be made about the government schools. In 1861 Lieutenant-Governor Wynyard, at the injunction of parliament, commissioned Justice E.B. Watermeyer to head an investigation into education. Popularly known as the Watermeyer Commission, its brief was 'to inquire into the present state of the established schools in the colony' as well as into conditions under which government grants were made to aid teachers 'of schools not on the establishment'. It was also 'to consider and report what measures, if any, it might be desirable to adopt for the extension of sound elementary instruction to all classes of the people'.⁴⁴

In gathering evidence, the Watermeyer Commission conducted lengthy interviews both with Innes and Dale, as well as a dozen men considered to be knowledgeable on matters of education. Ten of them were clerics. Questionnaires were circulated to civil commissioners and clergy throughout the colony, so that the geographical spread represented was wide. Again, the overwhelming number of respondents were district clergymen so that the Watermeyer Commission is in many ways the voice of white, male, clerical opinion – to be explained in part by the fact that aided church clerk and mission schools fell into their ambit, and in many places they were the most educated and influential residents. Views on girls' schooling were given little attention – and, in a paragraph in the final report, confirmed Dale's suggestions noted above. A set of questions on the operation of the government schools was sent to each government teacher, and their answers offer a view into their experiences of the New/Herschel/Established System as it drew to an end.

The Commission concluded that the system of established schools was 'unsuited to [the colony's] present state; and no new schools should be erected upon this system'.⁴⁵ It was, however, noted that the government schools had served to promote an interest in and appreciation for much higher quality education than had hitherto existed. The recommendations were that the government schools be allowed to close as the teachers retired. The shift was away from government provision to government aid and supervision:

⁴⁴ Its members besides Watermeyer were William Porter, Petrus de Roubaix, Saul Solomon, John Fairbairn, Jan Hendrik Munnik, Langham Dale and James Rose Innes. 'Report,' G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, iii.

⁴⁵ 1, 'Summary of Recommendations,' *ibid*, lxxiii.

The system of granting aid by the Government in support of schools initiated in 1841, and engrafted on the Government system from that time, is suited to the present circumstances of the colony, and should be more generally applied.⁴⁶

In order to cater for the range of needs in urban and rural environments, different categories of aided farmer, aided public schools, and aided mission schools should be set up, receiving differing levels of state funding. The focus on extending elementary education in this way could achieve the following moral, intellectual, vocational and civic purposes:

The school-life of the children, even of the poorest people, is acknowledged to be from about 3 or 4 years to 11 or 12 years of age, and if this period be duly economized and turned to account, it is amply sufficient to lay the foundations of habits of order, obedience, and attention, as well as to rouse and train the intellectual and moral faculties, and to communicate sufficient information both on religious and secular matters as to leave an indelible impression on the character of the child, as well as to place within his reach the means of earning an honourable living, and fulfilling all the duties, political and otherwise, which devolve upon him in this colony.⁴⁷

Education of the poor should be delegated to the mission schools – which should continue to be aided but more carefully supervised. For the more affluent, inhabitants could choose their own teachers, have more authority over them, and play a greater financial role in sustaining public aided education.⁴⁸ The implementation of this in practice has been seen in the Colesberg, Caledon and Worcester Schools, as they became aided first-class public schools.

The commissioners accepted that denominational differences, particularly in a town like Graham's Town, were leading to the establishment of denominational schools competing with the government schools; schools which, in Innes's words, 'excluded the humbler classes, making at the same time class distinction, with sectarian superadded, a feature in the educational system of the country'.⁴⁹ With Innes a dissenting voice, the commissioners concluded that, in order to prevent such fracturing of public education, it was better to exclude religious instruction from the new aided public schools. 'Managers of schools' could provide for religious instruction 'in addition to the ordinary school hours', but not compel any child to attend this.⁵⁰ This shift, to promoting a common identity as

⁴⁶ 4, *ibid*, lxxiv.

⁴⁷ 'Report,' *ibid*, lii.

⁴⁸ The 'Summary of Recommendations' includes recommended curricula for each division of school, *ibid*, lxxiv-lxxvi.

⁴⁹ Innes, 8 October 1861, 'Evidence to Educational Commission,' *ibid*, 14.

⁵⁰ 14, 'Summary of Recommendations,' *ibid*, lxxv.

British citizen rather than a denominationally divisive Christian subject, was captured in the title of the new aided schools as 'Undenominational Public Schools'.

A matter of concern noted by the Watermeyer Commission echoed that which had existed throughout the time of the New System, namely the difficulty of obtaining suitably qualified teachers for first-class schools. Although Innes and Montagu had grasped the nettle of teacher training in 1841, the improvisation in making one of first the Scottish teachers head of the Normal School in Cape Town was a singular failure. Not one of his pupils embraced the profession and the Cape Town school was closed in 1860. The pupil-teacher training system (such as had been operating under Rowan in Worcester) was an inexpensive way to provide teachers *in situ* and should continue. They were not, however qualified for first-class public schools. The Commission concluded that first-class teachers would have still to be brought to the Cape from Britain.⁵¹

This section concludes with a comment from a teacher's response to the Watermeyer Commission. John Gibson, the government teacher at Uitenhage, initially selected for the task by Herschel, was proud of what the established schools had achieved and concluded:

Too much was expected from the Government schools; they are few in number, therefore, unable to grapple with the educational wants of the colony; but if the Government will give them a fair trial, and make their strength equal to the work to be done, my experience of the past leads me to predict that their working will not disappoint the country.⁵²

It was not to be. The core recommendations of the Watermeyer Commission were eventually implemented in the Education Act of 1865 (No 13).⁵³ It became, then, a matter of time for the New System to wind down, school by school. [See **Appendix A**].

The Construction of Teacher Identity within the New System

The second major theme in the thesis concerns the question: how did teachers construct themselves within the system and local context, and how did they perform that identity? As has been shown in the case studies, individual teachers appropriated the lofty vision of their position and role. The

⁵¹ 'Report,' *ibid*, lxi.

