Letters Home: The Experiences and Perceptions of Middle Class British Women at the Cape 1820-1850

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for an MA in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Town, August 1995

ABSTRACT

My thesis is concerned with the experiences and perceptions of British women living in the Cape Colony, South Africa, during the first half of the nineteenth century. My chief source materials are the letters and diaries written by different women in the period 1820-1850. The women in my thesis were members of the British middle class and proponents of its dominant ideology. This revolved around a "separation of spheres" which prescribed particular types of behaviour for men and women. This view was more of an ideal than a reality, and women in this period found ways in which to both resist and enforce its prescriptions. I am interested in the negotiation of identity that occurred when British women arrived at the Cape. In order to tap into their experiences, I examine in detail the writing of several women who lived in Cape Town, and then compare this to women's writing in different parts of the colony.

What emerges is a version of South African history in which the experiences of individual women challenge assumptions about the existence of middle class and colonial homogenising discourses. Women in Cape Town, on the eastern frontier and on mission stations lived in different circumstances. The contexts in which they wrote affected the versions of themselves that they revealed in their writing. The different ways in which they wrote, and they ways in which they constructed a d represented their identities, challenge attempts to fit them into the contemporary femin e mould.

While they were creating their own identities through the medium of letters, they were also creating cultural artefacts. Their letters formed the basis of a private literate culture which both represented these women and their particular view of the Cape to the rest of the world. Women controlled what was written in their letters - their self-representations were presented to their readers in a version not mediated through their male relatives. In their own letters, they were not men's wives, they were their own women.

Most of the women I discuss had a commitment to Christianity, and the promotion of Christianity. Missionary wives and evangelical women had a code of behaviour that did not always accord with middle class ideology. They measured their behaviour according to religious and moral standards. This allowed them to contravene middle class ethics if they felt these contravened their own codes of morality. Depending on circumstances, women could be called upon to behave either as middle class women or Christian women, and in these instances would conform to the identity under either ideology. I would therefore suggest that not only did English middle-class women at the Cape create their subjectivity in terms of their status as women, as middle class women and as white women, but they also constructed their subjectivity in terms of their religious beliefs - as religious women.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people I need to thank for their help. First and foremost my mother, unpaid research assistant, for all her love, help, encouragement and assistance. Vivian Bickford-Smith has been an incisive, dedicated and challenging supervisor. Elizabeth van Heyningen gave me access to her sources and pointed me in the direction of mine - many thanks. I owe a big debt to the archivists and generally wonderful people at the Cory Library in Grahamstown - Sandy Rowoldt, Cecilia Blight and Zwele. To Janet Marsh, thank you for your room and the wine. The staff at the Historical Papers Department, Wits were also very helpful. Leonie Twentyman-Jones at UCT organised for me to have disc copies of the Cape Town street directories. Anne Mager, Shula Marks and Nigel Worden have given me much helpful comment. Thanks also to the people at the 1995 South African Historical Society Conference who commented upon a version of my chapter four - Iris Berger and Debbie Gaitskell among others. Hildegard Fast, Kate Angier and Kirsten McKenzie provided me with some thoughtful answers. A big thank you to the Archaeology Department at UCT who have resourced me and given me so much assistance - my former supervisor, Martin Hall and Dawn Fourie included. For their gratuitous but welcome advice and help in printing, Royden Yates and Chopi Jerardino. Miscellaneous thanks to the rest of my family - Dom, Nessie, Cate, Jonty, Cid r and Simon. Also Graeme and Kathy.

For financial assistance I am indebted to the Centre for Science Development and the University of Cape Town. I had additional funding from the Oppenheimer Foundation, Centre for African Studies, UCT on two occasions.

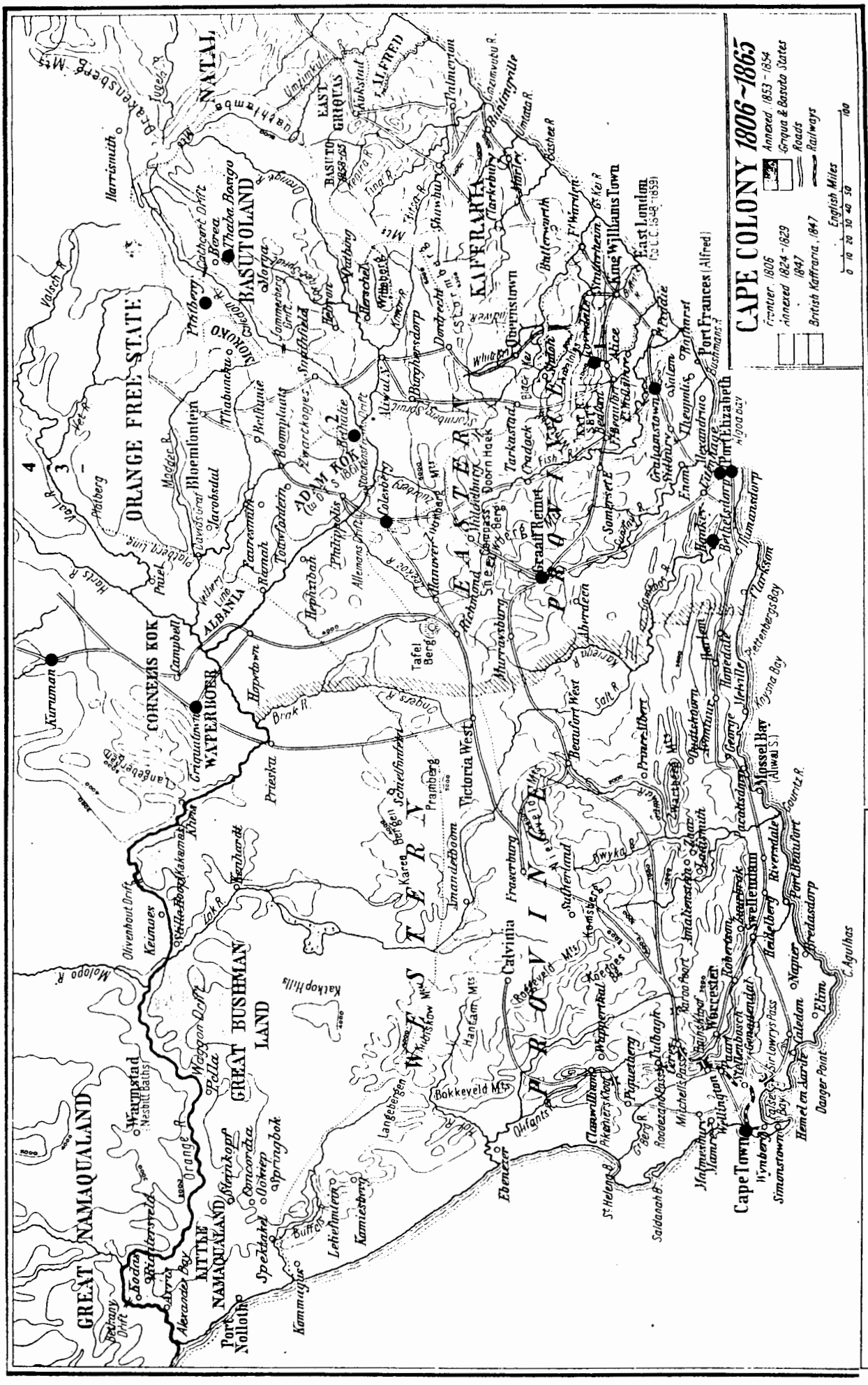
And lastly thank you to my computer - my constant companion on long nights over the last two years.

NOTES

In this thesis I have attempted, as far as possible, to be consistent in my use of terminology when referring to people. On most occasions I refer to Africans according to the language group to which they belonged. When I use terms such as 'Tswana' I recognise that the Tswana were not any identifiable group, but rather a collection of peoples speaking the same language. When referring to the Xhosa I have been guided by Jeff Peires's methods of reference. I also use the terms Khoisan and Khoi to refer to the original inhabitants of the Cape. On occasion I use the terms 'white', 'black', 'European and 'non-European'. In these instances usage is determined by the context in which it occurs. For this reason, I sometimes use terms like 'mantatee' or 'tamboekie' or 'Rolong' - these were used by my sources and I am attempting to convey their views. I use British and English virtually interchangeably, though both terms do not mean quite the same thing. I have included notes in the body of my text on using loaded phrases like "wife of" to refer to women. As Mrs Dennison frequently wrote at the end of her letters "excuse all blunders".

I have a fairly detailed second appendix which may seem out of place in this thesis. I have included it because I wish to make the information available to other people, and because it does inform some of my research. It did not fit comfortably into the body of ny thesis.

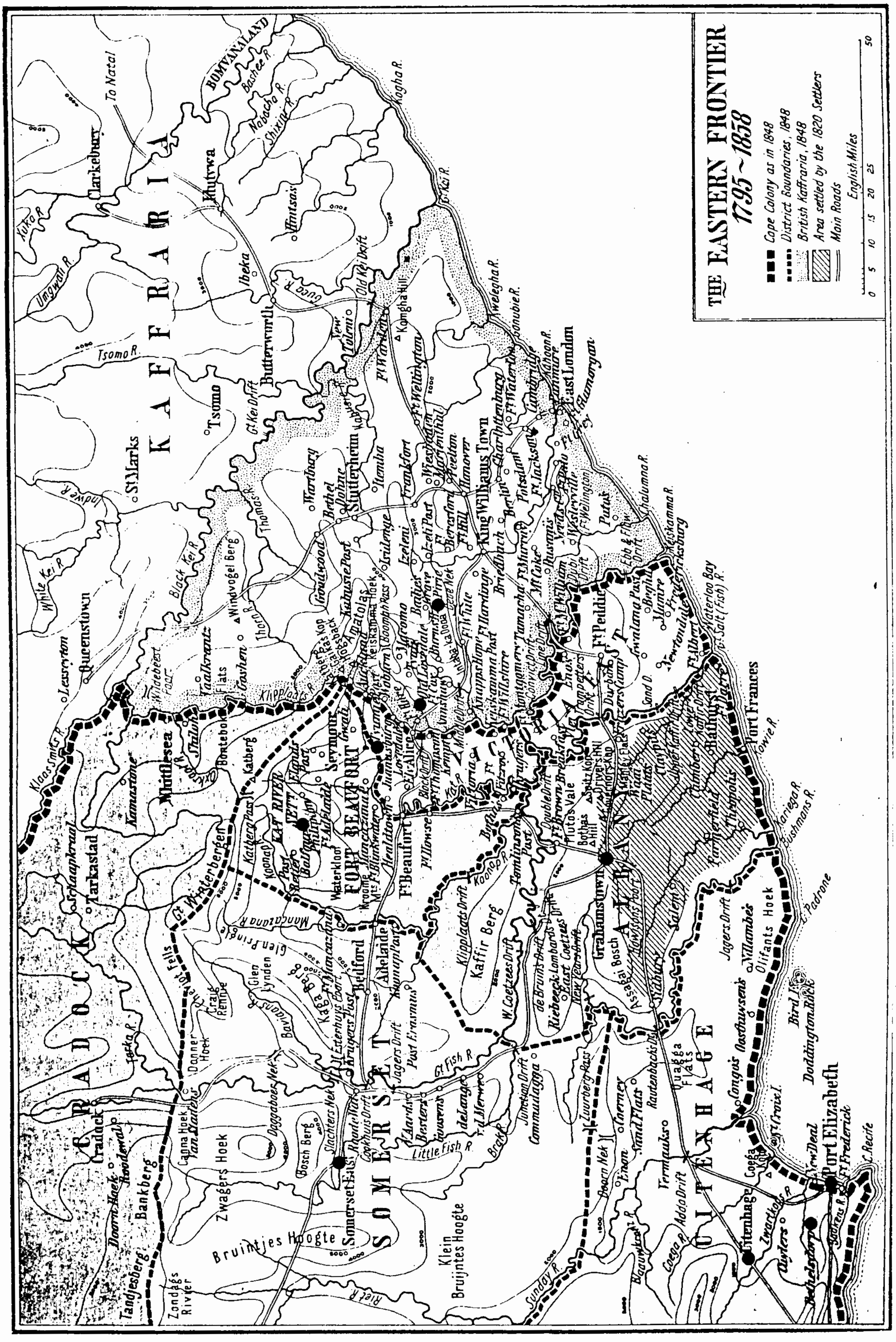
A Map of the Cape Colony in the Nineteenth-Century
(the black dots represent places referred to in this thesis)



(from Walker, E. A Historical Atlas of South Africa. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)

A Map of the Eastern Cape in the Nineteenth-Century

(the black dots represent places referred to in this thesis, especially chapters three and four)



(from Walker, E. A Historical Atlas of South Africa. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)

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INTRODUCTION

My thesis is concerned with the experiences and perceptions of British women living in the Cape Colony, South Africa, during the first half of the nineteenth century. My chief source materials are the letters and diaries written by different women in the period 1820-1850.[1] The women in my thesis were members of the British middle class and proponents of its dominant ideology, transported to a foreign land where they sometimes had to come to grips with situations far beyond their physical and cultural familiarity.[2] I am interested in the different conditions they experienced, how these affected how they thought, and how they wrote. In order to tap into these experiences, I examine in detail the writing of several women who lived in Cape Town, and then compare this to women's writing in different parts of the colony. I am also interested in questions about the role of women in Britain's colonial endeavour in Southern Africa. If women's actions can be distinguished from men's actions, how did they contribute to the colonial impulse that directed Britain's actions in South Africa during the first half of the nineteenth century?

My setting is the Cape Colony in the first half of the nineteenth century under British rule for the second time since 1806.[3] The women I study accompanied their husbands who were missionaries, government officials and 1820 settlers, to the Cape. All these categories of people were implicated one way or another in the establishment of British rule at the Cape.

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[1] A summary of these sources is to be found in Appendix One.

[2] In this thesis I use 'British' and 'English' virtually interchangeably - sometimes unintentionally so. When speaking of ideology or consciousness I mean to use 'English', because it was in England proper that these developed (see chapter one). I try to use 'British' to refer to the people, because a fair number I research were in fact Scottish.

[3] The British first occupied the Cape in 1795, but ceded the territory back to the Dutch after the Peace of Amiens in 1803. In 1806 they reoccupied the Cape, but it was only ceded permanently by the Dutch in 1814.

For those people not directly involved in government, British ascendancy was achieved through the transference of culture, consciousness and ideology. In 'civilising' and Christianising the Africans, and in establishing British culture and society firmly in the Eastern Cape, the missionaries and the settlers were promoting different discourses but in both cases the prominence of England, and English culture was stressed.

In the "long conversation" that occurred between Europeans and the black people of Southern Africa, all sides of the encounter were affected, albeit in different ways.[4] However, my concern in this paper lies primarily with the way in which the English (women) were influenced by this experience.[5]

By the start of the nineteenth century the English, especially the English middle class, were used to categorising the people they knew in terms implicitly, of gender, and explicitly, of class - this is the thesis behind Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's book, Family Fortunes, which has been tremendously influential in my thinking throughout this thesis.[6] Race, however, was not an immediate variable of categorisation in day to day living. Popular perceptions of Africans were derived from the knowledge of and literature on, firstly the slave trade (from the early seventeenth century) and then the abolition movement.[7] In the colonies the experience of race was very different. During the first decades after settlement (1806), liberal sentiments which were hostile to slavery and the treatment of the Khoisan (the

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[4] Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa Volume One (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991) p.31.

[5] It should go without saying that I am not uninterested in the experience of the colonised people; part of my methodology - discourse analysis, and my source material have dictated the parameters of the group I am to study.

[6] Davidoff, L. and Hall, C. Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850 (London: Hutchinson, 1987) p.13.

[7] Ferguson, M. Subject to Others (London: Routledge, 1992) p.4-6.

original inhabitants of the Cape) by the Dutch inhabitants dominated the English view.[8] This changed as Africans and English on the Eastern Frontier competed for land and the latter for African labour. Clifton Crais' book The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865 discusses how English attitudes to race on the Eastern Frontier hardened during this period, and how discourses saturated in concepts of racial inferiority were used to bolster the power of local authorities.[9] European attitudes towards Africans were also changing in Cape Town, though the process was quite different in the city and occurred more towards the end of the first half of the century.[10]

For this thesis I was interested in several themes which relate to the particular experience of British women within these broader contexts, and mediated through a discourse shaped in personal writing. The practice of letter writing occurs in private - what has been referred to as a 'confessional' form of discourse.[11] Its very personal nature allows it to be used to say things that cannot be expressed in more public forms of discourse. For this reason letters (my principal body of sources) are ideally suited for the asking of questions about the construction of personal identity, as well as the negotiation of broader social and political issues on a personal level.

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[8] For a discussion of liberalism and the extent of this thinking, see Bank, A. 'John Philip and the Ambiguities of Early 19th Century Liberalism at the Cape.' Unpublished paper, Journal of Southern African Studies Conference, York, 1994 and 'The Great Debate and the Origins of South African Historiography.' Unpublished paper, South African Historical Society Conference, Grahamstown, 1995. Also, Crais, C. The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape 1770--1865 (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1992).

[9] In England blackness was also being reconceptualised as more inferior. For discussions of this see Moira Ferguson's book.

[10] Research on the history of Cape Town in this period has shown that, although the underclass of Cape Town was composed of different elements, blackness was becoming within this an increasingly inferior category. This has been discussed in work by Shirley Judges, Catherine Elks, and Robert Ross (consult my bibliography for references).

[11] Mill, S. Discourses of Difference (London: Routledge, 1991) p48, p.50.

The possibility of using letters in this way has little precedent, either in historical or literary work. Caroll Smith-Rosenberg's research on middle class women in America makes extensive use of women's letters.[12] On the basis of the evidence of women's letters, and content in these letters, she has posited the existence of specifically female networks in nineteenth century middle class society. These networks formed the space for an affirmation of female integrity and female friendships. However her analysis does not take her into the ways in which women represented their identities in writing, and wrote these identities into being.

More work has been done on women's travel writing and diaries. Sara Mill's book Discourses of Difference discusses the particular discursive terrain available to British women who wrote accounts of their travels to foreign lands at the end of the nineteenth century, and attempts to map out a particular feminine discourse within the genre of travel writing. In her writing she attempts to understand how women negotiated their identities in the face of these conflicting discourses. On the basis of particular women's writing she theorises on the relation of British women to colonial policy and the creation of discourses of colonialism. In Annette Kolodny's The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, she examines the letters and journals of European American women to chart their responses to an ever receding frontier.[13] In doing so she discusses women's attempts to 'claim' new land away from male metaphors of sexual contest through the manner in which they wrote.

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[12] Smith-Rosenberg, C. Disorderly Conduct (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[13] Kolodny, A. The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontier (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

This dearth in research is interesting because of the possibilities letters offer for researching the interface between people's public and private identities - the faces they wear in public and the way they are in private. Unlike diaries, letters have an audience which militates against their being used as a repository of a person's innermost thoughts and feelings. Letter writers have to negotiate their way between what they want to say, and what is permissible to say. All letters are not like this because their content will vary depending on who is going to read them. However, letters can be sites of conflict as writers try to avoid revealing to much of themselves, yet at the same time cannot avoid doing so.

In examining the construction of identity, the possibility of textual analysis allows me to touch upon some of the following issues. I am principally interested in how the women I study perceived themselves and how they revealed this in their letters. I am also interested in how English women, who were themselves the subjects of an ideology which cast them as inferior to men,[14] dealt with this in a situation where a social category more inferior than gender was being refined. Furthermore, and relating to the broader context again, can the women I discuss be classified in simple binary terms as resistors or collaborators, or do we require a model of social relations that is capable of picking up more subtle gradations of feeling and reaction?[15]

The idea for this thesis arose from the juncture of several different concerns. An interest in gender theory, and its very limited use in South African history brought me to the idea of

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[14] See chapter one.

[15] Through all of this I am trying to avoid formulations of race, class and gender that merely trivialise the importance of each. Throwing gender, race and class, untheorised, into the same analysis smacks of naive political correctness.

researching women in South African history.[16] Previous research had introduced me to the idea of investigating women's personal writing with a view to both its potential for literary analysis and as a record of historical experience (the two are not necessary antithetical). This provided the impetus for a search into the existence of further women's writing, specifically during the colonial period. Unlike male texts from the time, very few examples of letters and diaries are extant (even fewer have been published). I have however managed to uncover a sizeable number, and it is these texts that provide the source material for my thesis. What follows is a discussion of the theories and secondary sources that have influenced my thinking.

PRECEDENTS, THEORIES AND METHODS

Gender Theory

My dissertation draws on feminist theory and practice, particularly within the field of gender and colonial history.[17] Within the field of gender theory, I shall first discuss the impact of some recent thinking, and then the way in which developments in feminist methodology have affected my own approach.

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[16] For a discussion of this undertheorisation and absence refer to Manicom, L. 'Ruling Relations: Rethinking state and gender in South African history', Journal of African History 33 (1992) pp.441-465 and Driver, D. '"Woman" as sign in the South African colonial enterprise', Journal of Literary Studies 4 (1988) pp.1-8. Helen Bradford's paper, 'Women in the Cape and its Frontier Zones c1800-1870's: a critical essay on androcentric historiography' contains an excellent discussion of my point (Unpublished paper, South African Historical Society Conference, Grahamstown, 1995).

[17] Even I commit the sin of assuming that somehow colonial history and gendered colonial history are different. I upset my own critique of the marginalisation of research undertaken from a feminist perspective.

Quite crucially, feminist theory emphasises the link between social relations and state policies (which I shall also discuss with regard to theories of colonial history). During the 1980's Joan Wallach Scott published a seminal article entitled 'Gender: A Useful Means of Historical Analysis'.[18] Scott was concerned to show how gender as an analytical concept, because of its seeming applicability only in domestic social relations, had been marginalised by the field of history proper. The utility of gender was seen to be limited, and for this reason gender studies were seen as something quite separate from other research using more sophisticated theoretical tools. Scott's own research showed how gender was implicated in the functioning of power in all its guises. "Established as an objective set of references, concepts of gender structure perception and the concrete and symboli organisation of all social life. To the extent that these references establish relations of power (differential control over or access to material and symbolic resource) gender becomes implicated in the conception of power itself."[19] Struggles for power may not be about gender itself, but will be phrased in gendered terms because gender provides a convenient metaphor for describing and legitimising unequal relations. The prevalence of sexual metaphors of penetration and subjugation used in colonial discourse is a prime example of this.[20]

Using this formulation, other feminist researchers have shown how gender relations, and control over definitions of appropriate gender behaviour, are implicated in wider state policies and attempts to establish power. Pamela Scully, in her thesis Liberating the Family: Gender,

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[18] The article was published initially in American Historical Review, and finally in Scott's book, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

[19] Scott, J.W. Gender and History, p.42-45.