⁵² J. Gibson, 26 December 1861, 'Teachers' Answers', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 22.

⁵³ Janse van Rensburg, 'Lewe en Werk', 201-2.

material realities of colonial rule and the complexities of social relations at different pedagogic sites led them, however, to varying levels of disillusion. This section of the chapter attempts to draw together the major features of government teacher identity in the mid-nineteenth century, reflecting on the status teachers achieved, and how they attempted to perform a particular gendered form of respectability.

It appears to have been very important to the government teachers that they were teaching within a system attributed (over-generously) to the eminent astronomer Sir John Herschel. Humphrey McLachlan referred to Herschel's personal persuasiveness in recruiting the first five teachers and Bremner showed a strong familiarity in his journalistic efforts with Herschel's 'grand' scheme. Herschel's 'Remarks on the subject of the Government Free Schools' of 17 February 1838 was harnessed by James Rait at Colesberg to his cause of winning a salary commensurate with his status. The Herschel teacher was talented and well-qualified, a man of sound Christian character and someone who would be responsive to the incentives of good payment and promotion – the 'purposive actor' whom Popkewitz identifies as a fabrication of the Enlightenment.⁵⁴ He was a knowledgeable, rational and respectable individual. His role was to introduce a superior form of education to the Colony – this being stressed by the teachers more than the goal of the improvement of all classes.

James Rose Innes added to the teachers' sense of their value and status by reiterating the Herschel vision wherever he went. Whatever his weaknesses as an administrator, he regularly affirmed the superiority of the first-class teacher marked by his success in the examination on the curriculum to be delivered. Similarly, failure to pass this examination left an aspirant teacher like John Golding languishing in a second-class school and earning a concomitantly lower salary. What is not clear is whether the shortage of good teachers and the reality of low numbers engaged in the higher branches undermined their status over the years. By the time the New System was winding down, Dale commented:

According to the scheme laid down at the introduction of the system in 1839, it was expected that a first-class teacher should be competent to give instruction in classics; that is, Latin and Greek, mathematics, including subjects of a high range, physical science, and French. Practically, very few if any men can be found to combine

⁵⁴ Popkewitz, T.S. 'The Production of Reason and Power: Curriculum History and Intellectual Tradition,' in Popkewitz, T.S. et al, eds., *Cultural History and Education: Critical Essays on Knowing and Schooling* (London & New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), 158, 168.

excellence in so many branches; and a first-class teacher is practically a man who can give instruction in the elements of classics and mathematics ... Several of those who are in charge of first-class established schools are certainly not competent to take charge of such as school, if it were necessary in that school to provide for a tolerably wide range of classics and mathematics.⁵⁵

The initial recruits to the New System were those who could claim high levels of academic skill, and Revd Alexander Smith said of Uitenhage that 'the teachers of the Government schools are men of education. Those who superintend aided schools have not this advantage.'⁵⁶ When Revd Andrew Murray sen, disillusioned as he was with the Graaff-Reinet Government School, was asked what qualifications should be required of a teacher, he affirmed that 'in towns the qualifications should be the same as the first-class teachers have hitherto possessed'.⁵⁷

The impossibility of a woman qualifying as a first- (or even second-) class government teacher reinforces the gendered nature of the first-class teacher's status. In the rare instances where female pupils, such as Eliza Arnot at Colesberg, Johanna Meiring at Worcester and Sophia Swemmer at George, were able to study the higher branches in a curriculum that was not designed for girls, they gained access to assistant positions at much lower pay. As the New System moved to its end, women who trained in Britain were being employed as teachers of girls' sections of schools such as that at Worcester, and generally in the motherly role of teachers of infants and juniors. As Rowan said, this took away 'a great deal of the drudgery from the shoulders of the head teacher, and enable[d] him to devote more time to the improvement of his more advanced pupils'.⁵⁸ It is clear where the status in teaching lay.

The approval of the SGE, noted in his reports on examinations and published in numbers and words in annual reports, also affirmed or undermined the status of the teacher. Rowan's distress at being overlooked and the general complaints of SGE neglect from men such as McLachlan at Stellenbosch and Bremner at Graaff-Reinet were not only practical matters; they were about a lack of recognition of the importance and efforts of his teachers. Langham Dale acknowledged the efficiency of good teachers - of 'superior certified teachers' - by avoiding 'undue interference', for example in the

⁵⁵ Dale, 23 October 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence,' G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 37.

⁵⁶ 'Answer from Rev Alexander Smith,' Appendix I, *ibid*, 52-3.

⁵⁷ 'Answer from Rev A. Murray, sen.,' *ibid*, 49.

⁵⁸ A.N. Rowan, 'Teachers Answers', G.24 -'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 34.

choice of textbooks for their schools. 'Each teacher likes his own tools, and, so long as it does not interfere with the course, I leave the selection to the teacher.'⁵⁹

While cleverness on its own would not win status in a community (viz Bremner), it was noteworthy and admirable, linked as it might be with his capacity to deliver the higher branches of the curriculum. When the children of a village or town like Colesberg, Worcester or Wynberg flooded into its government school, the teacher's status was enhanced; particularly if the children were 'of a better class'. The ability of Rowan at Worcester and McNaughton at Wynberg to make their government schools the school in their area added to their status more widely. In turn they were able to confer status on their villages through their reputable schools.

The colonial government did little to enhance the standing of the government teacher after his initial recruitment. Most seriously the lack of resources allocated to the teachers often left them stranded in inadequate, over-crowded schoolrooms, without the books and apparatus to deliver the ambitious curriculum. The lack of adequate provision for assistance for many years left the proud teacher struggling to cope with too many children, in too little space, with too few resources. Thus was public confidence lost in his whole project, and his person undermined.⁶⁰ The infrequency of SGE visits and slowness of the SGE to respond to the government teacher's requests further undermined morale, and when the local school commission or Divisional Council failed to support his school, status was seen and felt to be rock-bottom. Salaries varied, but were generally not such as to affirm the status of the government teacher. He could earn more by becoming a land surveyor or clerk in the civil service. The 'colonial youth' avoided the career of teacher. What the perception was of the government teacher who supplemented his income through other occupations is not clear – except in the case of Bremner who was suspected of neglecting his duties to his pupils.

When, on the other hand, the teacher possessed social capital as in the support of the dominee and Dutch Reformed Church congregation to which he belonged, his status was enhanced. Admiring reports from school commissioners on performance in examinations affirmed the teacher's efforts. Late moves by government to provide assistance, better accommodation and improved salaries for teachers eased their situations and enhanced their standing.

⁵⁹ Dale, 18 October 1861, 'Evidence to Educational Commission,' *ibid*, 31.

⁶⁰ This dilemma is cogently summed up by Joseph Reid, Port Elizabeth Government Teacher, 'Teachers Answers,' *ibid*, 16.

How did the teachers represent themselves and how did they perform this identity? In the first place they embraced skilful and scholarly teaching as the marker of their identity. Joseph Reid of Port Elizabeth Government School noted that he was 'necessarily' engaged for much of his time with 'the mechanical part' of education but 'I have always kept in view the higher aims of education'.⁶¹ Albert Rowan could point to twenty-five pupils in his Latin classes as evidence of 'affording the rising generation as superior an education as possible'.⁶²

George Bremner took pleasure in his skill in working with the pupils entrusted to him, and problematised the 'Boer' population rather than any fault in his instruction when they failed to stay at school.⁶³ As a teacher he conducted his public examinations with ingenuity, humour and cleverness. He presented pupils able to read creditably and reply intelligently to questions.⁶⁴ Like Humphrey McLachlan at Stellenbosch,⁶⁵ Bremner distinguished between the real understanding his teaching promoted and the devotion to memorisation found in the 'teaching of the ancient regime' or, more graphically, 'the system of mental agriculture'.⁶⁶ As McLachlan's protégée, James Rait sought to implement the complex curriculum of a British classical education at Colesberg, with attention being given to the most recent developments in rationalist scientific thinking. John McNaughton's personal spending on materials to assist in his teaching in his superior schoolroom shows him, like the others, to be performing as a teacher who had a high sense of vocation.

Assertion of their success was more often framed in terms of outside recognition of their pupils than in terms of upliftment of those taking advantage of free education. Thus James Rait was to boast of the success of two of his former pupils at Scottish schools and universities.⁶⁷ Rowan was proud that several of his pupils had moved to 'town to finish their education at the [South African] College and other schools ... and one obtained the Prince Alfred's Prize'.⁶⁸ McNaughton at Wynberg boasted, not only that he drew pupils from all over the colony, but also that his former pupils later occupied

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 17.

⁶² A.N. Rowan, 'Teachers' Answers,' *ibid*, 34.

⁶³ G. Bremner, 'Teachers' Answers,' *ibid*, 7-10.

⁶⁴ See chapter 4, pages 84-5.

⁶⁵ H. McLachlan, 'Teachers' Answers,' *ibid*, 31.

⁶⁶ Bremner, 'Teachers' Answers,' *ibid*, 7.

⁶⁷ Rait to Innes, 1 August 1857, SGE 1/4, Miscellaneous letters received by the Superintendent-General of Education, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth, Bathurst, Graham's Town, Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg & c, 1851-1859.

⁶⁸ Rowan, 'Teachers' Answers,' G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 34.

‘responsible and lucrative situations’ throughout the country.⁶⁹ Joseph Reid was similarly edified to ‘see the numbers around me, filling respectable positions in society, who were educated in [government] schools’.⁷⁰ John Gibson noted that there were ‘pupils from the Uitenhage Government school, filling, with satisfaction, many responsible offices in the colony’. He also cited with satisfaction the opinion of his former colleague John Paterson, government teacher at Port Elizabeth from 1841-1847, that on visiting a number of English public schools, ‘I find no pupils better than those we ourselves used to turn out’. In fact ‘the colonial public schools, in ability and in character, will not suffer from comparison with the schools at home’.⁷¹ The identity that these teachers held, at the end of the New System, was as pioneers of a system of education that elevated standards of education in the colony generally, while the system itself had perhaps run its course.

In persisting in their efforts to perform as would a good first-class teacher, these men often described their efforts in terms of character: conscientiousness, zeal, tirelessness and sacrificial effort on behalf of their scholars. For this, and the fact that most were respectably married and needed to support their families in a way that matched the status of their profession, the teachers made a great deal of fuss about their remuneration. The teachers, with the exception in the long run of John Golding at Caledon, represented themselves strongly as respectable men educating respectable and responsible citizens.

Theirs was a manly middle class respectability that also found some doing duty as public servants outside of the classroom – as secretary to a municipality, secretary to the board of a bank, committee member for a parliamentary electoral campaign. And of course they served as elders in the local Dutch Reformed Church or Church of England. These were modest public offices – not those held by wealthier men as directors of boards or chairman of committees (arranging the reception for the visit of Prince Albert, for example). Where they did perform well in the public arena, they were drawn out of teaching – most notably John Paterson who left the Port Elizabeth Government School to edit the *Eastern Province Herald* and found a mercantile empire. The most independent public position claimed by a still practising teacher was that of editor of a local newspaper, George Bremner at *The Midland Province Banner*; but he had to assume a pseudonym and resign his editorship when his identity as a government teacher became public.

⁶⁹ McNaughton to Col Sec, 2 January 1863, CO 809.

⁷⁰ Reid, ‘Teachers’ Answers,’ G.24–’63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 16.

⁷¹ Paterson cited by Reid, *ibid*.