[20] Ann Stoler discusses this form of metaphor in her article, 'Making Empire Respectable: the politics of race and sexual morality in 20th century colonial cultures', American Ethnologist 16 (1989) pp.634-660. The introduction to Laura Donaldson's book, Decolonizing Feminisms :Race, Gender and Empire Building (London: Routledge, 1993) also discusses a more oblique version of this metaphor.

labour, and sexuality in the rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823-1853 discusses how different discourses on the body, gender relations, the family, race and sexuality all affected issues of state organisation and control at the Cape.[21] In a more general article, Linzi Manicom has discussed the need to retheorise the state and gender in South African history.[22] The emphasis on both of these is important. As Scott has shown, gender studies are seldom linked to the wider political arena. While I may not theorise much about the state myself I am aware of these definitions, and they affect my thinking about the relation of state power and policies to the social relations between ordinary men and women, as well as relations based on class and colour. Questions around access to power and status - power to make other people do things, and the attainment of status within particular situations - thread through my discussion of women in Cape Town, women in Grahamstown and missionary wives. Their actions and experiences in these situations were much affected by what they knew of the rules, both real and implicit, which governed society.

Gender theory also provides me with ways of thinking about other social relations, particularly black-white relations, and with ways of theorising and understanding the construction of identities necessary to support these relations. The ideas I draw upon were developed in response to the feminist paradigm of the 1970's. During this period feminism was profoundly affected by the modernist/humanist thrust of the social sciences (seeking universal causes, underlying structures, general theories). As a result of this, it tended to focus almost exclusively on certain issues. Its primary object was to uncover the universal causes of female oppression. "Feminists differed substantially (and fiercely) as to what this

[21] Scully, P. 'Liberating the Family: Gender, Labor and Sexuality in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa 1823-1853', (Ph.D Thesis, University of Michigan, 1993) p.1.
[22] Manicom, L. 'State and Gender', p.440.

cause might be - male control of women's fertility, a patriarchal system of inheritance, capitalism's need for a docile labour force - but did not really question the notion of a cause itself".[23] This argument located female oppression in social structure, the implication being that if you could alter the structures of society you could eradicate inequality.[24]

The emphasis on oppression drew directly from the way in which sexual inequality was theorised. Feminists of the 1970's tended to think in binary categories; that is male/female: sex/gender: oppression/equality. This had the effect of disallowing gradations of oppression, positions that fell between difference and equality, and genders that might exist apart from male and female. Categories were universal or nothing. This binary categori ation has been the subject of much critique. Post-structuralist theory has alerted feminists to the artificiality of some of these concepts.[25] The most relevant here are the critique of theoretical universalism (the tendency to seek generalisations and to speak in a universal voice) and the critique of Englightenment thought and its suggestion that rationality and humanity were embodied in the male form.[26]

The binarism and universalism of 1970's feminism (and western feminism at large) was also under attack from another direction. In stressing a universal female identity, the feminist movement denied the possibility of difference, including that between women. This sort of reasoning had a number of implications, the first one being its marginalisation of black women. Chandra Talpade Mohanty has shown how western feminist thinking has ignored the

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[23] Barrett, M. and Phillips, A. Introduction: Destabilizing Theory, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) p.2.
[24] Barrett and Phillips, p.3.
[25] Flax, J. 'Postmodernism and gender relations in feminist theory', Signs 12 (1987) pp. 621-643 and Scott, J.W., Gender and History and the volume edited by Barrett and Phillips.
[26] Barrett, M. 'Words and Things: Materialism and Method in Contemporary Feminist Analysis', in Barrett, M. and Phillips, A. (eds), p.207.

experiences of black women by assuming that all women stand in the same position with regard to male oppression.[27] In attempting to posit a universal sisterhood, capable of taking on patriarchy at large, western feminists ignored quite crucially the possibility that black and white women were differently situated to all sorts of things, including basic material resources and basic human rights.

This criticism has also initiated debate on the construction of female subjectivity with regard to race, class and gender. This debate informs my understanding of the construction of subjectivity among the women I am researching and also points to some of the difficulties of doing women's history from a gendered perspective in a colonial context. The terrain f colonial history is filled with potential pitfalls, most of them being to do with an inherent tendency toward the construction of the colonial subject as the "other" - at its most basic a tendency only to see colonised people as objects. A study which concentrates on the experience of white women does this by default. One way to avoid this is through a focus on the "local, specific and particular. Much of this work is 'deconstructive' in character, seeking to destabilize ...some of the hierarchical binary oppositions...of western culture".[28] By attempting to understand women's experiences and perceptions in the contexts in which they operated we can attempt to unpack the cultural paradigms that bound them and so situate them outside of these hegemonic discourses ('all black women are oppressed', 'all white women in colonial situations are oppressors' and so on). I hope to show in this thesis that white women operated and thought from such different positions that their "gaze" was never able to

[27] Mohanty, C. T. 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse', Feminist Review 30 (1988) pp.61-87.
[28] Barrett and Phillips, Destabilizing Theory, p.1.

construct only one identity for black people, and that their own identities were continually changing.

Historiography, Sources and Theory in Colonial History

South African colonial history, until the end of the '70's, tended to be written in discrete entities. Historians concentrated on describing the economic and political processes at work from the time the Dutch colonised the Cape which climaxed in the mineral revolutions, while anthropologists and archaeologists dealt with social history, mainly of the indigenous people of the sub-continent. The result, as Jean and John Comaroff describe it, is history in which African societies are reduced to structuralist-functionalist islands, and the actions of colonisers are reduced to uncomplicated political and economic reflexes.[29] Only in the last two decades or so has social history at the Cape become a subject of professional research, while the history of black people has begun to be described in the economic and political terms usually reserved for European effort. I now wish to discuss some of the work that has been produced in this field, as well as their implications for both my research and the historiography of colonial history more generally.

For the period under discussion the history of Cape Town has been well-covered in a number of excellent studies. Some of this - Shirley Judge's work on poverty in Cape Town, Katherine Elk's work on crime and Digby Warren's work on inter-group relations within the middle class - has contributed greatly to our understanding of the history of Cape Town in the first half of the nineteenth century. These represent only a very small fraction of the work done on

[29] Comaroff and Comaroff, Revelation, pp.9-10.

Cape history. However, in common with much of the rest of the work on social history, they fail to consider gender as a category of analysis. This is also the case with work (for instance Edna Bradlow's) which, although on women, is not written from a gendered perspective.[30] Although work has been done on women in colonial history, its lack of gender analysis excludes it from my category of gender-sensitive research.

Only in the last decade or so has gender become a variable for consideration in the history of Cape Town for the nineteenth century. In this regard the work of the following people has been especially influential - Helen Bradford, Kirsten McKenzie, Pamela Scully, Patricia van der Spuy and Elizabeth van Heyningen.[31] This work has in turn influenced work in progress on the history of Cape Town during the nineteenth century, and the next few years should see the production of a wider body of research written from a gendered perspective. From archaeology the work of Yvonne Brink and Martin Hall has also contributed to our knowledge of the operation of gender politics at the Cape.[32] For the rest of the country and for the colonial period there is a dearth of research incorporating concepts of gender - as both

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[30] Bradlow, E. '"The Oldest Charitable Society in South Africa": One Hundred Years and More of the Ladies' Benevolent Society at the Cape of Good Hope', South African Historical Journal, 25 (1991) pp.77-104, Bradlow, E. 'Women and Education in Nineteenth Century South Africa: The Attitudes and Experiences of Middle-Class English-Speaking Females at the Cape', South African Historical Journal 28 (1993) pp.119-150, Bradlow, E. 'Women at the Cape in the mid-19th century', South African Historical Journal 19 (1987) pp.51-75. In spite of this Edna Bradlow's work has been tremendously important in foregrounding women's history, and I have relied heavily on some of her work in this thesis.

[31] Bradford, H. 'Women in the Cape', McKenzie, K. 'The South African Commercial Advertiser and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Town' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993), Scully, P. 'Liberating the Family', Van der Spuy, P. 'A Collection of Discrete Essays with the Common Theme of Gender and Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope with a focus on the 1820's' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993), and Van Heyningen, E. 'Women and the Second Anglo-Boer War'. Unpublished paper presented at the Women and Gender in Southern Africa Conference, University of Natal at Durban, 1991.

[32] Brink, Y. 'Places of Discourse and Dialogue: a study of the material culture of Cape Town during the rule of the Dutch East India Company, 1652-1795' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1992) and Hall, M. 'Gender and the archaeology of urban Cape Town'. Unpublished paper, Gender and Archaeology Workshop, Cape Town, 1991.

Dorothy Driver and Linzi Manicom discuss in their articles on concepts of gender in South African histories.[33]

My research has been made possible because of the existence of work which does discuss history within a gendered framework. As I mentioned earlier, gender theory involves a shift in perspective - not only doing new history but also doing history differently. Different approaches to history are also characteristic of the other body of work, and theory, which influences my thesis. Gender theory and gender based analyses provide one of the ways into connecting social action and individual discourses into a wider network of social relations, which include categories more normally studied under the rubric of political and economic history. In this aspect it approaches work in the field of colonial discourse analysis and colonial anthropology. Since this work has influenced much of the work on women's travel writing (including Discourses of Difference) it is worthwhile discussing some of its characteristics.

Over the last decade or so (paralleling developments in the social history of Cape Town) anthropologists and historians have begun to assess the construction of consciousness and subjectivity among the people involved in and affected by British colonialism at the Cape. This trend has been referred to by Michele Barrett as a "turn to culture...a marked interest in analysing processes of symbolization and representation - the field of 'culture' - and attempts to develop a better understanding of subjectivity, the psyche and the self."[34] This turn to

[33] Driver, D. '"Woman" as sign' and Manicom, L. 'Ruling Relations'. Note I emphasise that the dearth of feminist scholarship applies to the colonial period only.
[34] Barrett, M. 'Words and Things', p.204.

culture has been achieved by similar methods to those used in gender theory - though there are certain differences in the standpoints.[35]

In a special edition of American Ethnologist dedicated to a review of historical colonialism, Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler discuss developments within colonial history.[36] Earlier studies of colonialism have tended to treat the relationship between coloniser and colonised as uncomplicated - each group displaying discrete identities and discrete objectives. Furthermore these relations were conceived of only in binary and hierarchical terms; colonisers were always aggressive and colonised people always reactive.[36]

The motivations and behaviour of each group have subsequently been unpacked and reanalysed.[37] In re-examining the behaviour of the colonising group, particular attention has been paid to the way in which colonial authority is maintained. One of the results of this thinking is a concern to show how imperial powers gained authority on the ground, where neither overt political manoeuvring nor military force can account for it. Both Clifton Crais and the Comaroffs implicate English culture and ideology - and their symbols - in the extension of colonial authority. "...colonialism has been as much a matter of the politics of perception and experience as it has been an exercise in formal governance".[38] Or as Crais puts it: "Historians of Africa have only recently begun to explore the ways in which people

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[35] These trends are displayed in the recent volume edited by Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais, for instance. Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994)

[36] Even in studies which have focused on African endeavour seem to have done this - by concentrating on African resistance, and the efforts of an African working class to make itself (Comaroff, J. and J. Revelation, p.9).

[37] Examples of writing which encompasses these ideas can be found in Robert Young's book White Mythologies: Writing History and the West (London: Routledge, 1990), as well as the special edition of American Ethnologist (November 1989) mentioned.

[38] Comaroff, J. and J. Revelation, p.5.

confronted the intricate workings of colonial power which accompanied conquest - for example in the reorganization of space and in the myriad contestations over language and identity."[39] The extent to which these oppressive measures have been recognised by indigenous people - and recognised as oppressive, diverted from their intended objectives and even recognised in the first place has also become an object of study.[40]

These initiatives have all fed into work such as Sara Mill s, which is in turn also influenced by feminist thinking. It is in this context, but within a different genre, that I situate my research.

AN OUTLINE

New business opportunities, the social and economic upheaval occasioned by the late eighteenth century crises around the French Revolution, the war with France, and the industrial revolution prompted the growth of the British middle class after the late eighteenth century. This growth was accompanied by the development of a middle class ideology, centred on the separation of spheres and the versions of masculine and feminine behaviour considered best suited to this separation. The social upheaval also prompted the development of a new religious seriousness - the evangelical revival at the end of the eighteenth century. In my first chapter I trace the rise of the English middle class, the development of its gendered ideology, the rise of Evangelicism, the development of Evangelical philanthropy and the

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[39] Crais, C. The Making of the Colonial Order, p.2.

[40] Elbourne, E. '"To Colonize the Mind": Evangelical Missionaries in Britain and the Eastern Cape 1790-1837' (D.Phil., Oxford, 1991) and especially Elbourne's unpublished paper 'Colonialism, conversion and cultural change: shifting paradigms of religious interaction in South African history', Journal of Southern African Studies Conference, York, 1994.

growth of mission Christianity. These developments and influences form a background for most of the English settlers and non-settlers who came to the Cape.

While most of the new British immigrants to the Cape aimed to replicate their home way of life as much as possible, the very different conditions within the colony sometimes made this difficult. Local conditions affected both standards of living and the way the women I study thought. In some cases they limited and in some cases extended the range of behaviour open to British women. The women whose writing I study can be classified into three groups with regard to the different areas they inhabited in the colony. They were women who lived in Cape Town, women who lived in the Eastern Cape, in the land allotted to them as settlers or in the few towns in the eastern districts, and women who lived mostly beyond the borders of the colony as missionary wives. In addition to the geographical separation between these women, issues of religion and occupation also divided them. This three-way division provides the way to a discussion of each group. The following three chapters concern the background to the different areas in which these women lived, the way they lived, as well as discussions of their writing.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EXPANSION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS, THE SEPARATION OF SPHERES AND THE GROWTH OF EVANGELICISM

In order to grapple with the writing of the various women I have selected to study, the historical conditions behind that writing need to be understood. The letters and diaries I study did not exist in a vacuum; they were created by women who lived in particular times and particular places. The majority of them had several things in common. Most were British, middle class, religi us, English speaking and writing, and all were immigrants to the Cape. Their cultural and social consciousness was middle class British, and an understanding of the nature of British middle class society is important in gauging something of their backgrounds.

EXPANSION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Between the end of the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century the British middle class was subject to demographic growth which was accompanied by the growth of a more coherent middle class ideology.[1] The number of people who could be classified as middle class, and the sway of their influence expanded greatly, especially within the English provinces which were the sites of the new industrial growth. This growth in prominence was the result of a combination of factors - economic, social and political. The Industrial

[1] Davidoff, L. and Hall, C. Family Fortunes, pp.18-28.

Revolution provided the means for a growing number of entrepreneurs of various different professions and persuasions to accumulate wealth and power to themselves, and to begin to challenge the power of the landed aristocracy.[2] Rapid urbanisation as a result of the Industrial Revolution, and its social consequences also acted as a catalyst for a convergence of interest among different and developing elements of the middle class. Various crises at the end of the eighteenth century, including the French Revolution and the war with France also drew the middle class together. An evangelical revival provided the fabric of a morality for this expanding class because of its emphasis on self-discipline and self-sacrifice.[3] Initially this class was unified, not so much through common purpose, but rather in its interests against both th British aristocracy and the working class. The former were despised for their decadent and conspicuously consumptive lifestyles (though not for their possession of land), while the latter were viewed with intense suspicion because of their potential for causing social upheaval.[4]

This is a fairly loose description of the expansion of a quite heterogeneous class. Although the margins of this class may have been indistinct, and its members drawn from quite different backgrounds, they however shared and propagated an ideology that was quite their own, and that was rapidly to become more than the sum of its parts.

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[2] The aristocracy still regarded land as their wealth base, and preferred (initially) not to enter into trade, while the lower classes were in no position to take advantages of the benefits of the industrial revolution.
[3] Prochaska, F. The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain, (London: Faber, 1988), p.22.
[4] It is interesting that, while the middle class may not have been a unified whole, both the middle class and the upper class (such as they were) were very convinced of the existence of an undifferentiated class of the poor - an homogeneous mass that came to be increasingly legislated against during the nineteenth century (Barrell, J. The Dark Side of the Landscape, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.3).

DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDLE CLASS IDEOLOGY

Accompanying the rise of the middle class was the rise of its own ideology.[5] In a book entitled Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall describe this middle class ideology as being linked to changes in the way people viewed gender roles: "*Family Fortunes* argues that the men and women of the provincial middle class adopted distinctively different class identities, that the language of class formation was gendered".[6] In their argument, class formation and gender identity were dependent on one another and inextricably intertwined. Middle class identity came to be defined as one in which the relations between men and women were mediated according to specific and desirable sets of behaviour. Gender relations were the core around which middle class ideology was shaped.

Perceptions of sexual difference in British society were not absent prior to the nineteenth century. However, as many western feminist writers have discussed, perceptions of sexual difference began to assume a qualitatively different nature after the sixteenth century.[7] This was the result of a convergence of different forces - economic, social and political. During the eighteenth century philosophies of political liberalism, arising out of the Enlightenment, were gaining ground.[8] They emphasised the primacy of the individual in society, and as power was typically associated with men the focus of individual political

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[5] I use middle class ideology and middle class cultural consciousness as interchangeable concepts, because it is the cultural component of the ideology with which I deal.
[6] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p.450.
[7] Flax, J. 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory'. Also Fox-Genovese, E. 'Placing Women's History', New Left Review 132 (1982) pp.24-26.
[8] For a fuller discussion of this see Rendall, J. 'The Enlightenment and the Nature of Women', chapter one, in The Origins of Modern Feminism (London: Macmillan, 1985).

rights came to be the male subject.[9] A political philosophy that took as its subject 'man' therefore accompanied, bolstered, and in turn was bolstered by, economic developments which also asserted the primacy of the male contribution.[10] Whereas prior to the nineteenth century men and women were seen to be different to one another, the difference had now become normalised in economic practices and political philosophies which asserted the inferiority of femaleness. Although the industrial revolution and the philosophies of the Enlightenment may have offered women a greater range of possibilities (i.e. improved access to education) the effects of this were counteracted by the increasingly prescriptive role allotted to women in popular literature and perception.[11]

By the end of the eighteenth century, among the middle class, changes in the status of men and women began to be naturalised into new conceptions of their generic capabilities and qualities. Socially desirable traits began to be conceived of as desirable personal qualities. The result was a reconceptualisation of the limits of appropriate behaviour for men and women. This reconceptualisation entailed the separation of ordinary, everyday life into separate spheres, "one of the fundamental organizing characteristics of middle class society in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century England" - and, as I shall show, at

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[9] Flax, J. 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory', p.624-625. Also Fox-Genovese, 'Placing Women's History', p.24-26.

[10] I do not intend to enter into discussion here of the diminishing economic status of women by the start of the nineteenth century. The following can be consulted for discussions of women and work over this period: Rendall, J. 'Work and Organisation' (chapter five) in The Origins of Modern Feminism, or the introduction in Caroll-Smith Rosenberg's book, Becoming Visible.

[11] It is also not my intention to enter into the debate on the pros and cons of Victorian domestic ideology. While assumptions about women in the Victorian era need to be examined, I am dubious about work which tends to downplay the ideological subjugation of women in favour of favourable material circumstances (such as M. Jeanne Peterson in Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen)(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). It is all to easy to homogenise Victorian women on the basis of shared oppression, but it is equally easy to represent them as women incapable of recognising an oppressive ideology (the argument which tends to assume that women could be happy as wives and mothers only). Again, the introduction in Caroll Smith-Rosenberg's book Disorderly Women, as well as Joan Scott's article 'The Problem of Invisibility' in Kleinberg, J. Retrieving Women's History (Providence: Berg, 1986) summarise some of this argument.

the Cape.[12] Under this separation men were to occupy the public world of work and to wield influence as political and economic decision makers; women were to remain at home as wives and mothers.[13]

Middle class ideology evolved in such a way that its class dominance was entrenched through a model of unequal social relations based on gender. Given that gender roles are socially constituted, the emerging middle class ideology included definitions of masculinity and femininity that justified a separation of spheres. Men were supposed to be the firm, wise guides and providers of their families, while women were supposed to be the moral guardians of the home. Together these role definitions and their complementary nature were to provide the structure behind the ideal family. This differed from the expressively patriarchal model of family relations more common in the pre-industrial era.[14] By attributing to all men innate intelligence and rationality, this ideology justified their presence in the public world. The emotional nature of women, on the contrary, befitted them to be wives and mothers (emotionality, moral empathy, simplicity and spirituality were on the same side of a binary construct which placed rationality and practicality on the other).[15] Since emotion and morality were linked, they were also suited to be the moral guardians of their families . Men represented their families, while women were defined in terms of their roles of wives and mothers. The family was the perfect social institution for this reconceptualisation of gender roles because it symbolised the

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[12] Hall, C. White, Male and Middle Class, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993) p.106.

[13] Recent feminist theory has cautioned against the use of binary opposites in trying to understand the dynamics of gender relations, for instance Moore, H.L. 'The Differences Within and the Differences Between' in De Valle, T. (ed) Gendered Anthropology (London: Routledge, 1993). However, it is difficult to work without such concepts in this particular context.

[14] Stone, L. The Family, Sex and Marriage in England (abridged edition) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp.164-168, p.217, pp.414-422. Also, Rendall, J. The Origins of Modern Feminism, pp.3-5.

[15] Hall, C. 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology' in Burman, S. (ed). Fit Work for Women, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p.25.

model locus for men and women's particular proclivities.[16] This ideal was propagated through popular literature, and through the sorts of education boys and girls were receiving from the end of the eighteenth century.[17] In chapter two I discuss the transmission of these values through education and literary forms in the particular Cape context.

Middle class ideology and its model of gender relations was, however, only an ideal. There was a world of difference between how some women and men may have believed they should behave, and how they did behave. Marriage was not an option for all women during this period, while many women (married or single) would have needed or wanted to work. However, as Davidoff and Hall emphasise, there was tremendous pressure to conform to the model of gender relations set out in middle class ideology.[18] People negotiated this conflict by "saying one thing and doing another", and such tensions tended to be evident in their personal writing.[19] These tensions are of particular interest to me, and their expression in personal writing obviously has implications for the sources I use.

EVANGELICISM AND THE MIDDLE CLASS IDEOLOGY

The form of middle class ideology so prevalent by the middle of the nineteenth century first took shape in middle and lower middle class evangelical families.[20] Towards the end of the eighteenth century middle class Anglicans and lower middle class non-conformists

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[16] Prochaska, F. The Voluntary Impulse, p.23.
[17] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p.58-172, Hall, C. 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', p.22.
[18] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p.322.
[19] Ibid, p.322.
[20] Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology'. During the 1830's and 1840's domesticity passed from the practice of a religious clique to the practice of a class (Davidoff and Hall, p.154).