The government teachers of the mid-nineteenth century wielded their pens with ease and performed their identity through a variety of written forms; letters, memorials, articles in public newspapers and Golding's book on education. It is through their own inscriptions that the failure of the teachers to be fully what they aspired to be emerges most strongly (supported by the findings of parliamentary investigations and some of the SGE reports). Loss of control or powerlessness to stem the flow of pupils from a school, gain the attention of government or secure a promotion caused anxiety and anger. Some sought the attention of higher authority as we have seen with Rowan at Worcester; others sought a wider audience as did Bremner through his journalistic efforts at Graaff-Reinet. Many attempted to leave teaching and studied to pass the examinations of the Clerks Board, as did John Chapman Golding, or those for land surveying as did Albert Rowan and Jaspar Loxton, the Malmesbury Government Teacher (1859-62).⁷²

The respectability to which teachers aspired was all too often countered in a *cri de cœur* to Innes, a somewhat ambiguous and neglectful father figure. To the extent that they were unable to secure their families financially, were emotional, ill or exhausted, they became feminised and dependant. The ill James Rait and the 'intemperate' Revd W. Shand at George Government School were supported and, for a period of time, supplanted by their female assistants.⁷³

While inebriation might not necessarily cost a man his reputation,⁷⁴ one suspects that in Stellenbosch under the eagle eye of its theological school heads, Hofmeyr and John Murray, matters may have been different. It was Hofmeyr who commented that the incapacity of teachers was the main reason for the failure of the government schools.⁷⁵ He was clearly referring to Golding of Caledon but was certainly aware by 1863 of the decline of Humphrey McLachlan, the Stellenbosch teacher. This Scot was highly respected as the Stellenbosch first-class teacher for many years. He battled through the hardships common to the government schools to deliver a wide range of higher branch subjects.⁷⁶ As we have seen, it was his senior pupils, more than those of any other teacher, who themselves became teachers in government schools - John Hugo and Albert Rowan at Worcester, James Rait at

⁷² SGE 13/1 and 17/2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ C.E. Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West: Gender, Civilization and the Body* (Basingstoke, UK & New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 59.

⁷⁵ 'Answer from Rev Professor Hofmeyr', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 58-9.

⁷⁶ See many letters concerning McLachlan during 1860, CO 767; Dale to Col Sec, 16 September 1865 and attached letter from M.S., 5 September 1865, published in the *Volksblad*, CO 841.

Colesberg and John Janssen at Swellendam. The death of his son John in 1860, at the time assistant teacher to his father, seems, however, to have precipitated a relentless decline, performed in quarrelsomeness, drunkenness and absenteeism. One suspects that the resources of manly respectability were inadequate for his personal loss – and so his respectability was forfeited – and noted to be so, publically, in the letter pages of the *Volksblad*. The status of Albert Rowan, his former pupil and assistant, later Worcester teacher and Deputy Inspector of Education, may have provided him with some comfort, however; for he clung to the conviction that the New System had had value:

The Teacher that sends forth into society three or four well-educated men has done infinitely more towards accomplishing the object of this or of any system of education than one who sends forth one hundred half educated, or the missionary who sends forth one thousand whose education generally evaporates as soon as they leave the precincts of the institution.⁷⁷

Local Communities and the Project of Education

This final section of the chapter returns to the third question framed at the beginning of the thesis. In what ways did the nature and expectations of particular local communities interact with and modify a project of the colonial order? How did they influence its success or failure?

The New System of education may be seen as representing a discourse shaped within British and particularly Scottish Enlightenment paradigms of what counted as knowledge. The power to define this lay with middle class Christian rationalists and pastoral technicians. It was designed, financed and introduced to the towns and villages of the Cape Colony by a British government with an intention to improve the extremely low level of colonial education and to improve the population through it. But power may be dispersed, and the power of a local community with its own educational discourses to resist, modify or embrace the national vision is worthy of consideration here.

For Bremner, ‘the scheme ... might have commanded the education of the towns and villages, and supplied teachers for the country for a long period; but it was bungled at the very outset’. As we saw in the chapter on Graaff-Reinet, he attributed this failure to win the support of the residents to the

⁷⁷ McLachlan, ‘Teachers’ Answers,’ G.24–’63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 31.

system's lack of prestigious, properly equipped school buildings and efficient assistance. 'The schools never realised the prestige formed of them. They had no air of respectability about them.'⁷⁸

While Bremner's comments were certainly true of Graaff-Reinet where he spent most of his career, and of Swellendam, where he ended it, we have seen that in Wynberg by contrast, the aspirations of the élite were catered for by McNaughton's school. He saw to it that a respectable building was erected and managed to retain large numbers of pupils who continued through to completion of their studies in the higher branches. This secured for them the kind of education needed to enter into clerical and business positions. It also prepared them for an 'international' higher education should this be desired. In the process he provided an opportunity for the upward mobility of poorer white children, but not of coloured children, and so embraced both the ambitions of the military and mercantile élite, as well as those of Dutch and British artisans.

The existence of the popular and efficient Rhenish mission schools in Worcester provided an educational alternative in that town for coloured pupils who were never embraced by the government schools – either the free schools from 1822 or the established schools after 1839. This meant that the teachers of the government school, Black, Hugo and Rowan, were able to work unhindered by prejudices against being schooled with the lower classes of former slaves and servants. This again differed from Bremner's experience. The Worcester Government School under Rowan came to be owned by the Dutch Reformed community in particular, as providing a public educational space in which their influence was secured. The teacher was also able to win them contracts for government buildings, train some of the poorer boys as pupil-teachers, and secure his school's respectability. While the Paarl Dutch Reformed Church put its educational efforts into the establishment of the Paarl Gymnasium,⁷⁹ both Worcester and Wynberg Government Schools were without competition from the denominational and 'proprietary' private schools which gradually absorbed the children of the respectable classes in many Cape towns.

In the absence of strong government regulation and certainly of coercion, the success or failure of the government school at a particular locality depended on its alignment with the dominant class.

⁷⁸ Bremner, 'Teachers' Answers,' *ibid*, 8.

⁷⁹ J. Inglis, 'Teachers' Answers,' G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 25.

The ever observant and forthright Bremner set out the issue as he experienced it in some of 'the older towns of the colony':

The history of a Government school of any pretensions may thus be epitomized. It is introduced with a flourish of trumpets, but its levelling *upward* character is soon ascertained. Other educational means and appliances are therefore secured as soon as possible. These provided, the Government school ceases to be 'respectable'. It gets the name of charity school, ragged school, shoeless school, poor school, or any other name that will bring it into contempt. The school-going test of respectability being established, who would, after that, risk his status in society by sending his children to a charity school to associate with the riff-raff of villagedom merely to shirk a trifling school fee, the payment of which secures the privilege of having one's children educated among the patricians instead of among the plebeians of the village?⁸⁰

We have seen how the Graaff-Reinet Grammar School was established when the government school was unable to meet the middle class pretensions of its respectable residents. The existence of an old Dutch established community in both Graaff-Reinet and Swellendam may also account for their particular resistance to the offerings of a self-confident, often arrogant British teacher like George Bremner. McKenzie notes that the colonial bourgeoisie were very sensitive to metropolitan scorn,⁸¹ and his unsubtle pronouncements on the low educational expectations of the colonial Dutch were particularly destined to alienate them from his school. So, too, was his rejection of the role of the local community in surveillance over education. The demand of the local community was for teachers who were accountable to them and this is what the more affluent members of society won in the long run.

When interviewed about the Swellendam school, Revd Dr William Robertson explained that the children who went to the government schools were 'chiefly the middle and lower classes of society ... mechanics and the lower class of the European population', while labourers' children went to the mission school in Swellendam.⁸² At the same time, when asked if the teacher was to be blamed for the failure of Bremner's Swellendam Government School, Robertson said 'no'. Robertson agreed that people generally preferred to send their children to their own schools 'and it must be a very unpleasant situation for a Government teacher to be in, when he sees nearly all the respectable class of children sent to proprietary schools'. His view was that by 1861 it would be very hard for even an outstanding government teacher to succeed in Swellendam, given the class attitudes. At the same

⁸⁰ Bremner, 'Teachers' Answers,' *ibid*, 8-9.

⁸¹ K. McKenzie, 'The South African Commercial Advertiser and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Town' (MA diss., University of Cape Town, 1993), 29.

⁸² W. Robertson, 'Minutes of Evidence', G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*, 63.

time he felt that '[I]n Graaff-Reinet and other places, after schools had been established by Government, the inhabitants began gradually to feel more the value of education'. Some inhabitants were 'consequently more willing to contribute liberally towards the instruction of their children'.⁸³

Colesberg and Caledon were small villages where the local inhabitants probably had a humbler self image than those of Wynberg, Graaff-Reinet and Swellendam. They had neither the wealth nor the population to support private institutions capable of competing with the government school. We note, however, the closure of the government school in Caledon when its teacher's sexual immorality subverted all possibility of its respectable continuation. The fluidity of Colesberg as a newly established frontier town limited deep set class attitudes. Given a skilled teacher in the person of James Rait, its school was able to accommodate a diversity of pupils, including coloured pupils, not found at Wynberg and Worcester. Under a less skilled teacher, however, residents made other plans for education, or none at all.

What upset all of the government teachers, but especially those working with poorer pupils, was the instability caused by repeated absenteeism and short-term commitment to schooling. For many government school children, their school careers continued for no more than two or three years, and remaining at school beyond the age of fourteen was rare.⁸⁴ The reality faced by the teachers of the New System examined in this thesis, Wynberg and Worcester excepted, was that many (mainly Dutch-speaking) parents still saw little value in withdrawing their children from family labour for longer than it was necessary to acquire a basic literacy.⁸⁵ This was what would obtain for them the necessary social inclusion of church membership. The fact that elementary government education was free seemed, in the eyes of most of the teachers and clergy who reported to the Watermeyer Commission, to have undermined rather than enhanced its value in public eyes. And while a number of teachers felt that these attitudes were slowly changing,⁸⁶ government became reluctant to pay for an expensive state education for the poor while the respectable members of society withdrew to 'proprietary' schools. The solution was to surrender education of the poor fully to mission schools.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 63, 71-7.

⁸⁴ These are repeated themes in the 'Teachers' Answers,' Appendix II, G.24-'63. *Report of the Watermeyer Commission*.

⁸⁵ Bremner, *ibid*, 7-10.

⁸⁶ For example, P. Wither, *ibid*, 27.

The identity of the emerging colonial bourgeoisie was performed, in terms of education, in an increasing separation based on income, gender and race. While Christian identity was important, they could countenance 'undenominational' public schooling because the new dispensation left the choice of religious education in the hands of parents; and on the local school committees the clergy continued to play a dominant role. As Humphrey McLachlan also observed, '[I]n such a state of society as we have here, where the influence of the minister is supreme, unless he take an interest in a school, it will work to great disadvantage. Our system has never got this support.'⁸⁷

An important insight from scholars engaging with Foucauldian notions of governmentality is that it is not simply the state that promotes governmentality.⁸⁸ The state is able to retreat symbolically and in practice when others do the work for it. This may be because of the state's own ineffectuality.⁸⁹ It may be because implicit in notions of a liberal society was space for 'ever-growing apparatuses of knowledge collection and problematization' to form 'alongside the state apparatus and even in conflict with it, in the emergent terrain of the "social".'⁹⁰ While Rose and others focus on the emergence of 'biopower' and the domain of managing human populations more broadly in terms of health, insurance and the like, their comments seem apposite to the situation as the New System came to an end. In the case of the education project, the colonial residents, churches and missionary societies between them were willing to take on the role of disciplining, moralising and improving colonial subjects. Bishop Robert Gray commented:

[U]ntil Dr Dale was appointed, I think, the system was more in the Superintendent-General's head than anywhere else ... I do not think the Government schools are promoting education at all in any degree relatively to their cost. When first established, upon the recommendation of Sir John Herschel, they were, I doubt not, more suited to the circumstances of the country than at present. Then there was no great effort made by the people on behalf of education; **now it is different.**⁹¹

While first-class teachers in the mould of their New System predecessors were appointed at new Undenominational Public Schools – Revd M. Waugh at Caledon, Revd Geo Jeffreys at Worcester and

⁸⁷ McLachlan, *ibid*, 31.