(those traditionally denied power in the high church) became concerned at the state of moral decay exhibited by the aristocracy, and with various national sins, such as the perpetuation of the slave trade. The upheaval caused by the French and American Revolutions was also a matter of concern, because of the portents they offered of social dislocation: "Events in France were a warning of what was to come if individuals did not inspire a revolution in the 'manners and morals' of the nation, a transformation which must begin with individual salvation".[21] The result was an evangelical revival - a resurgence of interest in Christianity, which occurred within the Anglican Church, and which also occurred within and gave rise to dissenting sects like the Unitarians and Quakers.[22] The leaders of this revival were devote members of the Church of England, like Henry Thornton, William Wilberforce, Zachary Macauley, James Stephens, Lord Teignmouth and Hannah More. They were know as the Clapham Sect and their principal objectives were a reform of manners and morals and the abolition of the slave trade.[23]

The effects of the evangelical revival were to be found firstly in a reorganisation and reconceptualisation of social identities, and secondly in the public philanthropic work this inspired. In a time of economic and social uncertainty and rapid change, evangelicism and Bible Christianity offered, via self-discipline and self-sacrifice, a route to the preservation of the soul.[24]

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[21] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p.82.
[22] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p.73. The history of the Evangelical Revival at the end of the eighteenth century deserves more space than I can give it here.
[23] Hall, C. 'The Early Formation', p.16.
[24] Prochaska, F. The Voluntary Impulse, p.22.

In evangelicism the individual was the site of his or her own transformation. There was therefore a correspondence between the philosophy of political liberalism that was also emerging at the end of the eighteenth century, and evangelicism.[25] Prior to the eighteenth century the political philosophy rested on the assumption of a relationship of the state to its citizens; society rather than the individual was the site of political and social attention.[26] As a result of the eighteenth century enlightenment, the individual began to be seen as the site of social and political attention. The result was a reconstructed self, in which the social values of, for instance, discipline and generosity became reconstituted as the personal qualities of self-discipline and self-denial.[27] Evangelicism proposed a reconceptualisation of individual characters similar to this, but with the added component of individual energy, which was necessary to overcome the distinction between self-interest and selflessness.[28] This individual energy translated into practical action was at the core of evangelical belief, and at the Cape was to assume an almost iconic status.

Salvation lay in self-discipline and the individual triumph of a soul over sin. Activity, of the soul and of the body, in the right direction led to the attainment of salvation. It is very important to understand the dynamic character of early evangelicism, because this personal conception of sin and the need for salvation was what motivated so many of the early philanthropist and missionaries. Quite crucially it was this need for active intervention in one's soul that allowed women to move beyond their prescribed passive roles. Women's involvement in religion and religious activity was not new. Women were very much

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[25] Prochaska, F. The Voluntary Impulse, p.24.
[26] Vaughan, M. Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) pp.8-9.
[27] Comaroff and Comaroff, Revelation, p.62.
[28] Prochaska, F. The Voluntary Impulse, p.24.

involved in the puritan movement of the seventeenth century and as members of dissenting sects they moved around the country preaching.[29] However, this involvement was never mainstream, which philanthropic activity was.

In corporeal terms the evangelical ethos referred to definite sorts of behaviour. In its call for a reform of manners and morals it foresaw salvation in emphasising the sanctity of family life. The family was considered to be a haven from the irreligiosity of everyday life, and as such it could provide an arena in which the evangelical credo could flourish.[30] In order for the family to fulfil its role, the roles of its individual members needed to be clearly defined. These roles were what I have already outlined as those roles laid out for men and women in middle class ideology, but for the evangelicals, their adherence went even deeper. For Bible Christians the model of sexual relations they posited was more than a social ideal; individual salvation depended on its maintenance. Model family relations were to be the example which would reform social relations at large and so save the nation from sin and moral degeneracy.

PHILANTHROPY AND MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN

Faith, hope and charity were part of the evangelical ethos, and charity lay at the interface between the private and public worlds of the middle class. Charity was the public face of Bible Christianity - the moral regeneration of the nation was to be undertaken, not only by example but also via the active intervention of the religiously oriented middle class.

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[29] Rendall, J. Introduction to Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) p.6.

[30] Prochaska, F. The Voluntary Impulse, p.23, also Hall, C 'The Early Formation', p.21.

Philanthropy as it was conceived not only benefited other people, but also the giver of philanthropy (see below).[31] Frank Prochaska has described nineteenth century philanthropy as "liberalism turning to social reform under religious pressure".[32] Philanthropic ideals centred on the extension of the benefits of the well-ordered family - the ideal middle class social institution - to the rest of society. "Arguably the most important theme running through the history of philanthropy is the desire of the charitable to protect and to elevate the family and to extend the blessings of an idealised home life into the wider community."[33] However, before this ideal could be achieved, the people who required reform often needed attention to their practical deficiencies. Philanthropy, though its goals may have been spiritual, always had a decidedly practical side - the dispensing of charity.

This charity was generally dispensed by women. Their ideal role lay in the establishment and control of the family and they were also the moral guardians of the family. The former gave them some of the skills required to dispense charity while the latter gave them an innate sensitivity for doing so. According to middle class ideology women were naturally suited to domesticity; they were therefore the ideal proponents of a domestic religion.[34]

Charity and philanthropy took on several forms. It could entail direct financial assistance or more indirect forms of assistance. It could be dispensed directly into the homes of the poor, or could be given out in mother's meetings or neighbourhood associations. It could

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[31] Prochaska, The Voluntary Impulse, p.22.
[32] Prochaska, The Voluntary Impulse, p.24.
[33] Prochaska, The Voluntary Impulse, p.26.
[34] Prochaska, The Voluntary Impulse, p.23.

be dispensed by formal women's organisations, or be the result of informal neighbourly help. It could also take the form of assistance between people of a similar class; philanthropy was not always dispensed from the rich to the poor. In its more organised form however, it was generally done by middle class women who increasingly in the nineteenth century formed local organisations for the express purpose of ministering to the poor. Evangelical societies proliferated towards the end of the eighteenth century, with various aims - some foreign, some domestic. As auxiliaries to these societies, women formed hosts of local branches and sub-divisions.[35] These ladies' societies were designed to combat the evils of early capitalism, social upheaval and its accompanying moral degeneracy, all on a local scale. The women involved raised money through subscriptions, donations and bazaars, and used the money either for the direct alleviation of distress, or to distribute tracts and religious information if the physical need was not felt to be so great. At the Cape there was only one ladies' organisation for the 1820-1850 period, and its model of operation was entirely in line with that outlined in the British organisations.

The philanthropic societies' principal activities consisted of district visiting and mother's meetings. In an era when the state offered little, and increasingly less, in the form of social welfare, visiting was often the only source of succour to the poor (this began before, but increased after the New Poor Law of 1834). District visiting developed out of casual and local forms of benevolence, in which individual agents dispensed help where they could. With the formation of women's visiting societies, it became a much more organised practice.[36] Visiting was principally undertaken in urban areas, which were becoming

[35] Billington, L and R. 'Women in the British Anti-Slavery Movement', in Rendall, J. Equal or Different, p.83.
[36] Prochaska, F. Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-century England, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) p.98.

increasingly bigger and over-crowded from the end of the eighteenth century. This description of these activities is from Frank Prochaska's book Women and Philanthropy.

> Dividing the districts into streets, and streets into households, they assigned visitors to each district, ideally one visitor to every twenty to forty families. Armed with the paraphernalia of their calling - Bibles, tracts, blankets, food and coal tickets, and love - these foot-soldier of the charitable army went from door to door to combat the evils of poverty, disease and irreligion.[37]

These visiting societies were ultimately to reach a level of organisation and clarity of aim exemplified by the Ranyard Mission, founded by Ellen Ranyard in 1857.[38] Ellen Ranyard had been so touched by the privation she encountered as a district visitor, that she founded a society based on the idea of 'Bible Women'. Bible women were intended to act as workers in the poorest slums, giving out both advice on matters corporeal and spiritual. These women were to promote the gospel and to act as a link between the poor and their social superiors.[39] The organisation was so successful in its aims that ten years later it employed 234 Bible Women in London, and had raised for its cause something over £133000.[40]

In addition to district visiting, women's organisations also practised their philanthropy through meetings for their subjects arranged around different issues. The principal occupation of these meetings was sewing: "At the heart of female culture in the nineteenth century, sewing was crucial to women's philanthropy" - perhaps most importantly because it was such a practical activity.[41] This point is relevant, because sewing was at the nexus of

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[37] Prochaska, F. Women and Philanthropy, p.98.
[38] Prochaska, F. Women and Philanthropy, p.126, also The Voluntary Impulse, p.48.
[39] Prochaska, F. The Voluntary Impulse, p.48.
[40] Prochaska, F, Women, p.127.
[41] Prochaska, Impulse, p.42.

most of the activities of the Ladies' Benevolent Society, established in Cape Town in 1824 and which I discuss in the next chapter.

Women were the overwhelming participants in philanthropic activities during the nineteenth century. Some of their motives have already been discussed; however the forces at work behind the voluntary impulse were complex and need further discussion. It has been suggested that much of the motivation behind, for example district visiting, was middle class guilt. Prochaska, however, finds this an inadequate explanation for such a varied enterprise.[42] While religious conviction and the desire to promote the word of God may have been the principa' motive behind much philanthropy, various other sources played their part. First and foremost, philanthropy provided a legitimate avenue of occupation for middle class women. It endowed them with respectability and made them feel useful. Less salubrious motives, such as a desire for power (over other women), status (among contemporaries) and amusement (at the expense of recipients) may also have been behind some women's involvement in philanthropy.

Philanthropy provided an natural avenue of activity for middle class women during the nineteenth century. Ironically, however, this potential was to be the site of some conflict in their 'traditional' role as it brought women into conflict with the accepted standards of womanhood. As women they were the most suited to propagate the doctrines of domesticity; however, in the active propagation of this doctrine they would be taken, even if temporarily, out of their homes and into the public domain. In addition they were to learn skills that would provide a foundation for later political agitation in the suffragette

[42] Prochaska, Impulse, p.47.

movement at the end of the nineteenth century. The organisation of the women's societies and their activities required the development of skills not necessarily associated with women - bookkeeping, secretarial work etc.[43] It also took women into contact with less fortunate members of society. It is these activities which presented women with the potential to find space to manoeuvre within the gender stereotyping of middle class ideology, a potential carried even further in the work of missionary women, which I shall discuss in chapter four.

MISSIONARY SOCIETIES AND THE ABOLITION MOVEMENT

Parochial philanthropy was the domestic focus of evangelical activity. The abolition of the slave trade, from the 1780's onwards, was its national focus. The leaders of the evangelical movement, the Clapham Sect, devoted much of the time of their more prominent members towards this end. The liberal political climate of the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on the rights of men, had convinced many leading evangelists (among them Wilberforce) of the evils of slavery. Various impulses of the late eighteenth century converged to convince these men that slavery was evil. Slavery became viewed as an evil because it denied slaves access to God, and because it perpetuated labour forms that were antithetical to the spirit of capitalism. The idea of contract and of the right to sell one's own labour were central to capitalism and the functioning of the free market. Slavery inhibited the functioning of capitalism because it centred on the forced extraction of labour and contradicted the notion that the ability to sell one's labour was a God given right. However, this emphasis on the reason for slavery's evil was a gradual development.

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[43] Prochaska, Impulse, p.29.

When the first abolitionists spoke out against slavery in the early eighteenth century, it was the conditions of slavery, rather than enslavement *per se* which concerned them.[44] Initially therefore, the abolitionists worked towards the amelioration of the slave condition and the end of the British trade in slave, which was achieved in 1807. Calls for the abolition of slavery only became common after this.

Several authors have written on the differing responses of middle class men and women to slavery.[45] Moira Ferguson has shown how frustrations in their condition of inferiority led British women writers to write about and empathise with the plight of slaves, from the seventeenth century onwards.[46] Women writers' anti-slavery tracts were paralleled by women's action in anti-slavery movements. Consciousness of slavery and its evils, perhaps for this reason or because of their greater involvement in philanthropic work, made British women the most vocal opponents of slavery.[47] The women involved in this movement were invariably members of the visiting organisations I discussed earlier. From the late 1820's groups of women formed around the specific issue of slavery. In 1825 the 'Birmingham Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves' was formed to work towards the amelioration of slavery, particularly among women slaves.[48] Between 1826 and 1827 this society collected and distributed £823, including £50 sent to the London Anti-Slavery Society.[49]

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[44] Ferguson, M. Subject to Others, p.6.
[45] Ferguson, M. Subject to Others, and Hall, C. White, Male and Middleclass.
[46] Subject to Others, p.2-4.
[47] A vocality carried over in action in boycotts of Caribbean sugar, among other items. Ferguson, M. Subject, p.6.
[48] Billington, 'Women', p.85.
[49] Billington, 'Women', p.85.

Against this background - evangelicism and its involvement in the abolition movement (and the crucial involvement of women in both) - the great British missionary societies were formed. These societies, while aware of the need for mission work at home, were driven by their need to take the gospel to the benighted heathens of the various dark spots on the peripheries of the British world.[50] Their doctrines were informed by the religious revival, the changing nature of British society, British imperialism and the plight of heathens as revealed in the slave trade.[51]

The missionary societies drew their members from different segments of the middle class. The Wesleyan movement originated in the middle of the eighteenth century. Through its message of hope for people dispirited by the rapid pace and ravages of industrialisation and urbanisation it gained most of its support from the working and lower middle classes. Its style of preaching - most of its work was done by itinerant priests - made it, effectively, a missionary movement from its inception.[52] In 1813 the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was founded, and in 1814 its first missionary had arrived at the Cape. The Hodgsons, whom I discuss in chapter four, were Wesleyans, and their denominational beliefs gave them an outlook on the South African situation that was noticeably different to that of the Congregationalists.

The London Missionary Society, formed in 1795, drew its members from a slightly wider section of the middle class. Theoretically it was a non-denominational society, but in

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[50] Ludlow, H. 'The Work of the London Missionary Society in Cape Town', (B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1981) p.1-3.
[51] Comaroff, Revelation.
[52] Comaroff , Revelation, p.47.

principal most of its members were Congregationalists (another non-conformist sect).[53] Its first missionaries were recruited from Holland, and arrived at the Cape in 1798 during the first British occupation. The Glasgow Missionary Society was founded, with enthusiasm generated by the forming of the London Missionary Society, in 1796. Like the LMS it was non-denominational. Its aim was "to advance and maintain the mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to those quarters of the earth where it is unknown".[54] Its first missionary arrived at the Cape in 1823. Most of the evangelical families that I discuss were Congregationalists.

Until the late nineteenth century, the London Missionary Society only accepted men as missionaries.[55] Women were only ever auxiliaries in the eyes of the Society, though very desirable auxiliaries. For young women raised in middle class evangelical circles, and accustomed to philanthropic work, the role of missionary's wife (sometimes sister or daughter) was the supreme test of their faith. They were expected to provide not only their husbands with a home and succour from the rigours of missionary work, but to demonstrate the benefits of monogamous Christian living to the people they encountered. They were never paid for their efforts, and never acknowledged by the missionary societies back home. If they ever dared to complain about their situation, they were sharply castigated.[56] Nevertheless they were an indispensable aid to the missionary endeavour; they taught, cooked, demonstrated, and provided their husbands with moral

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[53] Comaroff, Revelation, p.44.
[54] Berning, M and Fold, S. 'Scottish Missionaries on the Frontier', Annals of the Grahamstown Historical Society 17 (1987) p.9.
[55] Until 1875, the London Missionary Society only had three women missionaries on its books (Cunningham, V. 'God and Nature Intended You for a Missionary's Wife' in Bowie, F., Kirkwood, D. and Ardener, S. (eds). Women and Missions: Past and Present (Oxford: Berg, 1993) p.91).
[56] Kirkwood, D. "Protestant Missionary Women: Wives and Spinsters', in Bowie, F., Kirkwood, S., and Ardener, S.(eds) Women and Missions: Past and Present, p.28.

support and sexual relief. They were especially important where local female education was concerned. This sort of education was often not provided for in society funds, and missionary wives often had to fund it through their own initiative. The funding more often than not took the form of cash and material (literally as we shall see later) donations from home; the donors themselves were almost inevitably women.[57]

In the above discussion I have attempted to outline the social background and social constraints operating on British women who came to the Cape in the first part of the nineteenth century. What emerges is a set of influences and contexts which moulded the perceptions and behaviour of the women I discuss. All were members of the British middle class, whatever particular gradation of this class they occupied. They were all practitioners and contributors to an ideology that was rapidly gaining hegemonic status in Britain. This middle class ideology was premised upon a view of society in which women were supposed to be submissive homemakers, mothers and wives, and in which men were responsible for the guardianship and upkeep of their families through a work ethic shaped in the new industrial world.

However, the correspondence between this ideology and reality was at times tenuous. Middle class women were not supposed to work, but many did so out of financial necessity, and their own wishes. Legitimate avenues of work were non-remunerative and restricted to philanthropic activity. The philanthropic nature of this work acted to naturalise it and make it acceptable. Ironically, the religious morality of the middle classes

[57] Cunningham, V. 'God and Nature Intended You for a Missionary's Wife', p.93.

the separate roles of the sexes, also provided some of the opportunities for women to move beyond their prescribed roles. For the more devoutly evangelical members of the middle class, missionary work offered an arena for the exercise of their beliefs. As missionary wives, middle class women were likely to have to move even further from their socially prescribed role. While challenging these gender stereotypes, however, they were also coming into contact with non-white, non-Christian peoples. Race was to become a more dominant concept in their individual discourses. It is the effect of the intersection of these two systems of inequality, at different stages, that I wish to begin to examine in this thesis.

Several people have written of the emancipatory potential of philanthropy and women's involvement in the abolition movement and have described the activities of these women as proto-feminist.[58] Such a description is reductionist. The continuum of British women's involvement in philanthropy, then abolition, then the suffragette movement posits a link between the activities of religious women and the feminist movement. This ignores the very conflicting influences at work on women in the early nineteenth century. While some women may have resented the strictures of middle class ideology, others may have utilised them to find space and empowerment within their sphere of influence. Not all women would have felt constrained by such an ideology; many (as current work on Victorian women shows) would have found satisfaction in their designated roles, which may not have been as circumscribing as we might imagine.[59] A sense of their own abilities and self-confidence may have taken these women far, but such self-confidence does not necessarily imply a commitment to female equality.

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[58] Moira Ferguson and the Billingtons discuss these issues in their respective books and articles. See the references for this chapter.

[59] For instance the women in M. Jeanne Petersen's book, Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen.

CHAPTER TWO

BRITISH WOMEN IN CAPE TOWN: "WE ARE ALL ON EASY AND DELIGHTFUL TERMS WITH ONE ANOTHER"[1]

In 1795 the British assumed charge of the Dutch colony at the Cape. Their possession of the Cape was formalised in 1813 and from that point onwards Cape society, both qualitatively and quantitatively began to assume a more British character. In this chapter I shall attempt to discuss the experiences of some of the first English women who lived in Cape Town. I shall be concentrating upon middle class English women.

Until the late nineteenth century Cape Town's economy rested upon foreign trade and Cape Town's situation as the seat of British government in the Colony.[2] Wheat and wine were exported via Cape Town, with goods from both Europe and the East also entering via the city. Those inhabitants of Cape Town not directly involved in foreign trade earned money servicing the needs of the traders and merchants, or earned their living in a service industry centred around the needs of the government and the garrison at Cape Town. This economic situation was partially responsible for determining the social character of the city. Because status and position were so important in the lives of the women I discuss, it is necessary to understand more broadly the nature of society in Cape Town at this point.

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[1] A quotation from the letters of Lady Margaret Herschel (Erlank, N. 'Circulating in Cape Town', (B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993) p.82).

[2] Robert Ross refers to Cape Town in this period as a service centre. 'Structure and Culture in Pre-Industrial Cape Town' in James, W. and Simons, M. eds. The Angry Divide (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989) p.42.

Elite society at the Cape was composed of different elements.[3] At the apex of the social pyramid was a small government and military elite, but just beneath this group was a much larger middle class. Within the middle class in Cape Town, different considerations marked the precise positions held by its members in the social hierarchy, and these were subject to negotiation in the years with which I am concerned, and which I shall discuss. Different categories - of middle and working class - were recognised by the people who lived in Cape Town during the first few decades of the nineteenth century. In the late 1820's J.W.D. Moodie described Cape Town's inhabitants as being divided into six classes (his words): 1) government employees 2) professionals and merchants 3) white labourers 4) free Malays 5) Khoisan and 6) slaves.[4]

If Moodie had written in 1850 his list would have been quite different. After 1830 the emancipation of slaves precipitated a series of both economic and social changes. Slave compensation money fell into the hands of Cape Town's merchant class and contributed to its growth to even greater prominence while at the same time refuelling the Cape economy which had suffered from a depression during the 1820's.[5] The merchant class was responsible for organising trade (both internally and externally), expanding the Cape's markets, establishing credit lines with London, and later with the Eastern Cape.[6] Their financial links with Britain had allowed them to establish and control the local banks, and their pre-eminence in these areas helped them (among other factors) to gain access to most

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[3] See Bradlow, E. 'The Culture of a Colonial Elite: the Cape of Good Hope in the 1850's', Victorian Studies 29 (1986) pp.387-403 for more discussion of this issue.
[4] Watson, R.L. The Slave Question (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1990) p.67.
[5] Meltzer, L. 'The Growth of Cape Town Commerce and the Role of John Fairbairn's Advertiser' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989) p.7, 64, 76.
[6] Meltzer, L. 'The Growth', p.4.

of the seats on the Legislative Assembly that was established in 1854.[7] Their ties with London and their interest in merchant financing however, seem to have made this group disinterested in investing both in local industry and in local property. This task was left to what Digby Warren has referred to as the developing commercial class - an alliance of less wealthy English retailers and Dutch merchants who saw their opportunity for making money in property speculation and local investment.[8]

These two groups - the mercantile elite and the commercial bourgeoisie - had become socially dominant by the 1850's. Their commitment to remaining in the country made them different from the military and government elite who enjoyed a home-conferred status and had little commitment to the Cape.

Although Warren has distinguished between a merchant elite and a broader commercially oriented middle class, he and others have emphasised that these differences only caused political and economic conflict on a few occasions.[9] However, descriptions of these two distinct interest groups within the middle class emphasise distinction rather than commonalties. This I think stems in part from an emphasis on the political and economic activities of these groups. Warren does mention that the mercantile elite formed part of a "political and social elite which mixed on terms of equality with senior colonial officials",

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[7] Bickford-Smith, V. 'Cape Town at the Advent of the Mineral Revolution c. 1875', Studies in the History of Cape Town 6 (1988) p.63.

[8] Warren, D. 'Merchants, commissioners and municipal wardmasters: municipal politics in Cape Town 1840-1854 (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1986) p.47. Warren bases his argument on a thesis by Tony Kirk, in which Kirk argued for immutable differences between the merchant elite and rising commercial class (Warren, p.45-46). In Kirk's thesis, these differences lead the two groups to act as distinct interest groups politically and economically. Warren supports the criteria for distinguishing between these two groups, but disagrees on the extent of the effects of these distinctions.

[9] Warren, D. 'Merchants', p.45-51, 71, and the conclusion. This view is also supported by Robert Ross ('Structure and Culture') and Kirsten McKenzie 'The South African Commercial Advertiser and the Making of Middle Class Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Town', inter alia.

but does not consider social mixing between the merchant elite and the commercial class beyond "family connections".[10] What I hope to show in this chapter is that, at least for some middle class women these distinctions were irrelevant. Factors like religion were to have more potential for the formation of intra-class groupings than economic situation.

The different strands of middle class society at the Cape were united by a common culture. Kirsten McKenzie has examined the creation of a distinctive middle class identity in Cape Town during this period.[11] Social tensions within the city were threatening to divide a heterogeneous middle class. In order to prevent this fragmentation the middle class needed to develop its own distinctive identity.[12] This identity was forged in part in the cultural arena of the city. As a middle class identity emerged, a distinctive middle class culture emerged alongside it. This was represented in the writings of the South African Commercial Advertiser, which under its editor, John Fairbairn, championed the cause of British middle class identity. This cultural identity was the site of continual contestation (and in particular challenges to its hegemony from the underclass), but was reaching consensus by the 1850's. Social identity, and the social worlds of middle class women were intimately connected with the creation and representation of a distinctive Cape Town middle class discourse, and the women I study were all part of this creation and contestation.

The middle class in Cape Town was so powerful during this period that 'class' tended to shape social perceptions. Social status in Cape Town in the first few decades of the

[10] Warren, D. 'Merchants', p. 228, p.71.
[11] McKenzie, K. 'The Advertiser', and p.4.
[12] Ibid.

nineteenth century drew therefore on class rather than race as an indicator of position.[13] According to Vivian Bickford-Smith "the nature of economic activity, together with the reality of both white and black Capetonians in almost all gradations of the 'underclasses', had thus far prevented a society rigidly ordered according to colour/appearance. Nor were there rigid divisions of labour along these lines. Nonetheless, an approximate correlation would appear to have existed between lighter colour, male gender and better-paid jobs".[14] This is reinforced in the way people perceived social status at the time, and through an understanding of the relative status of people according to their occupations, as has been indicated by Ross and Judges among others.[15]

There needs to be a qualification to this statement, however. Slavery blurred contemporary understandings of social status at the Cape. It conferred its own status onto enslaved people, and the knowledge that all slaves were black while not all blacks were slaves certainly affected white perceptions of blacks, while it may not have affected possibilities for free black employment.

INFLUENCES ON WOMEN AND WOMEN'S INFLUENCE IN EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY CAPE TOWN

Several studies of Cape Town in the early nineteenth century are in existence, and detail both the nature of society in this period, as well as the material conditions of that society's

[13] This pointed is supported inter alia by Andrew Bank, Shirley Judges, Robert Watson and Robert Ross (see references in this chapter).
[14] Bickford-Smith, V. 'Meanings of Freedom: social position & identity among ex-slaves and their descendants in Cape Town, 1875-1910' in Worden, N. and Crais, C. Breaking the Chains.
[15] Same references as footnote 14.

existence. There are, however, a few aspects of life that I wish to highlight because they touch particularly on the way English women would have experienced Cape Town, and the sort of influence they would have had upon Cape Town.

By the middle of the 1820's the boundaries of Cape Town proper extended as far as what is today known as District Six in the south, while its western and northern boundaries were marked by the slopes of mountains, and its north-eastern boundary by the sea.[16] Within this space the city streets were laid out according to a grid pattern, but a three-dimensional view of the city would have shown ~~no other~~ another order. The streets consisted of dirt which became mud in wet weather. This mud was augmented by sewage in wet weather. The houses on the main thoroughfares were solidly built, but in the back streets of Cape Town, on the foreshore and off Buitenkant Street people lived in buildings that were quietly disintegrating.

Social tensions around control centred on the spaces between these different areas, particularly for the middle classes who worried about underclass encroachment on their space.[17] For these and other reasons, increasingly, between the 1820's and 1850's, middle class families were moving away from the city centre and relocating either in the seaside suburb of Greenpoint to the north, or in the suburbs of Observatory, Mowbray, Rondebosch, Newlands and Wynberg which grew up against the foot of the mountain to the south of Cape Town. During the 1820's farm land on the Cape Peninsula became sub-

[16] Malan, A. 'Households at the Cape 1750-1850; inventories and the archaeological record' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993) p.106.
[17] McKenzie, K. 'The Advertiser', p.95.

divided for development for the suburban villas the middle class were increasingly buying.[18]

The move out of Cape Town meant that English families could settle in newly formed suburbs in clumps, which they could attempt to construct as secure middle class havens. Middle class women were therefore not only socially but also spatially contained by the structures of middle class ideology. Their home and the spaces they occupied could not have failed to affect the way they experienced and perceived life at the Cape. However, these women were not merely contained by their houses and homes (which were symbolic as well as physical locations) but they also w rked at creating them, and I shall touch on this in my discussion of their writing.

Not only settlement patterns but also preferred building styles in Cape Town changed with the arrival of the English. At the start of the nineteenth century English families lived in Dutch-built houses, but as the years passed these houses began to be remodelled in English styles, while any new houses built were built in English style. The English disliked gabled houses, and they disliked the letter of the alphabet shape houses that were preferred by the Afrikaans inhabitants of the Cape. Architectural historians have written much on this subject, but only recently, in Yvonne Brink's Ph.D. thesis, have cultural considerations around the construction of group identity been considered with reference to the choice of particular house styles.[19] The British middle class at the Cape preferred elongated houses, with fireplaces in their living rooms, and English style staircases.[20] To this end they

[18] Malan, A. 'Households', p.103.
[19] Brink, Y. 'Places of discourse and dialogue'.
[20] Malan, A. 'Households', p.110-111.

remodelled the Afrikaans houses into English forms. The first governor of the Cape, Sir George Grey, remodelled Government House to include a large staircase that had not been there previously.[21] New houses were built in the Georgian style, with brick facades while internal walls had to be either painted or papered.

Behind this move for English styles in houses was the British desire to entrench their rule at the Cape - in cultural as well as social, political and economic dominance - as well as perhaps a cultural insecurity in the face of a Dutch-modelled landscape. This move was both conscious and unconscious - house builders wanting homes that reminded them of Britain, and a policy that asserted British as best. For their orrespondents back home, the British at the Cape were quite emphatic about this, as in Mrs Maclear's comment to her sister "nor do I think there is anything to put you in mind you are not in England".[22]

The women I study were living in these houses, choosing which houses to live in and remodelling these houses and as such were part of the British attempt to re-order the landscape into British form: "[Our house] has undergone a thorough repair. We have built three new rooms upstairs and knocked the dining room and drawing room into one, built a new breakfast room, stable, coach house and a forage room, turned other rooms into store room, pantry and kitchen, also a new staircase and entire new roof of English slates. Our old breakfast room is turned into a dining room, and all but two rooms are ceiled. You would not know the house again if you were to see it."[23] The remodelling of houses and

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[21] Robinson, A.M. Lewin. ed. Letters from Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas, (Cape Town: Balkema, 1972) p.212.

[22] MM1. I use abbreviated references for sources I quote at length. An expansion of these abbreviations is to be found in Appendix One. MM is the abbreviation for Mary Maclear's letters, JP for Jane Philip's letters, Findlay for the Findlay letters.

[23] Findlay10.

building of houses in English style had two objectives - to reassure these women leaving their countries behind that they were still in Britain (as a response to homesickness), and to impress upon the non-British at the Cape just how British it was.

Styles in household furnishings also changed. Archaeological research done on historical sites in Cape Town has shown particular patterns in crockery preferences, especially for the Dutch colonial period. During the last few decades of the eighteenth and first few of the nineteenth, consumer taste veered from a preference for oriental porcelain to crockery produced in England.[24] Not only was there evidence of a switch to English manufactured articles for furnishing houses, but there was also a trend for houses to hav more and more furnishings in them - a move towards what Antonia Malan refers to as "denser volumes of material culture".[25]

These goods were being used to refashion the interiors of houses in the English manner. As sometime purchasers of these goods, and as wives whose husbands sought their advice before buying anything, women were active promoters of English material culture, and we should expect to see evidence for this in any references to furnishings they may have made. As early as 1797 Lady Anne Barnard was responsible for refurbishing the Governor's quarters at the Castle in the English fashion - what she called "the stile (sic) of a comfortable plain English house" - while Mrs Maclear and her friend Lady Herschel, in the 1830's, planned to have the Observatory shutters done up to look like real oak.[26]

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[24] Malan, A. 'Households', p.173. The trend was from porcelain before 1800 to gilded whiteware to transfer prints, of which the Willow Pattern was and is the most famous.
[25] Malan, A. 'Households', p.146.
[26] Robinson, A.M. Lewin, The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard, p.43. MBH:MM10. For a more in depth discussion of this phenomenon, treating individual houses, see chapter two (on Cape Town) in Patricia Scott's thesis, 'An Approach to the Urban History of Early Victorian Grahamstown' (MA Thesis, Rhodes

The sorts of influence that British women brought to bear on their homes and surroundings were inextricably linked with their experience of life in Britain. Their influences were British in origin, and it seems opportune now to discuss the other sorts of influences that affected these women (whether in Britain or at the Cape) - the social and ideological constructions I discussed in chapter one - and their method of dissemination.

As the British middle class began to define itself in terms of gendered role differentiation and segregation it also began to promote these ideas in popular literature. The role of popular religious and secular literature has been written of at length by Leonore Davi 'off and Catherine Hall, in their book Family Fortunes. They describe how the new definitions of masculinity and femininity were spread and disseminated through this medium.[27] This literature was able to 'speak' to large numbers of middle class men and women because of the middle class emphasis on the importance of education - which turned the activities of reading and writing into part of the definition of middle class status. Often the sort of popular literature read by the middle classes was advisory in nature; and advisory tracts delineating the proper roles for women were particularly important.[28] These tracts included Anne Martin Taylor's Maternal Solicitude For A Daughter's Best Interests and Practical Hints to Young Females on the Duties of a Wife, a Mother and Mistress of a Family.[29] The content of these tracts is evident from their titles.

University, 1987). Oak is not a native tree to South Africa and when it grows here its wood is too porous to make furniture.

[27] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p.155-162.

[28] Ibid, p.162.

[29] Ibid, p.172.

Reading was an equally important middle class activity in Cape Town, as Kirsten McKenzie has shown in her discussion of the role of the Commercial Advertiser (and the creation of a literate culture) in the making of middle class identity in Cape Town for this period.[30] Notions of appropriate gender behaviour were disseminated through a number of opportunities such as the Commercial Advertiser (which was staunchly in favour of separate spheres for men and women and promoted this view in it columns), and also through books in the lending library.[31]

The women I study all read, though their reasons for doing so may have had very little to do with searching for models of appropriate female behaviour. They also sought their information on what to read (and what trends to follow) directly from Britain via the medium of letters. In fact letters containing instructions of what to read in the quest for self-improvement were common, both between women and their families at the Cape, and the same in Britain. Dr Philip wrote to his daughter Eliza in 1831 that, in order to improve her character (see below for her need to do this) she ought to "read the best authors once imbibe their sentiments and their spirits - give up novels".[32] He instructed her to read Addison and Millar.[33] William Philip similarly put his fiancé, Alison, on an extensive course of reading in the late 1830's that included German, French and Roman history.[34]

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[30] McKenzie, K. 'The Advertiser', chapters one and two, especially pp.22-30.

[31] The dissemination of appropriate gender roles in public through the Commercial Advertiser has been discussed at length in Kirsten McKenzie's thesis, and I think there is no doubt that this was a primary source for the dissemination of such roles (chapter three).

[32] Long, U. An index to the authors of unofficial, privately-owned manuscripts relating to the History of South Africa 1812-1920 (Cape Town, 1947) p.150.

[33] But gave no further references to them, and a literature search has not revealed whom they might have been. The same applies to Foster's Natural History of Enthusiasm.

[34] CAS BC742, William to Alison, 4 October 1839, 4 August 1840.

This list of recommended reading obviously extended to more than domestic tracts; and in fact in none of the women whose reading I studied ever mentioned reading any of these tracts. However most of them were reading religious works or quasi-philosophical works of one kind or another. Mary Anne Foulger was very fond of Foster's Natural History of Enthusiasm and recommended it strongly to Eliza Fairbairn.[35] Most of these women's families subscribed to or read journals like the Edinburgh Review - which contained a mixture of topics but with particular interests for evangelicals.[36]

Few of them appeared to read novels, though all would have had access to at least serialised forms of popular novels in periodicals. Alison Philip was, however, recommended to read Ivanhoe. William Philip recommended it to her on the basis of Sir Walter Scott's understanding of chivalry; in fact Philip expressed his dissatisfaction with the way contemporary society treated women (too callously he thought) and agreed with what he read in Scott, and other authors on chivalry: " The most remarkable and pleasing feature in the ancient Chivalry was the devotion to women". Scott was a romantic with Tory leanings - and considered a lot more conservative than some of his literary contemporaries.[37] Mrs Maclear definitely did not like Charles Dickens, whose Pickwick Papers she found rather vulgar - perhaps Dickens was too much of a realist for her.[38] Poetry seems to have been more widely read - Eliza Fairbairn was very fond of it, though she did not mention preferences.[39]

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[35] Cory MS6101.
[36] The Foulgers did. Cory MS6121.
[37] CAS BC742, William to Alison, 4 September 1839. On Scott: Crutwell, P. 'Walter Scott', in Ford, B. (ed) The New Pelican Guide to English Literature Volume Five, From Blake to Byron, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982).
[38] MM13.
[39] SAL MSB412.

Whatever they were reading, the general requirement of these women was that books ought to have a moral of some kind - and that could be educational or religious. In fact, what little I can reconstruct of the reading lists of these women shows them to have been desirous of learning, and desirous of reading more than just advisory tracts. This is important, given what all authors on the gender discourse of pre-Victorian and Victorian England have emphasised: however much it might espouse different and differently valued roles for men and women there was a great fluidity in the ways in which women (and men) reacted to these strictures - some of which were clearly not oppressive. The few examples of Cape Town women whom I have studied were clearly well-read and not bound by what they may have read into any particular sorts of behaviours.

I have divided the women, whose writing I studied, into different groups on the basis of particular allegiances. In the first place I discuss the writing of women who were intimately connected with religion in Cape Town, in the second I discuss the wife of a government official, and in the third I discuss two representatives of the business world. These divisions are in part artificial, as I hope will become apparent.

THE PERSONAL WRITING OF BRITISH WOMEN IN CAPE TOWN: CHURCH WIVES AND CHURCH WOMEN

After the English arrived at the Cape, the number of religious denominations practising in Cape Town increased. In addition to the Dutch Reform Church and the Lutheran Church which were already present in Cape Town, the Wesleyan Methodists, the Anglicans and

the Congregationalists established their own chapels and churches.[40] The latter group was represented after 1819 by Dr John Philip of the London Missionary Society (LMS). The LMS was not the only missionary society active in Cape Town. The Wesleyans were also primarily a missionary movement. In addition, Cape Town also had a home grown missionary society, the South African Missionary Society (1797). The activities of the missionary societies and various other affiliated organisations were carried out by devoted members, most of whom had no formal ties with the institutions they supported. These people and the people who ran the various societies formed a distinct sub-group in Cape society, which cut across the status hierarchy I have briefly outlined for Cape Town. Church activities seem to have formed a space for communication within the middle class in Cape Town. The group of women I discuss in this section may have been wives and daughters of merchants or government officials, but their activities and perceptions place them in a category that transcended their husbands' or fathers' social status.

The Ladies Benevolent Society

The Ladies Benevolent Society (LBS) was formed in 1822, and aimed "to alleviate ... the sufferings of deserving persons" through the distribution of aid primarily monetary but also spiritual.[41] Its members were Cape Town middle class women, English and Afrikaans, and most of them had concrete connections with the various churches in Cape Town. The Ladies Benevolent Society is important for a number of reasons. It was one of the earliest

[40] In 1841 the Cape Town Mail divided the population of Cape Town into 8 distinct 'Religious Sects' - Dutch Reform, English Episcopalian, Scotch Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Protestant Dissenters, Mahomedans and Heathens, but this description obviously subsumes some avenues of worship Ludlow, H. 'The Work of the London Missionary Society in Cape Town' p.70.

[41] Bradlow, E. 'The Oldest Charitable Society in South Africa"'. Edna Bradlow's article gives a more detailed account of the activities and background of the LBS.

examples of organised volunteer philanthropic work in Cape Town, and the earliest solely women's organisation. It provided opportunities for women in Cape Town to perform activities outside of their homes. One of its initiatives resulted in the founding of a multi-racial school for girls in 1824, and so it is an ideal organisation in which to examine the racial perceptions of European women at large.

Among the members of the LBS were Mrs Philip (see below), Miss Caldwell, Mrs Faure, Misses E. and A. Watermeyer, Mrs Beck and Mrs Menzies. Miss Caldwell was a British officer's daughter, who married William Elliot of the South African Missionary Society (SAMS), and later the LMS, in 1826.[42] Mrs Faure was the wife of Rev. Abraham Faure, a Dutch Reform Church minister, and the sister of Miss Caldwell.[43] The Watermeyers were daughters of an Afrikaans family, who were themselves very much involved in the Dutch Reform Church. One of the Watermeyer nephews later married the daughter of Eliza Fairbairn.[44] Mrs Beck was the wife of Rev. J. Beck of the SAMS. Mrs Menzies was married to a judge of the Supreme Court. Another member of the LBS from its inception was Elizabeth Williams, whom I mention in the chapter on missionary wives. She was the wife of the missionary Joseph Williams, and she came to Cape Town after the death of her husband on their mission station in the Eastern Cape. Her name appeared regularly in the minutes of the LBS until 1825, when she married Adam Robson, another missionary, and moved to Bethelsdorp.

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[42] Rennie, J.V.L. 'Presidential Address: William Elliott, 1820 Settler and Missionary', Annals of the Grahamstown Historical Society 2 (1976) p.4.
[43] Dictionary of South African Bibliography II (Durban: Human Sciences Research Council, 1972) p.230.
[44] I cannot determine which because the DSAB in its usual wisdom and in its entry on F.S. Watermeyer, did not mention any of his female relatives (DSAB II, p.833).

I mention all these ties to show just how intertwined the different elements of middle class society in Cape Town were. The members of the LBS were the wives and daughters of men who were by profession government officials, merchants, professionals and ministers of religion, who were by nationality English and Dutch, and who were of several different religious affiliations.

It is interesting to examine the composition of male philanthropic organisations with similar aims at this point. The LBS women's husbands and brothers were members of different organisations - the Cape Town Auxiliary Missionary Society Committee (1823), the Cape of Good Hope Philanthropic Society (1828), Die Fonds vir Weduwees en Ou Vroue (1799), and the Suid Afrikaanse Weeshuis (1809).[45] Members of the Auxiliary Missionary Society (a fund-raising body of the LMS) were the Rev. J. Beck, Mr Meterlerkamp of the SAMS, Rev. A. Faure, Mr H.E. Rutherfoord and Messrs Abercrombie, Pringle and Syme.[46] The 1833 executive committee of the Cape Philanthropic Society included Rutherfoord, Hamilton Ross, F.S. Watermeyer, Rev. A. Faure, John Philip and J. Abercrombie.[47] The Weeshuis committee included G.A Watermeyer, Rev. A. Faure, P.D. Hohne, J.G. Stegmann and Mr Metelerkamp.[48]

Despite their various commitments, there was obviously a pool of committed men who were interested in the running of such societies. They were also interested in the running of the LBS, which was mentioned in editorials and letters in the Commercial Advertiser on

[45] The last two are The Fund for Widows and Old Women and the South African Orphanage (CA V2 and V5).
[46] Ludlow, 'The Work of the LMS', p.27.
[47] Iannini, C. 'Slavery, Philanthropy and Hegemony: A History of the Cape of Good Hope Philanthropic Society 1820-1833 (B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993) pp.93-94.
[48] CA V5.

an intermittent basis, and always in favourable terms.[49] It was their wives who comprised the committees of the LBS, although mixing between English and Afrikaans seems to have been greater in the LBS than the other societies.[50] These membership lists point to strong and parallel lines of communication existing between the women in Cape Town and between their men folk.[51] Unfortunately I have not been able to find records for the LBS after 1829, and so it is difficult to see who was on its committee in the decades following. From Mrs Philip's letters (see below) we know that in 1838 she was still on the Committee while Mrs Lache was Treasurer and Mrs Fairbairn had been Secretary.[52]

The Schoc of Industry established in June 1824 constituted the major area of involvement for the women of the LBS. The business of the school was dealt with in separate meetings until November 1824, and the School of Industry had its own secretary.[53] Initially, until the affairs of the school were moved to the general meetings, the school committee met on every third Monday of the month (this was in theory; in practice they met more often). This was in addition to the regular meetings of the LBS. At these meetings the women considered applications to the school and considered other matters incidental to the running of the school. With regard to the applications, members of the committee were expected to have interviewed the parents of prospective pupils before bringing up the case at a meeting. In addition to their committee related work, the women of the LBS were also expected to participate in visiting the school: "Although it has been arranged that two

[49] For instance 11 September 1839 and 15 April 1840. Thank you very much to Kirsten McKenzie for these references.
[50] There were no associations for Afrikaans women. Although the Fonds and the Weeshuis were set up with the money of one Widow Margaretha Moller, who then sat on at least the Weeshuis committee (until she died in sometime around 1815), no other women were involved in these organisations (CA V5 1/1).
[51] Ludlow, 'The Work of the LMS', p.27.
[52] JP20.
[53] CA V3-1/1. There are a several references to the LBS in the Commercial Advertiser.

Ladies are appointed to visit the school daily, yet as regularity and good order of the institution will depend upon the superintendance of the visiting committee, these Ladies are requested to call at any time, if only for a quarter of an hour, and as often as their leisure will permit".[54] Miss Watermeyer, the secretary of the school, took the school on Saturday mornings, which the school teacher had off.

These activities may not have been onerous for some of the members of the committee, but for others they encroached as Mrs Philip recognised (see below), on their time off from earning. Mrs Williams was one such case. She was occupied as a teacher, with two children to support, yet he still found time to work for the LBS.[55]

The women of the LBS were typical of the type of volunteer philanthropist Frank Prochaska has described, and which I discussed in the previous chapter. However, many of these volunteers were also working women. Although they may only have been engaged in occupations like teaching, which was a recognised area of work for women, they defy classification of philanthropy as an activity for only unoccupied women..