⁸⁸ N. Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self 2 ed* (London & New York: Free Association Books, 1999), xxi; P. Rabinow and N. Rose, 'Biopower Today,' in *BioSocieties* 1 (2006): 195-217.

⁸⁹ C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 282-3.

⁹⁰ Rabinow and Rose, 'Biopower Today,' 203.

⁹¹ Bishop Robert Gray, 13 November 1861, 'Minutes of Evidence before Educational Commission,' G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, 79.

Dr John Shaw at Colesberg, for example⁹² – they were there at the behest of the respectable inhabitants. At the same time, the state enhanced its capacity for surveillance through better administrative structures, especially those of formal inspection. The colonial government was deeply in debt, and drought and famine in the 1860s worsened the economic situation.⁹³ This would have made the shift to a less-costly system of aiding others in their role of education compellingly attractive.

⁹² Dale to Col Sec, 9 Jan 1860; 'Forms of Guarantee,' June 1873, SGE 1/29, Letters received by the Superintendent-General of Education, 1873 (Western Districts); Office of SGE to Col Sec, 5 December 1871, CO 944.

⁹³ W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2007), 188.

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- CO 499, 510, 518 Letters received from Colonial Medical Committee, Bible and School Commission, Superintendent General of Education, Government Teachers, Collector of Transfer Dues, Collector of Taxes, Somerset Hospital and Pauper Asylum, 1841-1843.
- CO 534 Sundry Committees and Municipalities, 1844.
- CO 528,540,550, 565, 574, 582, 622, 637, 741, 775, 870 Letters received, Ecclesiastical and Educational, 1844-1849; 1853-1855; 1859; 1861; 1867.
- CO 656 Letters received, Educational and Shipping Master, 1855.
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- CO 791 Letters received, Collector of Customs, Registrar of Deeds, Educational, 1862.
- CO 809 Letters received, Executive Council, Ecclesiastical and Educational, 1863
- CO 822 Letters received, Collector of Customs, Ecclesiastical and Educational, 1864
- CO 841 Letters received, Executive Council, Ecclesiastical, Registrar of Deeds, Superintendent-General of Education, 1865
- CO 853 Letters received, Educational, Foreign Governments, Government House, Labour, Works, High Sherriff, Immigration, 1866.
- CO 944 Letters received, Registrar of Deeds, Education, High Sheriff, King William's Town Hospital, Somerset Hospital, Robben Island, 1871
- CO 953 Letters received, Divisional Councils, Ecclesiastical and Educational, 1872.
- CO 4150 Memorials received, A-B, 1868.

ii) Superintendent-General of Education of the Cape of Good Hope (SGE)

| | |
|----------|---|
| SGE 1/2 | Miscellaneous letters received, Clanwilliam, Tulbagh, Ceres, Worcester, 1851-1859. |
| SGE 1/3 | Miscellaneous letters received, Fraserburg, Victoria West, Beaufort West, Prince Albert, Caledon & c, 1851-1859. |
| SGE 1/ 4 | Miscellaneous letters received, Humansdorp, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth, Bathurst, Grahamstown, Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, Colesberg & c, 1851-1859. |
| SGE 1/9 | Miscellaneous letters received, 1861 (all districts). |
| SGE 1/29 | Miscellaneous letters received, 1873 (Western Districts). |
| SGE 13/1 | General Register of Schools, 1838-1875. |
| SGE 17/2 | Schedule of the Establishment in the Department of the Superintendent-General of Education, 1863-1875. |

iii) Resident Magistrates and Civil Commissioners

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1/CAL/1/1/3 | Records of Circuit Court for Division of Caledon, 1858. |
| 1/CBG 4/1/12 | Letters received by Civil Commissioner of Colesberg, 1847-1851. |
| 1/CBG 4/2/2-4/2/6 | Letters received by Resident Magistrate of Colesberg, 1848-1854. |
| 1/WOC 19/122 | Minutes of School Commission, Worcester, 1834-1854. |

iv) Municipalities

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 3/CAL/1 | Minutes of the Municipality of Caledon, 1840-1860. |
| 3/CAL/5 | Caledon Municipality - Letters Received, September 1843- November 1869. |
| 3/WOC/1/1/1/3 | Minutes of the Worcester Municipality, August 1856-August 1871. |

v) Maps

| | |
|--------|-------------------|
| 1/2917 | Cape Colony, n.d. |
|--------|-------------------|

vi) Photographs

- M 431 Dutch Reformed Church, Caledon
M 541 Thomas Baines painting of Colesberg, 1850
M 546 Aliwal Road, Wynberg, 1847

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Appendix A: Government Schools and Dates of Closure¹

| First-Class Schools | | Second-Class Schools | |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Beaufort West | 28 August 1863 | Bathurst | 15 April 1863 |
| Cape Town (Normal) | [January 1860] | Caledon | [December 1859] |
| Colesberg | 31 March 1866 | Clanwilliam | 31 March 1863 |
| Cradock | 20 August 1863 | Simon's Town | 31 December 1865 |
| Fort Beaufort | September 1862 | | |
| George | 30 June 1868 | | |
| Graaff-Reinet | 16 April 1862 | | |
| Graham's Town | 31 December 1862 | | |
| Malmesbury | 1 January 1863 | | |
| Paarl | 31 December 1867 | | |
| Port Elizabeth | 1 July 1866 | | |
| Somerset East | 1 July 1874 | | |
| Stellenbosch | 1 January 1866 | | |
| Swellendam | April 1862 | | |
| Uitenhage | 1 January 1873 | | |
| Worcester | 1 July 1873 | | |
| Wynberg | 1 March 1863 | | |

¹ SGE 13/1, General Register of Schools, 1838-1875; SGE 17/2, Schedule of the Establishment in the Department of the Superintendent General of Education, 1863-1875

Appendix B:

Government Teachers, 1840-1874 (Those mentioned in the thesis)

Arnot, Eliza was educated at the Colesburg Government School. She became a paid assistant to the teacher, James Rait, in 1856 and remained as such until 1866, when the school was closed

Black, Patrick, Revd

Trained at Edinburgh University. Came to Cape with original Innes group. In charge of Worcester Government School, 1841-47, though took off time because of illness. Died from a heart condition in 1847.

Bremner, George

Born c1820 and died in 1873. Educated at Kings College, Aberdeen. Came to Cape with original Innes group. Government Teacher at the Paarl (1841-1848), Graaff-Reinet (1849-1859) and Swellendam (1860-62). Married Johanna Wikboom and had two sons, one of whom assisted him in the Swellendam School. Editor of *The Midland Province Banner*, Graaff-Reinet. Subject of parliamentary inquiry in 1858. E. Bull identifies him as teacher of controversial Dutch Reformed minister at Hanover, later President T.F. Burgers of the Transvaal ('Rattray and Black: Two Scottish Schoolteachers,' in *Familia* XXVII, 3 (1990): 54-62.)

Bruce, Edward

Employed in 1855 to run the Fort Beaufort Government School. Had worked in a private academy at Rouw Koop, Cape Town before becoming government teacher.

Buchanan, Thomas, Revd

Recruited by Sir John Herschel. Not clear where he came from but spent some time at Edinburgh University. Initially sent to Graaff-Reinet Government School (1840-1841) but then moved to run the Normal and Model School in Cape Town. Transferred to Audit Office and Cape Town School closed by end of 1859.

Collins, Richard

The only free school teacher transferred directly to a first-class government school in 1840. He taught at Swellendam Government Free School until 1851.

Cromar, George

Educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen. Taught at Anderson Institute, Forres, in Edinburgh before being recruited by Innes to come to the Cape Colony. Government Teacher at George, 1841-1842. Eventually became Civil Commissioner for [Prince] Albert.

Gibson, John Revd

Sir John Herschel recruited him in 1840. He spent his entire career at Uitenhage Government School (1840-1873). James Rose Innes's grandson refers to being taught by him in 1863. J.R. Innes, *James Rose Innes: Chief Justice of South Africa, 1914-1927* (Cape Town, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 5-6.

Golding, John Chapman

Golding was an Englishman who came to the Cape in about 1820. His career included time in Cape Town at the 'Tot nut van Het Algemeen' School and teaching 'negro apprentices' with assistance of his son. In 1849 he was appointed as government teacher at the second-class school in Caledon. His career ended when he was convicted of [sexual] 'assault' in 1858 and jailed for two years.

Goldsbury, Samuel

He was educated at the South African College in Cape Town, and served as assistant teacher at the Hottentots Holland free school. In 1841 he was appointed to Caledon Government School where he was predecessor to Golding.

Hugo, John

Senior pupil and then assistant in Humphrey McLachlan's Stellenbosch Government School, he became Worcester Government Teacher in 1847. He left to become clerk to the Resident Magistrate of Worcester at the end of 1855.

McLachlan, Humphrey

'Student of Divinity in Edinburgh', he was recruited by Sir John Herschel as one of the first government teachers. He spent his whole career at Stellenbosch Government School 1840-1866.

McNaughton, John

Educated at Glasgow University, he was recruited by Innes in 1840. He came to the Cape with a wife and two children. He spent his whole career at Wynberg Government School. He retired in 1863.

McNaughton, Patrick

Brother of John, Patrick came out to the Cape in January 1844. He was employed at Beaufort West Government School, where the local residents subsidised his salary. He left teaching to set up a 'mercantile business' in Beaufort West.

McNaughton, Peter

Probably son of Patrick. He was teacher at Colesberg from September 1862 to March 1866.

Meiring, Johanna

Miss Meiring was educated at the Worcester Government School. She became a paid assistant to the teacher, John Hugo, in 1856 and continued to assist Albert Rowan until 1862.

Paterson, John

Educated at King's College, Aberdeen, John Paterson was one of the Innes recruits in 1840. He was only 19 years old when he came to the Cape, but came first in SGE Innes's competitive examination and was allocated to Port Elizabeth Government School as a result. He founded the *Eastern Province Herald* while still teaching. In 1847 he gave up teaching for a career in journalism and a mercantile business. He became involved in many civic projects in Port Elizabeth, sometime MP and went on to build a substantial fortune.

Paterson, Thomas Jones, Revd

Paterson was a Herschel recruit. He was considered surplus to requirements when he arrived in 1840 and initially sent to George Government School. He then spent five years at Graaff-Reinet before leaving to become a London Missionary Society missionary. He seems to have become involved with Gibson, the Uitenhage government teacher, with running a school for 'Fingoes'.

Rait, James

Rait was schooled by Humphrey McLachlan at Stellenbosch Government School and spent a time as assistant teacher there before moving to Colesberg. He remained as government teacher in Colesberg until his death, probably from tuberculosis, in 1858. He was survived by his wife and at least one son.

Reid, Joseph

Reid was educated at King's College, Aberdeen, along with John Paterson and George Bremner. He was recruited with them by Innes in 1840. Coming fifth in the competitive examination he was sent to the lowest-paying school at Somerset East. After four years there, and two at George, he was promoted to Port Elizabeth Government School on Paterson's departure. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1866.