The School of Industry, as it was known, was intended to provide lessons in sewing and reading to girls between the ages of about six and twelve. It was run on donations, subscriptions and money earned through sewing performed by the scholars. Application was open to girls whose parents were destitute and could not afford to provide them with education: "the [school] being destined only for the instruction of such children whose

[54] CA V3-1/1, Minutes of the 21 June 1824.
[55] Holt, J. Joseph Williams and the Pioneer Mission to the South-Eastern Bantu (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1954) p.133.

parents are destitute of the means of procuring them other instruction".[56] This proviso is important to note because the women of the LBS were not interested in providing education for girls whose parents could afford it. They intended their school to serve only the underclass of Cape Town, and in a resolve of the 26 July 1824, hardly a month after the school opened, they decided to admit "children of people of colour".[57]

Theoretically the school was multi-racial; whether it was non-racist is another question. The resolve to have an open school was not put into practice until July 1825. Mrs Bird, also a member of the committee, asked whether the child of her Madagascan servant (slave?) could be admitted to the school.[58] This request provoked an unusual outburst in the minutes, in which it appears that Miss Watermeyer, the secretary and keeper of the minutes, objected to this plan.[59]

> The secretary then...submitted the two following points for the Committee's consideration -
> 1/ In adverting to a request made by Mrs Bird...to have the daughter of her servant...admitted - she begged that the Committee might be pleased to fix certain rules relative to the admission of children, as far as regards their parents; stating that she had hitherto been under an impression that it was silently agreed between the members of the Committee, that girls of indigent christians, lawfully married, being inhabitants of the Town, of whatever Nation or denomination of Christians , otherwise, only were the subjects to which the benefit of their school was to extend; and that however willing she is to submit to the decision of the majority of the Ladies of the Committee, if at variance with the views she has of the subject, she must still submit it as her humble opinion, that the nature and the means of the society ought for the present to restrict the Ladies from extending the operations of the school, to other classes of society; - besides that she considers that the freeblacks and slaves, who have the wish to become christians and to be instructed in the first rudiments of education,

[56] CA V3-1/1, Minutes of the 2 August 1824.
[57] CA V3-1/1.
[58] CA V3-1/1, Minutes of 11 July 1825.
[59] It is impossible to determine which Miss Watermeyer this was. She was one of three sisters.

> have by various institutions of this Town, ample means offered to them to obtain their object.[60]

This paragraph is very interesting for what it reveals about both Miss Watermeyer and the Ladies of the Committee. Miss Watermeyer appeared to be objecting to the admittance of slave children on the grounds of their not being of Christian parents lawfully married. However it is unclear what she meant by "other classes of society". Was she objecting to black children being admitted at all, or was she objecting to non-Christian children being admitted? Whatever her view, it was obviously strongly felt, because in her second point she begs to be relieved of her duties as secretary. While the reasons she gives were to do with family duties, it is tempting to speculate that she was at such "variance" with the rest of the Committee that she felt (or her family felt she should be) obliged to retire as secretary. Her position becomes even more curious with the persistence of her name in the minutes after this meeting, and the election of her sister to the position of secretary.

In the next meeting of the LBS, in answer to the question of admitting black children, it was resolved that "the parents being unmarried should in future be no obstacle to prevent the admission of any children of free blacks their numbers not exceeding fifteen".[61] It appears as if morality, not race, was a more important factor in determining entrance into the school, according to this dictate. This is certainly born out in the minutes of the LBS. From 1825 onwards the daughters of free blacks, slaves and Muslims were regularly

[60] CA V3-1/1, Minutes of 11 July 1825.
[61] CA V3-1/1, Minutes of 1 August 1825.

admitted into the school, even if not in such numbers as were white girls. In 1826, one prize slave of Mrs Townsend was admitted, as was a Malay girl, Samiela.[62]

This brings me back to morality as a criterion of selection. Admittance to the School of Industry was not a problem; continued attendance at the school, however, depended on the conduct of the girls once they were admitted. When it came to distributing prizes for performance in the school good conduct, not academic progress, was the deciding factor. Girls were barred from the school, as in the case of Elizabeth Alldred who had caused Miss Crawford to complain of her "very ill conduct".[63]

The desire to enforce standards of behaviour has been remarked upon elsewhere, particularly by Shirley Judges. She attributes the middle class interest in educating the underclass to a desire to establish power over them.[64] By emphasising behaviour (and obviously standards of behaviour approved by the middle class as correct for people of inferior status) rather than any academic or technical skills the middle classes were ensuring their continuance of power. In addition, the sewing activities of the pupils meant that the version of middle class ideology being inculcated was one which included gender-defined behaviour. While the ladies of the LBS may have not considered race as a significant variable in choosing pupils for their school, they nevertheless had selection criterion which restricted their school to a lower social order - of whom inextricably blacks were part.

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[62] CA V3-1/1, Minutes of 13 March and 10 July 1826.
[63] CA V3-1/1, Minutes of the 19 June 1826.
[64] Judges, S. 'Poverty', p.129.

It is apparent from the minutes of the first five years of the LBS that its members were very much representatives of a middle class ideology which allocated women specific roles. As an organisation, they did not challenge contemporary gender stereotypes. Moira Ferguson and the Billingtons have shown that British women's activities in philanthropic societies (particularly anti-slavery societies) in the early nineteenth century were a precursor to some of their involvement in the suffrage movement that developed in Britain later that century.[65] It is tempting to view the LBS in a similar fashion but, although individual members may have challenged gender stereotypes, the group as a whole did not. More work will need to be done for the post-1850 period to see whether the activities of the women in the LBS empowered them to work for female suffrage, or created a climate in which such attempts would be possible.

Perhaps the question should rather concern the extent to which their religious beliefs prompted women into 'unwomanly' activities. They were simultaneously members of a religious community and members of a middle class community. Part of the ideology of the former required a commitment to the upliftment of the bodies and souls of the less fortunate; part of the ideology of the latter required an awareness of different classes of people and a need to maintain divisions between these. A multi-racial school which viewed its pupils as part of an underclass and reinforced their social inferiority was very much in keeping with these different ideals. The promotion of thinking which upset both religious and middle class discourses around the duties of women was not.

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[65] Ferguson, M. Subject to Others, p.3, Billington, L. and R. 'Women in the British Anti-Slavery Movement' for a more general discussion of this issue.

Mrs Jane Philip

The linchpin of the female church community in Cape Town, was Mrs Jane Philip. Little is known of her - none of the standard works on the LMS at the Cape mention her - yet she was an invaluable administrator in her own right, and an indefatigable correspondent. She was born Jane Ross in Scotland in 1792. In 1809 she married Dr John Philip (1775-1851), her senior by seventeen years. They lived in Aberdeen, where Dr Philip was a Congregational Church preacher until 1819. Their first child, Mary was born in 1810, the second Eliza in 1812, the third William in 1814 and the fourth John in 1816. Dr Philip was very involved in the home activities of the LMS, and in 1819 the family moved to the Cape of Good Hope where Dr Philip had been appointed as superintendent of the LMS affairs in the Cape Colony. Jane Philip was 27 when they arrived, and her husband 44. There the family remained - bar a visit to Britain for three years between 1826 and 1829, and another visit of Dr Philip's between 1836 and 1838. At the Cape the Philips had three more children: (Thomas) Durant born 1819, Margaret (who died young) born 1825 and Wilberforce born 1829. Jane Philip died in 1847 after an illness that was probably cancer and Dr Philip died in 1851.

Mrs Philip's extant writing comes from several different sources. She wrote to her children and grandchildren when she or they were separated. She wrote to her eldest son, William Enowy Philip, who was working on the mission station at Hankey in the Eastern Cape. After his death she wrote to his wife, Alison. She also wrote to her youngest son, Wilberforce, and her daughter Eliza, on occasions when she was away from Cape Town. Most of her personal letters were to her friend Miss Wills (also involved in evangelical

work), in England Her official correspondence is in the archives of the London Missionary Society, kept at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. In addition to Mrs Philip's own writing, I also have had access to the letters of her daughter Eliza to her sister Mary and her husband, John Fairbairn, and the minutes of the Ladies Benevolent Society, of which she was a pivotal member.

This collection of writing makes it possible not only to understand something of Mrs Philip's character, but to understand how she fitted into the society around her. In one way or another Mrs Philip or her husband were mentioned or written to by almost all the women I research (the settler wives and missionary wives included). These links are important because the inferences I make about Mrs Philip can be confirmed elsewhere. Not only that, but if I am attempting to make general statements about the cultural perceptions and actions of English women at the Cape, I need to establish a commonality between them. English society at the Cape in the first half of the nineteenth century was a fairly close community, and the network of correspondence established by Mrs Philip and her family managed to penetrate most of its sectors.

For the majority of their life at the Cape, the Philips lived at Mission House in Church Square, central Cape Town. They were physically in the hub of the city, and socially at the hub of Cape evangelical and missionary society. Their friends and acquaintances were drawn from a wide range of society, though more generally from Cape Town's professional and business classes. They were very good friends with the family of H.E. Rutherfoord, the merchant, and were also friendly with Rev. Abraham Faure of the Dutch Reformed Church. The defining characteristic of the people with whom they associated

was a commitment to liberal principles, specifically the abolition of the slave trade, the education of the poor, the upliftment of the Hottentots. Jane Philip seems rarely to have gone out much in society; rather it came to her. Church Square was often full of visitors of various descriptions, and with these visitors, her family and her various duties, Mrs Philip's time was occupied.

Jane Philip was very busy at the Cape. She assisted her husband with his LMS duties, while carrying out work under her own initiative. She was a founder member of the Ladies Benevolent Society in 1822, and in 1838 she was still worrying about who would perform the offices of the society.[66] She was sometime treasurer of the society, and wrote numerous letters on their behalf. In addition to the LBS, she also helped to initiate the distribution of tracts and Bibles within Cape Town, and in September 1831 she wrote to her friend Miss Wills "We have this week commenced a tract and Bible Society - it will be the object of the Society [not only] to circulate such tracts as are already printed but to select from these such as are thought most suitable and to simplify them and get them translated into Dutch...".[67] Four years later Mrs Philip was still delivering tracts: "We have lately had several arriving English tracts translated into Dutch which it is our intention to distribute over the whole town if possible one at a time..." and in 1838 the Tract Society was still in operation.[68]

Mrs Philip was also heavily involved in the introduction of the Infant School System to the Cape - both the first interdenominational and later the LMS schools. Helen Ludlow, in her

[66] JP20.
[67] JP9.
[68] JP16 and 20.

thesis on the London Missionary Society at the Cape, wrote about Mrs Philip, "It was she, more than any other individual, who was responsible for the establishment in Cape Town of the Mission Schools during this time".[69]

Mrs Philip was very exited about the prospect of opening the first infant school and agitated strongly for the facilities to establish it. In 1830, soon after the Philips had arrived back in Cape Town she was able to write to Miss Wills that "we have got an Infant School opened exactly opposite to our home. We have got an excellent building for the purpose lent by Government House...the very Store which I had always said would exactly suit for an Infant School became vacant at the time our Committee was formed...".[70] Just a few months later infant schools were also established in Port Elizabeth and Bethelsdorp, and a year later Mrs Philip wrote "Our Infant School flourishes - upwards of two hundred are daily instructed on that system in Cape Town and more schools will be begun as soon as the funds will admit of it, there are several up the country".[71] Jane Philip frequently informed her friend of the progress of the infant schools and it is clear that she was very much committed to the project. These initial infants schools were soon given over to control by an interdenominational committee, but in 1836 the LMS began to open its own schools.[72] In 1836 a British school for girls was opened in premises in Barrack Street. It was run by Miss Buzzacott, and had between 90 and 100 pupils aged ten to fourteen.[73]

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[69] Ludlow, H. 'The Work of the LMS', p.45.
[70] JP6. This was obviously one of those times when Dr Philip was in favour at Government House.
[71] JP7 and 8.
[72] For a discussion of the LMS's work in this area see Ludlow, H. 'The Work of the LMS', p.37, pp.44-58.
[73] Ibid, p.50-51.

Not only did Mrs Philip participate in activities that were ancillary to the work of the LMS, but she was also directly involved in the operation of the society. Her letters contain numerous references to the amount of work she did on behalf of the LMS and the cares it gave her. From 1826 onwards Mrs Philip assisted her husband with the organisation involved in supporting a growing number of mission stations throughout the country. She kept the society's accounts, and twice a year she was required to write up these books. She continued this work until shortly before her death.[74]

In 1834 she wrote to Miss Wills:

> the first three months of the year are (if possible) the busiest of the twelve for me for in addition to making up and sending home the Accts for the half year (which is also done in July) I have to make out to each Missionary a statement of the Bills drawn by him and paid by us and also the balance of his acct on which ever side it may be - these accts as you may suppose cannot be sent of without writing to each Missionary so that before I have my work done during these very hot months I am almost exhausted & glad of a respite for a little.[75] [sic]

Over the next 10 years (this reference is 1843), the work involved in writing up the accounts increased greatly.

> The writing connected with this place is very great there are about 48 or so Missionaries who have very often something to write about and that must be answered besides some stations which require much correspondence from the peculiar circumstances in which they may happen to be. Besides the correspondence there is the accounts which have increased very much since we first took the work in hand. There were then 12 Missionaries and about 8 stations. Now there are 28 Stations and 48 or so Missionaries.[76]

Unusually for a missionary's wife Mrs Philip was paid for this work.[77]

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[74] References to her work in this area can be found in JP10, 17, 20, 30, 38, 40 and 42.
[75] JP13.
[76] JP40.
[77] JP38.

Jane Philip was clearly, within the limits of her health, an indefatigable worker. Her status as a paid employee is very interesting because it challenges so much of the gender stereotypes of middle class, and in particular, evangelical society (a challenge offered too by individual women in the LBS). Women were not supposed to work; when they did (and this applies to middle class and working class women) they were paid according to their status rather than the work they did and so they were paid correspondingly less or nothing than men for similar jobs. From the tone of John Philip's letter to Eliza when she wished to begin working as a school teacher it is evident that this gender ideology was very strong in the Philip family (below). How then was Mrs Philip allowed, both by her contemporaries, her husband and her own conscience to perform work that was so clearly perceived to be out of the ambit of 'normal' female behaviour? The answer I think lies in Mrs Philip's commitment to duty and "the hope of being useful".[78]

The following passage (written 1831) is central to an understanding of her character.

> we have much mercy to be thankful for and if it would but please God to let us see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in our hands our cup would run over but we do grieve to think of the little spiritual advantage that appears to arise from our labours when we read of what is doing in America we feel humbled and almost discouraged and we are led to examine ourselves whether the want of eminent piety be not a bar to our usefulness - the prayer of our heart is let thy work appear unto thy Servants and thy Glory unto their children and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish thou the work of our hands upon us yea the work of our hands establish thou it.[79]

Several words and concepts are repeated in this passage: 'hands' were mentioned three times, as was 'work'; 'labours' and 'usefulness' are also loaded terms, given the tone of the passage. Another passage, from a letter in 1834, amplifies Mrs Philip's ethic.

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[78] JP24.
[79] JP8.

> We have much cause to bless God for the mercies he is continually showering upon us. He is pleased to favour us with a considerable measure of health, and to furnish with abundance of occupation in discharging the duties of the Station we are called to fill. Much of my time is certainly occupied by secular business but then it [spares] my husbands more valuable time to be employed on the Spiritual duties of his Station so that I have never to think my labour is not altogether in vain.[80]

From these extracts it is apparent that Mrs Philip was very concerned about being a recipient of God's mercy, and believed that God's mercy could be obtained through secular labour ('the work of our hands') if it was geared towards promoting the acquisition of spirituality. Work (of a tangible nature; hence the emphasis on hands), 'duty' and 'usefulness' are key concepts in these extracts; duty to God and usefulness in God's cause. Mrs Philip was very much a practical women - she was convinced of the worth of practical measures and concrete labours in raising God's cause among the people in Cape Town and the interior not blessed with His mercy. She measured her behaviour by a non-earthly standard and did not find it lacking.

Duty, usefulness and hard work were therefore common themes in Mrs Philip's letters. The way in which she used the terms 'duty' and 'usefulness' however, indicates the presence in her mind of a moral universe into which only certain people had access. Jane Philip's children and grandchildren were constantly being admonished to be useful. When William ran away to sea she wrote, "Grant me the Salvation of his soul, and if possible that he may be useful in this world in promoting the Saviour's cause", when John wished to become a printer on a missionary station she wrote "but he has many opportunities of being useful in town if he is disposed to avail himself of them", and she wrote directly to Wilberforce that "now is the time that you should employ in laying up a stock of knowledge to fit you for

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[80] JP11.

future usefulness".[81] With reference to Eliza's marriage to John Fairbairn she wrote, "I cannot but hope she will also be useful to him in many respects", and with reference to the returning daughter of a Dutch minister, "I hope she may be useful - there is considerable opportunity if she is so disposed in connection with her father's congregation".[82] 'Useful' and related concepts featured repeatedly in her letters, and it always implied some action that could be performed in the service of God.[83]

When Mrs Philip wrote about her children, in the extracts quoted above, none had yet attained the state of being truly useful. This comment about William to Miss Wills is revealing: "I am very hap' y to say that we have met him much improved. A great deal that was theory has given place to practical efforts".[84] It is clear from this comment that Mrs Philip believed that one could best serve God through action.

These comments reveal something about both Mrs Philip's religious ethic, and her own system of categorising people. As revealed in her writing, Mrs Philip and her husband regularly performed the duties that were expected of them. In her letters 'useful' and 'duty' had different connotations, with the former being used to describe theory not transmitted into action, while 'duties' were used to describe belief put into action. In this way Mrs Philip represented herself and her husband as the two certain inhabitants of her moral universe. She and Dr Philip had already obtained the means of grace and mercy - they had fulfilled the criteria for individual salvation. Mrs Philip's own personal discourse stressed hard work and usefulness as the route to God's mercy. In her frequent references to

[81] JP7, 26, 22.
[82] JP8, 38.
[83] JP7, 8, 9, 16, 24, 26, 28, 38, 40.
[84] JP48.

usefulness and duty she was both articulating and creating this discourse and laying claim to her inclusion in the moral universe created by it. This discourse then functioned on two levels - the one I have already discussed - and the one in which she was providing prior justification for her failure to conform to gender stereotypes in which women were supposed to be passive recipients rather than active propagators. She had arrived at this subconscious justification through the very material results of her labours. Through the work she did she had fulfilled the conditions her ethic required for entry into the kingdom of God.

This conviction also had the result of cc :vincing Mrs Philip of her own innate superiority over most people, excluding her husband. This sense of moral superiority displayed itself everywhere in Jane Philip's language. Not for her the plural personal pronoun, or the masculine personal pronoun, when referring to the things the Philip's had achieved. Mrs Philip regularly used the single personal pronoun when referring to work done. She was even able to use it with reference to commanding her husband: "I wish very much Dr Philip to visit you" (and he did).[85] All of the quotations I used to indicate the sort of work she was doing are also strongly indicative of Mrs Philip's guiding hand. Furthermore, Mrs Philip was often prone, in her letters to her children, to write in the voice of an authoritative parent. Her letters to them often contained lists of instructions to be performed, and commands to be executed. She was quite at ease in a position of authority.

Mrs Philip worked very hard and had every justification for being so confident in her own abilities. However, this confidence and moral superiority was not the sum total of her

[85] JP4.

personality. Sometimes this edifice slipped, and showed a more vulnerable side. This is particularly evident in situations when Mrs Philip was removed from her sphere of employment, and when she was writing to Miss Wills. Within the bosom of her family her behaviour was not always the result of extreme self-possession. As certain as she was of her children's need to improve their characters, she also loved them dearly. She was very upset when Eliza died at the age of 28 and wrote, "The loss of Eliza though now eight months since is felt as keenly as ever".[86] She was also a proud mother: "However I shall cherish the hope that you may yet make me pleased that I am your mother - I had almost written proud but I knew it was wrong and substituted another word more in consistence with the Spirit of the Gospel."[87] When her husband was away, she missed him tremendously: "My heart has at times nearly sunk within me during the absence of my husband".[88] This is a very different character to the one admonishing her children to usefulness (which she did at a remove from her children).

Much of this side of her character was revealed in her letters to Miss Wills. It is as if Mrs Philip felt that she could reveal the more vulnerable side of her character because her friend did not require to be reassured by the show of strength which is apparent in Mrs Philip's letters to her children. This is particularly apparent in the letters she wrote to Miss Wills about the Philip's returning to London. These reveal how taxing her duties and the Dr Philip's growing unpopularity, both at the Cape and with the LMS Directors, were on her spirit.

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[86] JP28.
[87] JP34.
[88] JP17.

This contradiction in Jane Philip's behaviour and character was echoed in her equivocal perception of women. On the one hand, she recognised that women were inferior creatures to men, and unless properly occupied, a burden to society. She was quite emphatic on the subject of the sort of education future missionary wives ought to receive. Her requirements were outlined in a letter to Miss Wills.

> and while a good education is exceedingly desirable it should be united with all house [ ] duties and a strict attention paid to the useful every day duties which females are born to attend to. I am always much grieved when I see Missionaries wives who require their husbands constant attendance and who instead of being an assistance to them in their [ ] or duties as Missionaries hinder them by taking up their time in attending to domestic concerns. I hope usefulness may be impressed upon their minds as the great aim of their lives.[89]

In this extract it is apparent that Mrs Philip ascribed to view in v ich women were first and foremost intended to be helpmeets to their husband. Women, in her view, were 'born' to particular roles, and to particular spheres of occupation. This was in line with contemporary gender ideology, which in this case was tempered by the belief that women also ought to be useful. However, when considering particular cases of women who transgressed the boundaries of appropriate female behaviour, it appears as if she had a lot more sympathy and understanding than evinced in this passage. When she was in Grahamstown in 1838 she wrote to Eliza about a mutual acquaintance, "Poor Sarah has I fear made a foolish choice of husband and I should not wonder if she would have *like some others* to support him as well as herself" (my italics).[90] Sarah may have made a foolish choice, but she 'like some others' would be forced into assuming a role that transcended her socially designated sphere of activity.

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[89] JP26.
[90] JP23.

Further awareness of life's realities was displayed in the letter in which she wrote to Miss Wills, enumerating the sorts of occupation available to the latter were Miss Wills to come to the Cape.

> not that the Ladies are unwilling to work but most of them are so cumbered with families - or School or duties of one kind or another that they really have not time to donate to the Societies. Every one of the Ladies connected with the Barrack Street School the Benevolent and tract Societies ...have large families besides several of them on whom depends the entire support of their families...The Treasurer and Secretary of the tract Society have each of them large families to support by keeping Schools you may judge how little time they have[91]

Mrs Philip was aware of the amount of time such work required; she suffered from the same time constraints herself. She understood that the sort of behaviour expected of middle class women was not always a possibility, and so she empathised with her contemporaries who needed to work. Of course the sort of work they did placed them directly into Mrs Philip's moral universe - they have 'duties' - and provided them with a de facto approbation. However, her sympathy for women in childbirth and the surnameless Sarah and the others like her do indicate more support for the women's lot than she was prepared to acknowledge.

So far I have concentrated upon examining the working of Mrs Philip's character, and in particular, the working of gender ideology in her character. Her thinking and self-perception in this respect were also contributed to by her perception of race. It would be inappropriate to Jane Philip's character to discuss perceptions of race and gender as if they were completely separate and so the following discussion should be considered as important to Mrs Philip's consciousness as the preceding.

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[91] JP20.

Mrs Philip's ambivalence about gender and the way gender structures operated in Cape society extended to race and the structuring of racial inequalities. Recent work on the nature of early Cape liberalism has emphasised its expediency. According to Robert Watson, liberalism developed around British concepts of property which did not agree with slavery, while Craig Iannini has challenged Watson's view, ascribing the connection between liberalism and slavery to a desire for greater economic efficiency.[92] In both views, slavery was considered untenable, not because of any philanthropic ideal, but because it was antithetical to concepts of property rights or the successful economic functioning of the colony. The Philips had very little property and money, and although Dr Philip's public agenda in denouncing slavery of all kinds may have had political motivation, Mrs Philip's personal writing was not constrained by external motives. From this point of view, the Philips' anti-slavery views seem to have been motivated by a genuine commitment to eradication of the condition of slavery. Their experience points to a need for more studies of Cape liberalism, and in particular the liberalism of people who operated within a religious discourse.