Rowan, Albert Nicholas

Rowan was also a pupil and pupil-teacher under Humphrey McLachlan at the Stellenbosch Government School. He then taught at Malmesbury Government School between 1848 and April 1856 when he moved to Worcester. At the same time as teaching, Rowan practised as a land surveyor and was responsible for surveying the new village of Rawsonville. The Worcester Government School grew to the largest of the schools on the Establishment. He left in 1872 to become one of the first two Deputy Inspectors of Schools in the Cape Colony.

Tennant, John B

John Tennant had taught in Aberdeen and New Pitsligo before attending the Glasgow Free Church Normal School for two years (August 1855-June 1857). He was not fully certified, not having taught for a further two years while being subject to inspection. Tennant was initially recruited by Revd Andrew Murray jnr for what seems to have been intended to be a private school in Colesberg. This did not materialise and so he accepted a position at the Colesberg Government School in 1858. He was asked to resign in 1860.

Tudhope, Francis

Tudhope was a Herschel recruit. He was sent to the Graham's Town Government School where he spent his whole career, (1840-1862).

Appendix C: Pupil-Teachers 1857

RETURN of the Pupil and Assistant Teachers who have been trained, or taken charge of Junior Classes in the First-class Schools of the Establishment, with an account, as far as is known, of their pursuits in life.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Normal School, Cape Town. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. J. Rose Innes: now Resident Magistrate Riversdale. 2. Henry Cloete: an officer in the East India Company's Service. 3. William Moore: an attorney at the Supreme Court. 4. N. Theuerkauf: grocer and general dealer, Cape Town. 5. F. Bresler: left to join the Commissariat Department, - now settled at Natal. 6. C. van Blommestein: attorney of the Supreme Court, Graaff-Reinet. 7. W. Makew: Resident Magistrate's clerk, Somerset (East). 8. J. Halkett: passed examination for the public service, at present in a mercantile house. 9. C. Finneran: gone to sea. 10. Thos. Miller: in a mercantile house, Calcutta. 11. H. Hutchons: joined his brother in business. 12. Jas Halkett: the present pupil teacher in the Normal school. |
| Wynberg School | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. B. Jandrill, sworn land surveyor. 14. J. Loxton: in charge of George school, which he left, to join his brother in business, in New South Wales. 15. R. Saunders: sworn land surveyor, now dead. 16. J. Engels: apothecary at Wynberg. 17. R. Wolfe: passed examination as Government clerk in Central Road Board Office. 18. John Horne: ditto ditto in Customs. 19. M. H. Kannemeyer: sworn land surveyor 20. Wm Horne: passed examination as Government clerk, in the Customs. 21. H. McNaughton: temporary clerk Central Road Board. 22. P.B. Borchers: now a pupil teacher in the school. 23. John McNaughton: ditto ditto ditto |
| (omitted) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 63. Harry Horne: underwent examination for the public service in February last. |
| Stellenbosch School ... | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24. A. Rowan: in charge of the Worcester school, passed examination as a land surveyor. 25. J.D. Hugo: teacher of the above school, now clerk to the Resident Magistrate. 26. J. Janssen: Government teacher, Swellendam. 27. J. Rait: ditto ditto Colesberg. 28. P. Flichter: sworn land surveyor and civil engineer. 29. F. Myberg: an agriculturist. 30. D. Morkel: ditto 31. J. Maxwell: ditto 32. J. McLachlan: now assistant teacher in the school. |
| Graham's Town School .. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 33. W. Selwyn: for a time teacher at Bathurst, now cashier at Port Elizabeth Bank 34. J. Dixie: a stock farmer. 35. H. Thomson: studying for the church in Holland. 36. W. Chalmers: not known, was a student in the Glasgow university. 37. J. Tudhope: in business at King William's Town. |

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | 38. W. Minto: an officer in one of H.M.'s Regiments. |
| | 39. John Tudhope: clerk Commercial Bank, Port Elizabeth. |
| Port Elizabeth School ... | 40. F. McLeland: an officer in one of H.M.'s Regiments. |
| | 41. E. Kemsly: shopkeeper Port Elizabeth |
| | 42. P. Heugh: stock farmer. |
| | 43. F. Massyn: now pupil teacher in the school |
| Graaff-Reinet School ... | 44. J.S. Louw: dealer, Graaff-Reinet. |
| | 45. - Ritchie: now clerk in a store. |
| | 46. R.M. Moll: sworn land surveyor. |
| Malmesbury School | 47. - Becker: employment not known. |
| | 48. B. Smith: teacher of the farmers' school, Dal Jehosaphat. |
| | 49. J. Ehlers: in temporary charge (1856) of the Malmesbury school. |
| | 50. J. Moorrees: under examination for the public service. |
| Paarl School | 51. J.S. de Villiers: teacher of music and organist, Paarl. |
| | 52. B. de Vries: occupation not known. |
| | 53. H. du Toit: now assistant teacher and candidate for examination. |
| Beaufort (West) School.... | 54. J. Devenish: a stock farmer. |
| | 55. D. McNaughton: clerk in his father's store. |
| George School | 56. J.H. Niepoth: a deacon of the church of England, & missionary. |
| | 57. W. Edwards: for a time teacher of the Bathurst school, afterwards clerk in the public service. |
| Colesberg School | 58. Henry Arnot: studying at Aberdeen University. |
| | 59. Duncan Reid: engaged to a medical practitioner. |
| Swellendam School..... | 60. J. Hay: left for Scotland. |
| Uitenhage School | 61. J.G. de Korte: assistant in the school. |
| | 62. C. Robson: stock farmer, now a clerk. |

J. ROSE INNES

20th March, 1857.²

² G.16 -'57. *CGH.Report on Public Education for the Year 1855, and the First Half of 1856*, 54-5.