It is not my intention to discuss the nature of Cape liberalism in any detail, but it is important inasmuch as the Philips were active propagandists of one incarnation of it. This comes through very clearly in Mrs Philip's writing.

> Slavery has been said to reveal its mildest aspect at the Cape but if our newspapers are consulted the numerous convictions of slave owners for the ill treatment of Slaves as well as those that are tried and escape will show that in its mildest form it is very bad - it is not an uncommon thing in the Court for Slaves to steal or commit some other fault that they may get free

[92] Watson, R. The Slave Question, and Iannini, C. 'Slavery, Philanthropy and Hegemony'.

> from their master's service and be condemned to work in chains on the roads as convicts!! Their circumstances speaks volumes.[93]

Together with slavery, Mrs Philip also expressed opinions on Ordinance 49 and 50, as well as the situation on the frontier, and in all cases her concern was manifestly for the non-Europeans. However, Jane Philip's concern for Xhosa and Khoi people was tempered by a conditional acceptance of their faults, relating again to her moral universe. Those Khoi and Xhosa who had not been exposed to Christianity were described with the adjective 'poor' (relating to spiritual poverty).[94] Khoi and Xhosa who had come into contact with the missionaries were in an infinitely advanced state because they had come into contact with the means of grace.

For Mrs Philip, the means of grace was symbolised by European clothing and attention to missionary preaching. She revealed her opinion of other Africans by mentioning where they stood in regard to European clothing. In 1831 she distributed a "few of your dresses to the poor children in Town", and in 1838 Fingoes were "poor creatures lying around the fire in a miserable state".[95] These 'poor creatures' were "living in their native huts and dress" - but were nevertheless living at Bethelsdorp and waiting to receive (implication) European clothing.

Blacks who had come into contact with the means of grace and rejected it were, however, damned - what Mrs Philip called "the disgusting shamelessness of the Caffer men". In the same paragraph of the above letter Mrs Philip explained such a statement from the mouth of an avowed liberal.

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[93] JP8 (1831).
[94] JP9, 23.
[95] JP9, 23.

> But all these difficulties are nothing to the disgusting shamelessness of the Caffer men. The women are covered but the men do not even make a pretence of covering I am not surprised at Sir Benjamin being disgusted to pronounce them as irreclaimable - nothing but a belief in the [revering] influence of religion upon the mind and a firm belief in the promise of God that all nations shall bow down before him and serve him could support the mind while living in such a state of Society....I do not however think them irreclaimable though I feel that in the nature of things the Gospel has more [ ] obstacles to overcome than in other more civilised states of Society. However the grace of God can overcome even this difficulty and we have been glad to meet Christian Caffers at Mr Brownlees clothed and hearing with attention the word of God.[96]

Mrs Philip was ambivalent about her perceptions of Africans. On the one hand she was not surprised at Sir Benjamin's opinion of them, and on the other she (quite emphatically) did not think them irreclaimable. This particular word is interesting because it implies a contest - from what or where were the missionaries reclaiming the Xhosa? 'Disgusting shamelessness' appears to have been part of this answer; if this was the case then Xhosa women were closer to being reclaimed than Xhosa men.

Jane Philip had at least two voices for describing Africans. On one hand "the poor natives" and on the other the "disgusting shamelessness of Caffer men". In the same letter she wrote of a meeting between her husband and Chief Makoma (see references in chapter three and four), at the residence of C.L. Stretch, the government agent in the Ceded Territory: "Mokoma came with leather trousers and a water proof Cloak and [Tyhali] with his Kaross. This morning I see they have both got their Tiger Skin Karosses on but it is to be hoped that they will dress before dinner". For anyone familiar with Mrs Philip's discourse, this comment must have been very revealing. Apart from any question about

[96] JP25.

Makoma's own understanding of the symbolic value of European clothing, and changing between it and African clothing, it is apparent that Mrs Philip was very ambivalent about Makoma himself. Although he was meeting with her husband and other missionaries, she did not approve of him, which becomes apparent in a comment at the end of the same letter: "I fear Mokomas mind is in danger of losing all feeling through a love of all intoxicating liquors. His conscience condemns him but he goes on still".[97]

This second voice was only apparent on a few occasions such as the one above, when she and her husband had travelled to the eastern frontier at the end of 1838. Here, her experience of Africans was such that they burst beyond the confines of a voice that insisted on most occasions in describing the Khoi and the Xhosa as objects of pity. In such cases it is interesting that the Africans who challenged her discourse were always men. Most of the time, however, her references to non-whites were couched in the same sort of language, where the biggest difference she recognised was among people who had converted and those who had not.

Eliza Fairbairn

Eliza Philip married John Fairbairn, editor of the South African Commercial Advertiser, in 1831 when she was 19 and he 37 (Jane Philip was 39). Eleven years later she died shortly after giving birth to their fourth child. Her life is interesting because of whose daughter she was and what she tried to be. Eliza's letters are scattered around the country in various different collections. I have been able to study two letters written by her shortly after her

[97] JP25.

engagement to John Fairbairn, and four written in the mid 1830's to her sister, Mary Christie, in England, as well as two letters to her friend Mary Anne Smith in Britain in 1838. In addition, a letter from her father to Eliza is also available.[98]

Eliza seems to have been a person universally loved. The volume of correspondence alone addressed to her, and by people she had encountered only briefly, is indicative of this. Some of her closest friends were Mary-Anne and Emma Foulger (later Mary-Anne Smith), the daughters of the Foulgers with whom the Philips stayed when they were in Britain. Mary-Anne used to address Eliza as "my beloved and precious sister", "my loved friend" and evidently considered Eliza in the light of an elder sister and confidant.[99] When she died in 1841, Mary-Anne wrote to John Fairbairn, "She was the most intimate heart friend whom I ever possessed".[100] Emma felt similarly towards Eliza as Mary-Anne did: "My beloved Eliza, my own friend... I know I liked you when you were with us, but I was not certain that I really & truly loved you. There is no such doubt now."[101]

Eliza's own letters reveal an intelligent and witty author who was not resistant to displaying her humour in her letters.

> I really feel quite ashamed of this letter but I think you ought to be pleased first because I have given up my own will to write it - though Mrs Rutherfoord tells me she let Mr R see all her faults before her marriage & as self will is one of mine I suppose I ought to let you see it & in the second place it is quite full of my self which you are in duty bound to consider a most interesting subject.[102]

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[98] Eliza's letters are in the Fairbairn Family Papers, A663, Historical Papers Department at the University of the Witwatersrand, the Rutherfoord Collection in the South African Library MSB412 (29 March 1838 and 10 May 1839), and in the Cory Library, Grahamstown, MS6154-6157 (16 July 1836, 8 September 1836, 16 February 1837 and 9 March 1838). I have not dealt with her correspondence in great detail.
[99] Cory MS6094 and MS6100.
[100] Cory MS6143.
[101] Cory MS6136.
[102] Wits A663.

Despite this eloquence and all the affection in which she was held, Eliza lacked self-confidence and did not feel secure in other people's regard for her. In a letter written to Mary-Anne in 1831 she had obviously indicated a dissatisfaction with the frequency of Mary-Anne's letters to her, and had attributed it to her offending Mary-Anne. Mary-Anne's reply assured her of the contrary: "And now once for all assure yourself that I have never thought your letters or remarks in the slightest degree unkind."[103] Eliza's insecurity emerges elsewhere. In a letter to Fairbairn soon after their engagement she wrote, "I feel that any thing I could say would be so utterly unworthy of your perusal".[104] In 1836, in a letter to her sister she felt "stupid and useless".

Eliza's insecurity appears to stem from the feeling she had of her own inferiority. Despite being intelligent and articulate - which her letters were when she was not depressed - and despite the humour in her character - her consciousness was structured around a perception of herself as unworthy. Mrs Philip may have had an abundance of self-confidence, but this did not transmit itself to her daughter. Eliza Philip may not have been as emotionally strong as her mother and as equal to the task of creating her own self-worth, but these are not sufficient reasons for her evident unhappiness, her frustration and the petulance that sometimes revealed itself in her letters. Jane Philip had a character in which she managed to accommodate the demands of being a woman in a society which designated women as inferior, with activities which were inappropriate to those demands - and she had done so successfully. Eliza was not as successful in negotiating her wants with the demands on her as a woman, and this is the root of her frustration.

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[103] Cory MS6116.
[104] Wits A663.

I come back to the letter her father wrote her in 1830. It was apparently in response to a letter in which Eliza expressed her determination to become a school teacher.

> I am glad that you saw it to be your duty not to engage in the school without my sanction; ...To speak freely with you on this point, I have objections to the scheme you propose which must be solved before I can be satisfied to give it my countenance.
>
> In the first place it is my decided opinion that you are too young and your character and principles not sufficiently formed to qualify you for becoming the Mrs of a school without doing yourself a serious injury...
>
> Secondly: It will inflict a positive injury upon your mind and manners. Your mind is not yet sufficiently expanded and you have need of some pursuits to favour its development...but this is not all in your manners as a Lady you have nothing to lose. You are still in want of that nameless ease, that self command, that light society, that grace in company and in conversation which give to Woman her liveliness, her Empire: and as the Mrs. of a school you not only would not advance beyond what you now are: but you would most certainly retrograde.
>
> There remains another objection to be noticed. Your dearest friends have ever regretted in your character a fondness for display, which if ever you are to be anything must be constantly checked...if you wish for future respectability and comfort, make yourself sensible of your own deficiencies...[105]

Dr Philip may have written in Eliza's best interests; however the impact of this list of criticisms on Eliza must have been quite severe. Eliza had an independent spirit which I think was broken by her family's solicitous reminders of her self-will, which was a trait completely antithetical to the spirit of evangelical religious ideology (which advocated self-denial).

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[105] John Philip to Eliza Philip, quoted in Una Long, Index, p.149-150.

Eliza became just like her mother, but without the saving grace of a self-confidence which could draw her attention away from herself.[106] She could not break out of the identity created for her as a woman by society. For whatever reasons, she lacked the wherewithal to challenge the gender stereotype that left her so frustrated. In 1838 she wrote to her friend Mary Anne Smith: "But cleaning fish, & saucepans & candlesticks now & then have a sad tendency to destroy the fine polish of our feelings. There is a sad feeling of stern reality creeps over me sometimes as I ask myself - *is this the all of life*".[107] Clearly she wanted more, but had not the spiritual or social wherewithal to achieve it. For whatever reasons, Eliza Fairbairn clearly did not receive as much from life as her mother did.

THE PERSONAL WRITING OF BRITISH WOMEN IN CAPE TOWN: GOVERNMENT CIRCLES

A degree removed from this religious circle (but intersecting with it at times) were the wives and daughters of English government officials and prominent government employees at the Cape, who tended to limit their involvement in the philanthropic societies to their yearly subscriptions. These women were part of the middle class elite at the Cape - an elite which consisted of the bureaucracy, the landed elite, the professional elite and the military elite.[108] Most of them were only temporary residents at the Cape, remaining as long as their husbands' postings, if the latter were part of the government, the army or the

[106] Eliza did not expect a proposal from Fairbairn until it happened (A663), and her mother was very enthusiastic about the marriage (JP8).
[107] SAL MSB412. I am very grateful to Kirsten McKenzie for this reference.
[108] Bradlow, E. 'The Culture of a Colonial Elite', p.389.

navy. Some, whose husbands' took up professional, government appointed positions at the Cape remained longer.

The writing of these women falls into two categories - travel accounts and letters home. Government wives, especially the wives of officials who travelled a lot, were a category of women who tended to write a fair amount, and to make their travel descriptions available for publication. Into this category falls Lady Jane Franklin, whose journal of a visit to Cape Town has been published by Brian and Nancy Warner.[109] In the latter category were people like Mrs Mary Maclear, Lady Margaret Herschel and Sarah Le Mesurier.[110]

Mary Maclear

Mary Maclear was the wife of Thomas Maclear, Royal Astronomer at the Cape. The Maclears arrived at the Cape in 1834, after Thomas Maclear had been appointed to superintend the royal observatory. They took up residence at the Observatory in Cape Town, where they were to remain until after Mrs Maclear's death in 1862. The Maclears had an extensive family and Mary Maclear's time was spent looking after this family as well as the various visitors that constantly filled the Observatory. This was not always easy for her - she was almost wholly deaf and not very strong.

In addition to her domestic duties Mrs Maclear also wrote extensively - diaries chronicling every day occurrences and letters to her family and friends providing a narrative of what

[109] Warner, B. and N. eds. The Journal of Lady Jane Franklin at the Cape of Good Hope (Cape Town: Friends of the South African Library, 1985).
[110] See Appendix One for a summary of my references to women's writing.

was happening at the Cape. One of her particular friends was Lady Margaret Herschel[111], who together with her husband Sir John Herschel was resident at the Cape between 1834 and 1838. When the Herschels left the Cape Mrs Maclear continued to write to Lady Herschel. These letters are very interesting because they represent a correspondence between two people who were both familiar with circumstances at the Cape. In addition to Lady Herschel, Mrs Maclear also wrote to her sisters, brother and father in Britain.

Thomas and Mary Maclear were the parents of a large and expanding family. When they arrived at the Cape the Maclears had five daughters (one was to die shortly after their arrival). In addition their household was supplemented by a governess, Miss Geard, a female servant, and Maclear's assistant, Thomas Bowler - who was later to gain fame as a commercial artist. Once they had settled at the Observatory the numbers of the household expanded to include several servants and any number of visitors. After 1834 the Maclears had three more daughters and four sons.

Although the Observatory was rent free, the number of people living in it at any one time seems to have placed a financial strain on the Maclears. Mrs Maclear certainly felt so and remarked upon it several times by commenting upon their "limited income" and the "insufficient state of our finances".[112] As Royal Astronomer, Maclear was earning only £600 p.a. and in 1835 the Maclear basic household expenses totalled £560.[113] £600 was a comparatively little sum on which to exist, compared to the expenditure of other households in this elite bracket - the Herschels were living on approximately £1500 p.a.[114]

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[111] See Erlank, N. 'Circulating at the Cape', for a discussion of this correspondence.
[112] MM2, MM12, MM37 and MM40.
[113] CA 515 Maclear-Mann Papers.
[114] Erlank, N. 'Circulating in Cape Town', p.100.

There appears to be a pattern to Mary Maclear's comments about their financial situation. Mary Maclear was clearly concerned about the Maclear family finances, but inasmuch as the Maclears had a lower standard of living than they might have liked. The Maclears could afford carriage hire according to their financial breakdown, but seemed to have found this a strain and preferred to use their friends' carriages, using first the Herschels and later the Montagus.[115] Mrs Maclear wrote to her brother on this subject: "We have no carriage yet; we have no proper accommodation for one, or for a coachman, or stabling for horses and therefore we are obliged to hire and as this is expensive I always try to avoid it" (though not always).[116] They could also not afford to send their sons to the newly opened South African College for schooling.[117] It was not that they could nc afford transport or schooling; they could not afford the quality of either that they would have liked. Social insecurity, rather than financial insecurity seems to have been behind Mrs Maclear's money worries.

In one of her earliest letters home, Mary Maclear wrote to her father that "we are likely to have as much or rather more society than we can well manage and of a higher grade than perhaps we have left, but we propose living in the same homely way we did at Biggleswade."[118] This comment reveals Mrs Maclear's cognisance of social hierarchy in Cape Town, as well as the Maclears' standing in relation to this (as well as a difference with the relative lack of attention to hierarchy among church women). In a letter to her

[115] Erlank, N. 'Circulating in Cape Town', p.100. Also MM35 and MM36. The Maclear house accounts for both 1835 and 1853 included a category of expense for carriage hire (A515/77).
[116] MM2.
[117] MM37. Instead they brought in a tutor, who proved inadequate.
[118] MM1.

brother, two months later, she wrote about "the chief families in the neighbourhood", clearly including the Maclear's in this category.[119]

The Maclears certainly were mingling with some of the Cape elite. They were acquainted with all the succession of governors supplying the Cape, and with their families, though Mrs Maclear had differing opinions of them. She disapproved of the D'Urbans, particularly their daughter (whom she felt was a flirt).[120] She was much more complimentary towards the Napiers: "The Napiers are to sail on Monday next - we are sorry to lose them for they have both ever been most kind to us individually".[121] She was similarly complimentary about the Smiths: "the Governor and Lady Smith seem to give great satisfaction - as a Governors wife she is admirable and appears to great advantage".[122]

The Maclears were also acquainted with many of the chief military families at the Cape. More of their friends seem to have been drawn from this circle than the government elite. They were familiar (or "intimate" as Mrs Maclear preferred to say) with a succession of admirals to the Cape and regularly had staying with them army and navy officers stationed at the Cape. In addition to these circles, the Observatory also attracted both amateur and professional scientists of all persuasions who were resident at the Cape. They were, however, not especially friendly with any of the merchant elite. The circles they moved in seemed to have been determined by Thomas Maclear's work and contacts; hence the strong scientific and naval element to their acquaintances. Mrs Maclear had few female

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[119] MM2.
[120] MM15, MM19.
[121] MM26.
[122] MM37.

friends of her own - she was probably constrained by a large family, little money for servants to care for her children, and her deafness. Interestingly enough, her daughters (in the 1840's and 1850's) were friendly with the younger Fairbairns and Rutherfoords , which would indicate at least their ties with the evangelical network in Cape Town.[123]

Given the circles in which the Maclears moved, it is not surprising that Mrs Maclear may have felt some anxiety about maintaining social appearances on a limited income. Entertaining especially, must have been a drain on the Maclear finances. As I referred to above, the Maclears often had staying with them a succession of navy and army officers: "In addition to our own little one [their son William] we have had Lieut Williams for the last month & altogether the household numbers two & twenty for an old friend not liking to be separated from the Williamses - a Lieut Nelson... is here also & the whole party are to remain at the Obsy until they embark for England".[124]

Their visitors were not always friends. The Observatory was one of the chief attractions to visitors to the Cape, and was frequently visited by people wishing to learn about astronomy in the southern skies. In May 1836 Captain Fitzroy of the Beagle and the naturalist on board, Charles Darwin, visited the Observatory.[125] In November of the same year Sir John Franklin, the in-going governor of Van Diemen's Land, and his wife Lady Jane Franklin, visited the Observatory. Their party fared badly at lunch, not all of them being fed sufficiently. After the lunch Mrs Maclear requested an interview with Lady Franklin, who wrote about it in her diary: "Her object in sending for me was to apologise

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[123] I am grateful to Elizabeth van Heyningen for pointing this out to me.
[124] MM15.
[125] A fuller account of the visit is to be found in Warner, B. Lady Herschel: Letters from the Cape 1834-1838 (Cape Town: Friends of the South African Library, 1991) pp.114-118.

for the dinner; she said she had just lost her cook & had been obliged to do without, & pleaded her excuses with so much naiveté & sweetness, that I was ready to feel quite touched".[126] It is possible that the inadequate lunch was the result of a lack of money rather than the absence of a cook.

Mrs Maclear's social anxiety seems to have been caused by more than the inability to maintain material social appearances to the degree she would have preferred. Her discourse provides more information on this. In her language, descriptions of people's behaviour, character and physical appearance function as subconscious measures of social standing. In her hierarchy the adjectives 'disgusting' and 'vulgar' and 'worthless' marked the lower end of the scale, while 'beautiful' and 'excellent' marked the upper end of the scale. In 1835 Mrs Maclear wrote to her father to appraise him of the dismissal of Maclear's assistant, Thomas Bowler.

> he has had a sad drawback in his late more than worthless assistant, who hardly made one correct observation or one right computation with his Instrument. It is indescribable the annoyance this personage has been to him in various ways. It is to be regretted those who found the situation for him, were so ignorant of his incapacity. Yet Mr Henderson speaks of him in the brightest terms! Anne probably told you of the improper servant he kept - some very disgusting circumstances have been communicated to Maclear by gentlemen who were better acquainted with her character than we were.[127]

He was, also, according to Thomas Maclear, "slothful dirty...besides he is impudent & designing".[128] Bowler was an embarrassment to the Maclears. It appears as if he had been rude to Sir John Herschel on several occasions, for which Maclear was very apologetic to

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[126] Warner, B. and N. The Journal of Lady Jane Franklin, p.14.
[127] MM5.
[128] Warner, N. and B. Maclear and Herschel - Letters and Diaries at the Cape of Good Hope, 1834-1838 (Cape Town: Balkema, 1984) p.95.

the latter.[129] Bowler was a potential social embarrassment to the Maclears, and they obviously felt that his behaviour might reflect on themselves. It seems to be for this reason (rather than any other) that Thomas Maclear fired him. While there are few references to other servants in Mrs Maclears letters, it is clear that she had not a very high opinion of them, and tended to use derogatory language when referring to them.

At the other end of the scale were those characters whom Mrs Maclear found either excellent or beautiful. Andrew Smith, the explorer was "our excellent friend", their fourth daughter's husband had "an excellent character", while there was "something - excellency" about a Mr Andersson's character.[130] These men were all, Mrs Maclear's writing implied, excellent for the qualities of their minds.

When Mrs Maclear was writing about women of whom she approved, her choice of phrasing was different. Mrs Elliot, wife of the new admiral, "was once loveliness itself" while her daughter "was esteemed a beauty".[131] A Mrs Jones was "a conspicuous ornament" and a "very fine beautiful woman".[132] Mrs Maclear's description of Lady Smith, which I referred to earlier, contains the same sort of phrasing.

Mary Maclear's phraseology reveals something of her perception of the relations between sexes. Middle class and upper middle class men were accorded the accolade 'excellent' in her writing - and it seems her thinking as well. Lower class men, and servants more generally when she mentioned them, were vulgar and disgusting - both in their mental and physical habits. However, while the mark of superiority in middle and upper class women

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[129] Warner, N. and B., Maclear, pp.66-67.
[130] MM11, 41, 44 and several others.
[131] MM16.
[132] MM22.

may have lain in their characters, Mrs Maclear unconsciously displayed her approval of them by referring to their beauty or suitability as ornaments. She divided people socially first on the basis of their class, and within these divisions she saw men as superior to women.

Mrs Maclear appears to have been strongly influenced by middle class gender stereotypes, cut through by her own feelings of inadequacy. Her characterisation of female worth as physical beauty, rather than intellectual capability indicates a self conscious of gender stereotyping. Given the extent of the role that she played in her own family, she must have been aware that she was not conforming to her own perceptions of desirable femininity. Mrs Maclear may not have done her husband's astronomical plots for him (as Lady Herschel did for Sir John) but she was an equal partner in the relationship. In his books on Maclear, and on Charles Piazzi Smythe (one of Maclear's assistants) Brian Warner has referred to the number of hours Maclear worked, and to the amount of time it perforce separated him from his family. Regardless of any help Mrs Maclear may have had from governesses or servants, she was still very often the nominal head of her household. These duties and responsibilities sat ill with her understanding of femininity and explain to a large extent, what Warner has referred to as the petulant tone in much of her writing. Certainly Mrs Maclear was coy, patronising on occasion and inconsistent. Her behaviour, however, is understandable when viewed from her perspective. She was a woman placed sometimes in a man's role, which was in direct conflict with her sense of propriety.

Perhaps even more importantly, she was frequently separated from her husband. She regularly referred to these absences in a flippant manner: "the days of widowhood for me

are drawing near", "my dear Husband who is on a short visit to me".[133] However, her diaries reveal a different attitude

> Sat 28th: Becoming very weary, weather warm - walking - on finding no chance of Maclear arriving tonight - my spirits have completely failed me
>
> Sun 29th: Maclear came early this morning - we went to Church and afterwards started homewards - one of the happiest days.[134]

Not only then was Mrs Maclear conscious of her behaviour being inappropriate to her standards, but she was frequently husbandless. Combined with almost complete deafness and constant childbearing, her spirits were understandably low. She was also hampered by having no particular woman friend after Lady Herschel left, and her vague attempts to patronise other women always failed.

There is one other point that should be noted about Mrs Maclear. When she wrote - to her friend Lady Herschel, to her relatives - she very seldom mentioned her children in any great detail. Her longest descriptions were of her sons, and only when they were looking for professions. She seemed to be uninterested in her children as infants and adolescents and this is apparent in her writing. Her absence of references to her children is very surprising compared to the number of references to their children by the other women I discuss.

It is difficult to write about Mrs Maclear's perception of race, because race was seldom a factor she considered when categorising people. Even her few comments about her servants were free from a consideration of their race. Her world was white and tied up

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[133] MM18 and MM26.
[134] A515.

with middle class social categories and perceptions. However, on several occasions she referred to the Frontier Wars and her comments in these instances provide some evidence of her race perceptions. She was almost certainly a Cape liberal (whatever that means). She seldom used the word 'savage' which was a favourite term of disapprobium among Europeans living on the colony's borders. She preferred a stance of neutrality: "we feel greatly for all the wretched sufferers, truly & sincerely hoping matters will after this war be more wisely settled both as regards the Colonists & Caffirs".[135] Her life was not affected enough by people of a different race to prioritise it her perception of categories involved in social status.

THE 'ERSONAL WRITING OF BRITISH WOMEN IN CAPE TOWN: MERCHANT DAUGHTERS

Margaret Findlay and Anne Bertram Barker

Margaret Findlay and Anne Barker were the daughters of John Findlay, sometime merchant and ship's captain who made and lost money transporting cargoes of goods between Britain and the East. The Findlays were originally based in London but had moved to the Cape in 1821 when Margaret was fifteen and Anne nine. In 1826 the girls moved back to London with their mother, where they attended Miss Mien's Academy.[136] In 1830 they returned to the Cape, where Anne married John Barker, an attorney and friend of their brother George. She, her husband and her sister moved into a house in Cape

[135] MM29.
[136] Findlay, J. ed. The Findlay Letters (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1954) p.22.

Town called Helmsley Cottage, in Hof Street just above the Gardens. [137] Both Findlay sisters had short lives; Anne died in November 1838 aged 26 and Margaret in December aged 32 - both of unspecified illnesses.[138]

The Findlays were very connected with some of the other women I research in this thesis. Anne and Margaret's brother, George, had son called John who married Kate Schreiner, sister of Olive. The Schreiners were also related to the Rollands, whom I discuss at some length in the chapter on missionary wives. The Findlays were therefore typical of one of those newly established English families at the Cape who came to have links and contacts with all sectors of Cape society.[139]

Anne Barker and her sister Margaret wrote letters regularly to their brother George after he left Cape Town to make his fortune in Van Diemen's Land. Between them they wrote only twelve letters, but these are fascinating because the Findlay sisters were inveterate gossips. In writing to someone so close to them and someone so familiar with the Cape social scene they seemed to have felt no need to be circumspect in any of their writing. Their letters therefore chronicle, not only social events, but comment indirectly on the functioning of society at the Cape. It is a pity their letters only cover a few years in the 1830's, because they gossip unlike any of the other women I discuss.

In Cape Town the Findlays formed part of the commercial element in the broader middle class; certainly their cousin George was, and when their brother returned to the Cape this

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[137] Their property was rented from one J. Fleck (Laburn, C. 'The Cape Town Street Directory for 1830', Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1991).
[138] CA MOOC 6/9/14, 3009 and 3088.
[139] Descendants of these Findlays formed a law firm in Cape Town called "Findlay and Tait" which still practises today.

was the sub-class into which he fitted; John Barker was also a member of this group. However, the Findlays' closest friends were members of the merchant elite. They were closest to the Billingsleys, the Greigs ("our friend the printer and lady and son"[140]), the Winters, the Hendersons and the Fairbridges.[141] The two former have been identified as members of the merchant elite by Digby Warren, the Winters and the Hendersons were families involved in shipping as were the Findlays and Billingsleys; the Fairbridges were a local medical family.[142] The Findlay sisters often stayed with the Billingsleys, especially during the hot Cape summers when Helmsley Cottage became unbearable: "You will see by the head of my letter that we are at Newlands and again with our kind friends for such they have been to me, the Billingsleys, but have only a fortnight longer to remain, I am sorry to say...it has been much pleasanter for us this summer...".[143]

This interaction between the Findlays and their potential social superiors is important, both for an understanding of Anne and Margaret's consciousness, and also for what it reveals about social interaction in Cape Town just before the middle of the nineteenth century. The communication and friendship between these two groups calls, as Robert Ross has done, for a closer scrutiny of the relationship between these groups - and particularly a scrutiny of their relationship outside of business affairs.[144] Such an analysis would take even further Warren's critique of Tony Kirk on increasing polarisation between these two middle class elements during the 1840's, over various economic and political issues.[145] However, although Warren mentions socialising between the merchant elite and the

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[140] Findlay1.
[141] The Billingsleys are mentioned most often of their friends (Findlay1,2,4,5,10,11,12).
[142] Warren, D. 'Merchants', p.259.
[143] Findlay1.
[144] Ross, R. 'Structure and culture'.
[145] Warren, D. 'Merchants', p.45-46.

government elite, he does not recognise the existence of social ties between these two elements and the more commercial sectors of the middle class.[146] The ties the Findlays had with the merchant elite indicate a large degree of social co-operation, at least for them, between these two groups and particularly within the contact that existed between women.

In her first letter to her brother Margaret wrote "you want me to tell you all the news. We are rather short of that commodity at present".[147] In a further letter she used the same phrasing again: "I suppose I must now tell you some town news".[148] 'News' and 'town news' were often present in her letters, a trend which Anne followed, though to a lesser extent. Quite specifically, this news was seldom personal information. In a letter written after her sister's illness, Margaret wrote "You will perhaps be tired of reading this letter of miserables and think there is *no news* [my italics] in it. If so forgive me for having trespassed so long on your time, but I thought a particular account of ourselves would not prove uninteresting to my brother".[149] From this extract it is apparent that Margaret did not consider personal news as interesting news. Her letters seldom contained any detailed information on family events, and her longest account of family news was a description of her sister's near death. It seems as if she was insecure about her own worth (she almost never discusses herself) and about the worth of her immediate family. This translated into a paucity of family news even in letters to her brother. Anne was obviously a bit more secure than Margaret in this respect because her letters contain that much more home news.

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[146] Ibid, p.228.
[147] Findlay1.
[148] Findlay2.
[149] Findlay11.

Family news was overshadowed by an overwhelming amount of information on the movement and action of the rest of Cape Town's inhabitants. In Margaret's thinking, newsworthy information came from relating social events or 'town news'. This news was made up from the accounts of marriages, deaths, financial insolvencies, fraud, dinner parties and balls. The latter received several mentions in the letters, and, together with visiting their friends and trips to Paarl, were the only social events mentioned by the Findlays. Marriages were overwhelmingly the most frequently mentioned social event in the Findlays' letters. The most striking feature of both Anne and Margaret's letters is the number of references they make to marriage - people about to be married and people who married, as well as to people who were jilted.

In seven letters between 1833 and 1838 Margaret referred to 31 marriages (at least four per letter) and over the same period, in five letters Anne referred to 24 (almost five per letter). These references are found more often than not in the form of lists encompassing whole paragraphs.

> Did you know Miss Ferries. She was married yesterday to Mr Smuts, son of old rich Smuts, Miss Alicia Oakes to Mr Hart, Miss Henderson to Mr Hodgskin and the youngest Miss Marshall to Mr Dumergue. They sailed last week for India. But all these did not take place yesterday, only Miss Ferries. By the bye I forgot Miss Caroline Rex is united to Lieutenant Duthie of the 72nd and they have gone to England. Alex Chiapinni is to be married in May...[150]

In the above list only the Rex's were close friends of the Findlays. The Findlay sisters were not only writing about the marriages of people they knew, they were writing about marriages in Cape Town more generally - a very different type of preoccupation to those shown by the evangelical women and Mrs Maclear.

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[150] Findlay1.

The Findlays' interest in marriage requires explanation. It is possible that Margaret Findlay, an unmarried woman, was preoccupied with the subject of marriage to compensate for the lack of a wedding for herself, since marriage was considered the only suitable career for women at this point.[151] However, given that her married sister mentions marriage almost more, this is not a sufficient explanation.[152] I think their preoccupation with marriage is part of a larger social preoccupation about the nature of middle class society and the rituals which perpetuated it - such as marriage. Caroll Smith-Rosenberg has discussed the sorts of rituals around which women's lives were structured and getting married was one of the most important.[153] Anne Barker, who had no children, and Margaret Findlay, who was unmarried, had no such rituals of their own in which to become involved and so turned their attention to the marriages of their social contemporaries.

The Findlays were resident on the fringes of a social class slightly superior to theirs, and by focusing on the most important tool of social stability they were willing into being a society stable enough to include them. Margaret Findlay and Anne Barker were not guaranteed entree into upper middle class society at the Cape - the social arena in which they mixed. Like the Maclears, they were mixing higher. However their entree was tenuous and their invitations to balls and parties needed to be guaranteed by their total

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[151] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, p.114-117, Smith-Rosenberg, C. 'The Female World of Love and Ritual' p.65.

[152] It is also possible that Margaret and Anne mentioned marriage so much in their letters to their brother because they were hoping he would contemplate marriage. They certainly do want their brother to marry, and mention in particular his friendship with one Helen Christieson. However, as their references to marriage continue after their brother has married I do not think this is a sufficient explanation of their fascination with marriage.

[153] Smith-Rosenberg, C. 'The Female World', p.64.

support of the ideology prevalent in upper middle class circles in Cape Town. I am writing now of dominant ideologies which reveal themselves only at the level of discourse, but I think this point holds true for the way the Findlays felt compelled to write about marriage. That they were aware of the differences in status of people within the middle class at the Cape is apparent from their descriptions of parties and balls. While they mention several in their letters, the longest descriptions are devoted to balls at Government House.

The tenuous social accord achieved between people who had different statuses did sometimes break down, and Margaret and Anne reveal this in their references to death by suicide and by their references to financial insolvency. In 1834 Margaret told her brother about four definite and one possible suicides. Mr Muntingh shot himself in the head after having to surrender his estate, Mr Norgnoy shot himself after the embarrassment of being found embezzling, Mr Lelman drowned himself for debt and Mr Sutterman slit his throat after losing his business.[154] "Poor young Norgnoy is no more, he put an end to his own existence by shooting himself through the heart...it is supposed debt caused him to do it as there was a great deficit with Thompson and Watson".[155]

There were numerous references also to cases of embezzlement and debt which did not end in suicide. These references, on their own, indicate the hardships faced by people who were attempting to maintain their place in society. These cases are interesting, first of all for what they reveal about the Findlays' preoccupation with social happenings, and

[154] Findlay6 and Findlay8.
[155] Findlay8.

secondly for what they reveal about Cape society in the 1830's. Marriages were a symbol of the continuance of the social order, but attention also needed to be paid to social shortcomings like financial embarrassment. These were a reminder of life beyond the social pale. Margaret and Anne may only have been interested in the effects of financial difficulty, but these situations had a greater immediacy for the people affected by debt. What caused them to embezzle or over-speculate in the first place? It is possible, without knowing the details, that social pressure and the need to maintain certain standards of living in a fiercely competitive society led people to live beyond their means. Some went bankrupt immediately and some staved off bankruptcy through dubious measures. From the references Margaret and Anne made as to the effects of financial solvency, it is apparent that they were concerned for how the families of such men would survive their reduced circumstances.

There is one last point to be made about the attention the Findlays paid to financial insolvencies and suicides. While news of marriages would have been widely known because such things had status as official news, financial insolvencies were not broadcast in the Commercial Advertiser (unless they were reported in associated court cases). Cape Town was a very small world socially and everyone knew everyone else's business. There was no way in which social indiscretions would not become public knowledge - there were no second chances in Cape Town. Social death lay very close.

Margaret and Anne were preoccupied with social concerns connected to their own social status. Class and gender were the categories of difference which configured their perceptions of people. Race was rarely considered as an indicator of differences between

people, principally because race was rarely considered at all. It appears as if the Barkers had black servants but references to them were very brief - one reference each by Margaret and Anne. Apart from that Margaret Findlay gave no indication in her letters of an awareness that she was living in a country where the indigenous inhabitants were black.

Anne Findlay was slightly more aware, but her references to race were all part of discussions on the Seventh Frontier War. Anne wrote to George that Margaret had intended staying the winter in Uitenhage, but "I am glad she did not, as she would have been alarmed at the Caffar War. All the ladies fled from Uitenhage to Algoa Bay....The New Year came in very bad, it was not like New Year."[156] The rest of her account continued in this fashion: she described the effects of Martial Law, which of the English regiments were involved, the stockading of Grahamstown, and the effect of the loss of sheep on the English settlers. From her account it is apparent that her concern over the war lay in its disruption of the fabric of English social life. The comment above on New Year is particularly telling, since her standard of a good New Year was one in which many balls were hosted. In her account of the war she mentioned the Xhosa only once, "The Caffar Force according to accounts vary from 50 000 to 100 000. There is reason to believe the accounts are exaggerated in point of numbers, tho not in the horrid murders and devastations they have committed on lives and property".[157] Even here Anne Findlay was not concerned with any particular characteristic of the Xhosa, but rather with the effect they would have on English and Afrikaans life and property. That was it. It was as if the Findlays still lived in Britain. They were too preoccupied with their own concerns to

[156] Findlay9.
[157] Findlay9.

theorise on the significance of skin colour. Their social perceptions were structured firmly around class.

FEMALE NETWORKS IN CAPE TOWN

In a 1975 article entitled "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America", Caroll Smith-Rosenberg described the phenomena of friendships between middle class women in America during the nineteenth century.[158] "From at least the late eighteenth century through mid-nineteenth century, a female world of varied yet highly structured relationships appears to have been an essential aspect of American society. These relationships ranged from the supportive love of sisters, through the enthusiasms of adolescent girls, to sensual avowals of love by mature women. It was a world in which men made but a shadowy appearance."[159] In Smith-Rosenberg's thesis rigid gender-role differentiation within American society caused the emotional segregation of men and women.[160] This resulted in women spending most of their time in each other's company, duplicating roles as daughters grew up and became mothers themselves. Within this context "a specifically female world did indeed develop, a world built around a generic and unself-conscious pattern of single-sex or homosocial networks".[161]

This world had a number of essential features, some of which are relevant to this study of women in Cape Town. In the first place, Smith-Rosenberg's material is based on letters

[158] Smith-Rosenberg, C. 'The Female World', p.53.
[159] Ibid, p.53.
[160] Ibid, p.60.
[161] Ibid, p.60.

and diaries written by and between middle class women during this period - the correspondence of 35 families between the 1760's and 1880's.[162] These letters and diaries both chronicle and confirm, through their existence, the female networks they describe.

The sort of writing described by Caroll Smith-Rosenberg as characteristic of close female friends is very evident in the writing of Eliza Philip to the Foulgers and vice versa. Although I have not discussed the writing of Emma Rutherfoord in this thesis (because she only started writing in 1854), her letters to her sister are also very reminiscent of this style.[163] Overall, some of the most revealing writing discussed was that written between women. Mrs Philip could be curt to her children but she was never so to Miss Wills.

Letters were as important to the women of Cape Town as they were to American women - perhaps more so because of the very large distances that separated some of the women I discuss. These letters are necessary to understand something of the social world of middle class women in Cape Town and they also provide the paper trail affirming that world to both its inhabitants and outsiders. Women may not have participated widely in the production of a public literate culture but the private literate culture they produced must have been very influential in the lives of the large numbers of people to whom they wrote.

In the second place, Smith-Rosenberg's thesis provides a framework for my discussion of middle class women in Cape Town. From my discussion of the Ladies Benevolent Society it should be apparent that ties of a philanthropic nature bound women from

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[162] Smith-Rosenberg, C. 'The Female World', p.54.
[163] Murray, J.ed. In Mid-Victorian Cape Town: Letters from Miss Rutherfoord (Cape Town: Balkema, 1968).

different elements of the middle class in Cape Town - and in some instances into identifiable networks centred around particular families.[164] Men also participated in these networks, as my discussion of the men's organisations has indicated, but their ties were of a different nature. Networks of a non-philanthropic nature may also have connected other women in Cape Town, but there is less information on them.

The Philips can be viewed as being both at the centre of the largest identifiable family-centred philanthropic network in Cape Town. They were connected with the Fairbairns, Rutherfoords, Watermeyers, Rollands and Schreiners. They even connected (if the connections are traced backwards and forwards) with the Findlays. These networks became more intricate the longer the families were at the Cape. Within these networks, mothers and daughters wrote to each other (Eliza and Jane Philip), daughters wrote to their mother's friends (Eliza Philip to Miss Wills), and friends to one another. Eliza Fairbairn named one of her daughters after Miss Wills, and when Eliza died, Miss Wills wrote to John Fairbairn asking if she could bring up her namesake.[165] Both Eliza and Mary Philip named daughters after their mother. When Wilberforce Philip was sent to Britain in 1844, he was clothed by his sister Mary Christie, and had a school found for him by Miss Wills.[166] When Catherine Schreiner, who was the niece of Elizabeth Rolland and related by marriage to the Findlays, was in town in 1851 she boarded with the Fairbairns and Philips. The women involved in this network did not restrict their writing to their female relatives or friends, but their communication with their male relatives seems to have been of a different nature.

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[164] I am grateful to the participants (principally Elizabeth van Heyningen and Kirsten McKenzie) at a seminar I gave in the History Department at UCT for clarifying my thinking on this.
[165] JP28.
[166] JP44.

These sorts of practices were not peculiar to the Philips and their extended family. Mrs Maclear named her children after the Herschels, and both couples were godparents to each others children. George Findlay named his daughters after his two sisters. Married sisters worked side by side within the LBS, and although its core was solidly religious in outlook people like Lady Margaret Herschel were interested and regular subscribers, while a succession of governor's wives were its patrons. I have tried to follow these connections through into official records; they do not feature. It is only through the letters and diaries of these women that we can access such friendships.

There is another very important point to the female networks, if they can be called such, in Cape Town. They had a very different social geography to the world inhabited by men. These connections, unlike the male middle class world described by Kirsten McKenzie, were centred on women's homes. Women visited each other in their homes, conducted their philanthropic meetings from their homes, and wrote to each other from their homes. They were much more limited than men in what they could do in the public eye - they could only go out in public on their own on select occasions.[167] The coffee houses and public rooms in which men met were taboo territory for women.[168] Perhaps for these reasons, whether or not women did appear in public, their presence in such rarefied space was seldom recognised.

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[167] My study has been focused on women's letters and these were written in private, so perhaps my conclusions are reflective of that rather than any reality. I have also done very little work on women and their pursuit of leisure - and whether, for instance, their were any such pursuits particular to them. This is obviously an area for further study, and I am grateful to Vivian Bickford-Smith for drawing my attention to this.

[168] McKenzie, K. 'The Advertiser', chapter three.

It is also easy to assume, as might be the case for people like Mrs Philip, that not going out into society meant no social contact. If women did not go out into public space, it did not mean that they were socially withdrawn. On the contrary, as my discussion of the amount of control women had in determining the interiors of their homes shows, women's public space - the space in which they were paramount - was in private. Women's networks were physically located in private spaces, the areas over which they held the most control. Obviously men were not restricted to public spaces and women to private, but their influence in each differed. It was a tenet of middle class ideology that the proper sphere of women was the home (however much reality may have been different) and so society could hardly argue when women used that space to establish the same sorts of networks and cultures that men had in the public sphere. However, because private space - the home - was surrounded by an aura of privacy the extent of women's manipulation and control of it went unrecognised. Middle class ideology privileged public space and what happened in public space - what went on in private was not considered, so not considered a threat. It was this same thinking that allowed women to do philanthropic work. It was not considered work because it was so similar to what went on in women's homes.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to discuss something of the experiences and perceptions of individual British middle class women in Cape Town between approximately 1820 and 1850. I have also attempted to discuss something of the nature of relations between women for this period, as well as something of the nature of Cape middle class society. Perhaps one of the most noticeable features of these women was their individuality. In

this section, however, I shall attempt to draw some general conclusions from their experiences.

Although middle class society was cut across by sometimes serious and sometimes minor differences - between the mercantile elite and commercial bourgeoisie for instance - these can be reconceptualised if we start to consider the role and status of British women within this group. Their allegiances were not always the allegiances of their husbands and fathers. The groups they may have formed are invisible to us because they are not chronicled in public records; they met in private space for the most part and in between the requirements of their occupations as wives and mothers. Women went out in public all the time, but they had no recognised influence in this area. Their areas of influence were shaped by the limits of a role centred on the home.

Furthermore, as I have tried to emphasise, for some of these women gender stereotypes which cast women as inferior in public were not rigidly enforced in private. People like Thomas Maclear and Sir John Herschel could not have produced the work they did without the considerable assistance of their wives, and as such they deferred to them at least within private. Mrs Philip was a vital component of the operation of the LMS in Cape Town. Between all these women and their husbands there existed extremely affectionate relations. However, I must stress that these relations and occurrences took place within private spaces; in the public sphere women generally had very little influence or stature as Kirsten McKenzie's work has shown. Religion was a very important element of most of these women's lives, and where women did assume roles in public they did so in an all-women organisation that gained sanction through its religious structure and

foundation. In general, I think that the role of religion and religious belief has been undertheorised in work on Cape society - both for men and women.

While women may have been secure in their female networks and within their families, they also had social lives that played out in public. Under these circumstances - in balls and other public ceremonies - social tension and the possibilities of social ruin (or social success) were very much more evident. The Findlays were obsessed with marriage and their particular social status. They were socialising higher than their own status, and were concerned to maintain their entree into this world. Neither had female relatives nearby, or children which may also explain why so much of their gaze was turned onto the public world. They had different experiences to the evangelical women; society mattered more to them. Within their world middle class status had more to do with personal behaviour and adherence to a particular social code than any other group conferred status. Within these terms membership of the middle class was open to a wide range of people, who could all socialise with one another, but membership could be very tenuous and easily lost. This explains so much of the focus on gradations of class or status within the middle class.

Within this focus on class in public, and gender in private, race was not very much a category that concerned British middle class women, inasmuch as it was not ever a social category that was likely to infringe on their lives in a way which would challenge the social norms already established for Cape Town. This is an important point and perhaps I should explain further. When I began this research I was interested in examining relations between middle class women and their servants. There is surprisingly very little information on this - English women did not write about their servants. When they did,

they made little distinction between their European and non-European servants. They were not interested in their servants, black or white, to the extent that they would have written home about them. Where British middle class women had contact with other non-Europeans, they were all members of the Cape underclass. The latter did not attempt to move into the world inhabited by middle class Capetonians. British women already had a category of inferiority with which to think of non-Europeans; they were all of a lower class. When they do start to conceptualise blackness as its own particular inferiority, it is in response to things like the frontier war of 1834.

Mrs Philip's case is slightly different; her view of race was based on a more potent combination of trait normalisation, but then she had so much more contact with Africans and Khoi than the average Cape Town middle class woman.

Cape Town, as the following chapters will show, was very different from the Eastern Cape and the mission stations beyond the frontier. Cape Town was focused in on itself; its middle class inhabitants intent on replicating England, going back to England, and behaving like English people. Within this context they thought in social categories of gender and class; not race - or not yet.

CHAPTER THREE

"THINKING IT WRONG TO REMAIN UNEMPLOYED IN THE PRESSING TIMES": WIVES OF 1820 SETTLERS

The second group of women whose writing I have studied were the wives of 1820 settlers. These settlers were the first and only mass immigration of British people to the Cape Colony.

ORIGINS OF THE SETTLERS

The settlement of English people at the Cape was a Colonial Office sponsored project - designed more for the benefit of a government jeopardised by the social and economic upheaval occasioned by the Napoleonic wars, than for the benefit of the colonists.[1] It originated from a scheme suggested by Lord Charles Somerset, Governor at the Cape, who aimed to put the balance of power on a troubled frontier in the hands of the British. The Conservative Government voted £50 000 towards the project, and applicants for aided immigration to Cape were advertised for. After the selection procedure, only 4000 or so British settlers were given passages to the Cape. They were to receive land on the eastern frontier, in an area known as the Suurveld.

[1] Peires, J.B. 'The British and the Cape, 1814-1834' in Elphick, R. and Giliomee, H. (eds). The Shaping of South African Society (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989) p.474.

Few of the settlers who arrived at the Cape were the agriculturists the Colonial Office had hoped for.[2] Although the settlers came from all different classes of British society, most were middle to lower middle class urban artisans, with very little knowledge of agriculture at all.[3] The social profile of the emigrants was a result of the selection procedure designed for the emigration scheme. In order to prevent men (and their families) of little skill and little money getting to the Cape, the emigration scheme was designed to attract only those with some financial standing, and preferably farming skills. As a result of this policy, the settlers came to the Cape in two ways. Emigrants who could bring with them, and support at least ten men (and their families) would be allowed.[4] These emigrants were required to pay a deposit of £10/man or family, and on arrival at the Cape these parties would be allocated 100 acres per man, titles to the land reverting to the settlers after three years. In practice these sorts of parties were in the minority.

Under the second arrangement, men (and their families) with the required £10 banded together to form joint stock companies, under one person's leadership. On arrival these parties were also allocated 100 acres/man, reverting to each man at the end of three years. Alternatively, some settlers were minor English aristocracy or members of the upper class who were unable to survive in the style to which they had become accustomed in Britain. These men brought their families and entire retinues of servants to the eastern frontier, where they expected to set themselves up in true English manorial style.[5] They took advantage only of the Colonial Office's offer of land and did not require aided

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[2] In fact most applicants seemed to have lied on their forms with approximately 52% of the Settlers claiming a farming background. Scott, P. 'An Approach to the Urban History of Grahamstown', pp.109-112.
[3] Peires, J.B. 'The British', p.475. Also Scott, P. 'An Approach', p.111.
[4] Nash, M.D. The 1820 Settlers, p.95.
[5] For a discussion of this phenomenon, see chapter five in Clifton Crais' book, The Making of the Colonial Order.

immigration. The settlers who came, therefore, represented the whole spectrum of English society. It was from these people that English society on the Eastern Frontier took shape, and took shape in such a way that it differed from English society elsewhere in the country.

THE SITUATION ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER

Albany District lay at the eastern frontier of the colony. Beyond its borders were indigenous Xhosa chiefdoms, whose people had been driven out of the territory they occupied west of the Great Fish River after 1812.[6] Conflict over land and resources after this point were to lead to a succession of Xhosa/European clashes - the Frontier Wars. These wars were symbols of frontier turmoil in more than one sense; not only were territorial boundaries being contested but also the relationships between the people who occupied these contested areas. Xhosa and English were struggling, not only for territorial control but also for ideological control within their own enclaves. The English were struggling for European control of the frontier regions. and a power struggle was being waged among the amaRharabe and the amaGqunukhwebe for control of the area to the east of the Keiskamma.

Into this situation came the settlers, who had to negotiate the political tensions of the frontier situation with the difficulties of establishing themselves in a foreign country. On the one hand they were attempting to establish themselves in ways that were heavily

[6] Giliomee, H. 'The Eastern Frontier 1770-1812' in Elphick and Giliomee, (eds) The Shaping of South African Society, p.459.

dependent on maintaining good relations with the Xhosa, and on the other they were intent on making their life in Grahamstown and the countryside as English as possible. It is against these ambitions that settler initiative and developing perceptions of race consciousness need to be viewed.

CONDITIONS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Although the settlers and their families were supposed to become farmers on their arrival at the Cape, the difficulties involved in farming led most to abandon the land allocated them in the first few years after they arrived. The soil of the Eastern Cape was not suited to the sort of farming any of the settlers were used to, while the size of their allotments was too little for pastoral farming.[7] These factors, together with their own inexperience were compounded by the effects of droughts, locust plagues and Xhosa raids. Anna Francis was the wife of an 1820 Settler who wrote home in a letter in 1821:

> This I think is the most miserable country in the world, for it produces nothing without manure , and the gardens we have made are all burnt up before they come to any perfection. The whole part of the wheat harvest has failed here...indeed the miseries of the unhappy settlers are beyond anything I can express.8

By 1825 most of the settlers had moved off their farms and into the few towns in the Eastern Cape. As a result, places like Grahamstown in particular, grew rapidly and developed a more comprehensive urban character.

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[7] Land in upper Albany, the districts of Fort Beaufort and Adelaide had good grazing land, but most of the settlers received initially land in lower Albany, between Grahamstown, Bathurst and the coast. This was the area known as the Suurveld, and not suited to grazing.

[8] Cory Library, MS2031 (all MS numbers are from the Cory Library).

Trade, rather than farming, lay behind the economic development of the Eastern Cape and its centre at Grahamstown. In the first three decades of the nineteenth century the trans-frontier trade earned £40 000 for its practitioners.[9] The transfrontier trade - ivory, hides in exchange for beads, buttons, and iron - was the source of most of the wealth in the Eastern Cape.[10]

Dutch farmers on the frontier had been trading, illegally as it so happens, with the Xhosa since the middle of the eighteenth century.[11] When the British settlers arrived, the trans-frontier trade was soon perceived as the way to wealth and fortune.[12] Hannah Keeton wrote of her stepsons in 1832: "Ralph and Job have been trading amongst the Tribes of the Caffres which reside beyond the boundaries of the British Empire, for some considerable time, in Ivory; Horns and Hides and it has succeeded beyond their expectations".[13] In order to cope with the goods realised by this trade, and to outfit the traders, some of the merchant houses in Cape Town established stores in Grahamstown. The establishment of these merchant houses linked the town into financial networks stretching from Grahamstown to Cape Town to London and back again.

Discussions of the economic growth of the Eastern Cape have tended to emphasise the expanding role of merchant capital in this area. It is true that by 1830, control of the

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[9] Crais, The Making, p.106.
[10] The development of trade - the trans-frontier trade with the Boers and Xhosa in particular, the coasting trade and the direct trade - did much to transform the villages of the east from being essentially seats of administrative or military authority into centres of trade as well. Le Cordeur, B. Origins of Separatism in the Eastern Cape (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981) p.38.
[11] Crais, The Making, p.106.
[12] Not every one succeeded at this trade, however. Martha Jane Webber's husband traded karosses and native goods from Bechuanaland to the local regiments, but never made much money through a seeming lack of organisation (MS6313).
[13] MS6617.

interior trade lay in the hands of these merchants who attempted to prevent lesser operators becoming successful.[14] However this assessment ignores the very important role the trans-frontier trade played in the lives of middle and lower class settlers. At this point, a division seems to have opened up between the merchant houses which organised large-scale trading trips and individual operators who carried on as travelling salesmen. The Xhosa trade created a demand for services to supply and outfit it, and it also created the wealth for people to buy luxury goods. Those people who did not engage directly in trade were often associated with it in one way or another. When Mary Anne Webb's husband gave up farming he turned to the transport business: "we have removed to Grahamstown, where your Brother is a present well-employed with his waggon and oxen".[15] The transport business - Xhosa goods to the Bay (as Port Elizabeth was known) and imported English and Indian goods back to Grahamstown - was only one spin-off of the transfrontier trade. Not only did transport riders profit from the trade, but also people in occupations servicing this occupation. These included waggon makers, blacksmiths, harness repairers etc. When Mary Anne Webb's daughter was about to marry in 1835, Mary Anne was pleased at the prospect of a waggon maker son-in-law. Not directly involved in the transfrontier trade, but employed because of it were carpenters, masons, blacksmiths and retailers and whose wives became school teachers.[16]

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[14] Until 1824 it was relatively easy to trade across the frontier, but after this date the colonial government (on the behest of some of the wealthier settlers) placed restrictions on trade. This was done by requiring expensive licenses of traders and also through government levies charged at the trade fair at Fort Willshire.

[15] Mary Anne Webb, 1827, MS5672.

[16] MS5672. In his Roll of the British Settlers, (Cape Town: Balkema, 1977) E. Morse-Jones mentions a number of women teachers, many of whom worked out of their husbands premises, or worked with their husbands (pp.83, 90, 92, 93, 96, 104, 106,126, 127, 134, 141, 156, 163).

By the 1830's some of the more prosperous settlers had realised that money could also be made in farming Spanish merino sheep for wool. By the end of the 1820's wool was the staple export of the eastern districts.[17] In 1826 53 500 lbs of wool were exported, in 1836 over 100 000 lbs and in 1842 more than one millions lbs were exported.[18] As a result of the wool trade Grahamstown was the second largest town in the Cape Colony in 1831.

From the 1820's, women worked alongside men in Grahamstown - performing mostly occupations that were suited to women, but also occupations that were adjuncts to their husbands' professions (see Appendix Two). According to Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall this pattern was common in Britain and among the middle class, but at the end of the eighteenth century. Their findings show that the rural middle c' ss was initially a class in which both men and women worked - the latter assisting their husbands in their shops or businesses, or providing 'hidden investments' such as money and property.[19] As their prosperity increased, and under the influence of a developing middle class identity, middle class women gradually began to leave off working where finances permitted. Working became less socially acceptable among middle class women who had men folk who could be expected to provide for them. The middle class ideal involved men working and women remaining at home, and this began to be achieved as increasing prosperity allowed women to remain at home - a prospect partially achieved in Britain by the 1830's.

In Grahamstown the initial hardship of frontier life - the need to survive and establish oneself - circumvented the continuation of this process as it had begun in Britain. Women needed to work apart from or alongside their husbands. Martha Jane Webber's mother kept

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[17] Le Cordeur, B. Origins, p.39.
[18] MacLennan, B. A Proper Degree of Terror: John Graham and the Cape's Eastern Frontier (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986) p.226.
[19] All references in this paragraph are to Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, chapter six.

an inn during the sometime between 1820 and 1830, while her husband acted as an (unsuccessful) trader into Bechuanaland.[20] Unmarried women and widows were often required to support themselves without assistance from any other quarter.

By the 1850's the profile that working women had in public, and public acceptance of their work, seems to have diminished. This is born out by the decreasing number of working women householders over this period.[21] This impression about women and work is reinforced from another area. In the Grahamstown Journal (which published its first edition at the end of December 1831) for 1832 and 1833 women were regular, though intermittent and in very small numbers, advertisers.[22] For the same period 10 years later, the number of women advertising their services was very insignificant compared the volume of advertising (most of which was dominated by advertisements for sheep).

By the 1850's, with increasing prosperity on the frontier, settler society could afford financially and socially to follow the model of middle class behaviour common in Cape Town and Britain. This had implications for the profile of working women and explains, I think, some of the changes outlined above.

Both of the settler wives I discuss in detail had experiences which tallied with what I have described. Mary Anne Webb's husband was unsuccessful as a farmer, so the Webb's moved to Grahamstown where Webb became a wagonneer. Mary Anne worked as a

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[20] MS6313
[21] Appendix Two
[22] I examined editions of the Grahamstown Journal from the end of 1831 to the end of 1833, and from the end of 1841 to the end of 1843. The 1842 Street Directory, which was compiled in 1841, would represent the period before the second batch of journals I examined. The results of my findings are in the appendices.

teacher to supplement the family income. After leaving their land the Dennisons went first to Graaff-Reinet and then to Grahamstown. From at least 1825 Hannah Dennison was attempting to earn her living as a midwife. It appears also as if Mr Dennison attempted to make his living through transport.

What this study does not elaborate though, is that Grahamstown's population would have been increasingly black as the years passed, as Africans entered the town in search of work. Among the 1820 Settlers were several indentured servants, who had accompanied their masters on the long journey. Most of them seemed to have deserted their posts soon after arrival to the great dissatisfaction of the men to whom they were bound.[23] The discord between the servants and their masters, while rooted in other reasons, had also to do with the settlers developing awareness of racial categories. After arriving in the Eastern Cape it soon became apparent to them that blacks did the manual and unskilled labour that needed doing. The Xhosa and the Khoi formed the nexus of the labouring class on the Eastern Frontier, while the English men and women who had been members of it in Britain assumed positions at the lower end of the middling class described by Deetz and Scott. Issues over labour - domestic and farm labour - were to be found at the heart of Xhosa/English conflict, increasingly from the 1820's. English perceptions of the Xhosa were to be shaped in and by their experiences of and need for labour.

[23] Crais, C. The Making, p.91.

BORDER WIVES: PERCEPTIONS AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS

Mary Anne Webb

Mary Anne Webb and her husband, John, were members of Thomas Willson's settler party, and arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1820, when Mary Anne was approximately 32.[24] After their first crop failed John Webb took a position as foreman on a government farm at Somerset, to the north of Grahamstown. By 1827 they were living in Grahamstown, where Mary Anne kept a school for girls, and her husband had a transport company, using wagons to ferry goods between Algoa Bay and Grahamstown. By 1835 Mr Webb had died and Mary Anne was living in reduced circumstances in Grahamstown. She died in March 1838 in Port Elizabeth, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law.[25] Apart from these letters I have been unable to find anything more of the Webbs. From Mary Anne's letters we know that the Webbs came from Hertfordshire. In 1835 Mary Anne had three daughters and three sons, with one other son having died on the ship that carried them between Cape Town and Algoa Bay in 1820.

Mary Anne's letters are very poignant, and because she was describing the Cape to people who had never seen it, very informative in this respect. From her letters it is apparent that her writing was seldom answered, but nevertheless she continued to write. Her letters are addressed to members of her own and her husband's family in England. Only five are contained in the Cory Library, but their length, and the wealth of detail in them, makes them an invaluable resource.

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[24] MS5671

[25] Mary Anne Webb's death notice, CA MOOC 6/9/15.

Mary Anne Webb's letters cover the fifteen years that represent the settlers first decade and a half in South Africa. Although it is difficult to make firm statements about what she thought and how she felt about living in the Cape, on the basis of so few letters, certain trends do show themselves. In her first letter home, she discussed the death of a son, Alexander, and the failure of the Webb's harvest: "Every trouble and affliction I have hitherto met with appeared as nothing in comparison of his loss".[26] In 1827 "public calamities" do not affect her much. In 1832, when her husband had died, she was "singlehanded in Calamity", and had just been "brought through the deep waters of Affliction" and was full of general "afflictions". In a second letter to other relatives detailing the death of her husband she had "bitter news to write" and "to add Affliction to distress" she was not in a comfortable situation. In 1835 the world was experiencing a "general visitation of different calamities" including the "calamitous and overwhelming invasions" on the Eastern Frontier. 'Calamity' and 'Affliction' seemed to have followed her doggedly through her years at the Cape, assuming an almost physical character. All the hardships she endured translate into momentous occurrences and only when hardships pass on to other people does she relax her regard in this respect, and dispense with the capital letters.

Was Mary Anne Webb really embattled on all sides? Certainly her use of 'affliction" was most prevalent in those three letters which discussed the death of a child and her husband (and of course there are only five letters). However, it would appear, from another recurring theme in Mrs Webb's writing, that these occurrences were not the only source of unhappiness in her life. The Webbs appeared, according to Mary Anne's statements, to be

[26] MS5671

on the verge of financial ruin. In her first letter she asked her readers "to guess if our finances were not [indecipherable] very low", and in her second letter commented on "pressing times", "narrow circumstances" and "serious loss". In 1832 she was "in no very comfortable circumstances", "in insolvent circumstances" and in "circumstances not over abundant" - in fact, the Webbs had been altogether "greatly reduced". In her final letter, the situation had improved somewhat, because she had graduated to "humble circumstances" and the Webb's were "more comfortable in circumstances (tho' not rich)". But were the Webb's so badly off? When Mary Anne Webb complained of low finances, her husband had just accepted a position on a government farm for £30 pa, "everything included even to liquor & tea & sugar". When the Webb's moved to Grahamstown, Mr Webb was "well-employed" with a government contract for transport, and Mrs Webb had just opened up a school "which is an addition of 150 Rd/ month to our circumstances".[27]

The rest of the letters follow a similar pattern, discussing reduced circumstances in the same sentence as plans effected for improving them. Every time Mary Anne Webb wrote home she complained of suffering, or just having suffered financial hardship. Some of her comments on their relative prosperity may be attributed to changes in circumstances (things have been bad but now they are better), but sometimes her equivocation was in the same sentence. Moreover, this pattern of good times, bad times occurred consistently throughout her letters, though circumstances had improved by 1835. If, as we have seen, the Webbs were never in danger of becoming destitute, Mary Anne's attempts to claim poverty must have an alternative explanation.[28]

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[27] In 1821 one rixdollar = one shilling and 6 ¼ pence.

[28] I almost contradict my own statement by saying that her son-in-law wrote on her death notice that she left only "a few articles of wearing apparel of no Value" (CA MOOC 6/9/15).

Mrs Webb's comments about reduced circumstances were inevitably followed up by an account of how these circumstances were, or were in the process of , being overcome. From the second letter her efforts to contribute to the Webb's income included her work in running a small boarding school for girls. This was a typical strategy for women needing income to resort to in Grahamstown. Her letters home were to relatives - to John Webb's brother and his wife - and once to her own sisters - and family matters comprised much of their subject matter. It appears as if Mrs Webb's views were in line with contemporary views on the position of women in early nineteenth century middle class culture. Mary Anne seems to have felt some uneasiness about her status as a working women, and felt the need to justify this to her husband's family by claiming it was necessary in order to keep her family financially solvent. Again, we come back to her comment about her "thinking it wrong to remain unemployed in the pressing times".

Mary Anne Webb wished to be a suitable wife and a mother. She had "an unalterable aversion to Old Maids & Bachelors & wish they may all be suited like their Father & Mother, Uncles & Aunts, with good Husbands & Wives & further with a pray that they may also be good ones themselves".[29] Her consciousness was permeated with those elements of middle class ideology that idolised the family, and saw family and home relations as the most important form of human relations. Her language and writing reflect this as she wrote about family members by emphasising their familial status - "Brother William and Sister Hannah", "Son-in Law", "Daughters" etc. (which incidentally makes it

[29] MS5675

very difficult to determine whose family she was referring to).[30] Mrs Webb was a loving and caring mother, yet she worried that this part of her character would not be perceived by her relatives. This led her into exaggerations of the hardships the Webb's suffered, in an attempt to justify her actions - and also more than likely to elicit sympathy for a lonely woman far away from her home. The tension - between this representation of herself, and between how she perceived herself, displayed itself in her letters.

Financial hardship and the need to conform to a particular code of behaviour motivated some of what Mary Anne Webb wrote to her relatives. However, her perceptions were not only tied up with what happened to the Webbs personally, and what she thought her relatives would think of this. Her letters also reflect her awareness of broader political and social events and conditions, and this is where I move on to her growing understanding of inter-group relations on the frontier.

In Mrs Webb's first letter, in 1821, she told her relatives that "as for reports about the Caffers & wild Beasts are merely romantic, the former are by no means so hostile as represented & are guarded by troops at all the passes & outposts".[31] At this point the Xhosa were a guarded unknown, classified with the rest of the unfamiliar creatures of the land.[32] In 1827 her relatives were familiar with a new description of the Xhosa: "Your description of the native companies is laughable particularly the Caffer or stealing

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[30] MS5676, MS5672. Not all references to family members by status have capitals, but most do. In a style in which Mary Anne Webb seldom uses capitals at the start of her letters, these capitals are surely significant.

[31] MS5671

[32] The coupling of Africans and animals in the same sentence when people were describing the Cape to others unfamiliar with it was common. It was also common for the English to couple descriptions of the Dutch and animals together in one sentence.

company".[33] This disposition to theft was linked, by 1835, expressly to cattle: "It was rumoured the Caffers...stole Cattle, which is usual if they can".[34]

Cattle and oxen were frequent subjects in her letters.[35] She commented upon their price - "Oxen are from 2 to 3£ a head, fine great beasts, which in England would sell at 20 or 30 £. Sheep 6/ a head..." - their value, and current losses and gains of cattle.[36] From the way in which she wrote about cattle, it is apparent that cattle and sheep were central concerns on the frontier.

References to cattle, however, were also and often shorthand for fluctuating fortunes, not only of the Webbs but of the situation on the frontier as a whole. Cattle featured strongly in her description of the 1835 war:

> Now for our South African frontier dreadful news. The Christmas of 1834 & New Year 1835 will never be forgot...It was rumoured the Caffers were getting unruly & had murdered a young man a Caffer [ ] & stole Cattle, which is usual if they can. Their wealth wholly consists of herds of Cattle [a description of the first clash follows] The whole country is now laid waste & cattle to the amount of 15 000 head taken away in about a month or 5 weeks.. The town fill'd with Caffer hunted distressed inhabitants, Fort H[ ] was given up, tho' since invented again. The cattle that could be driven away in time to save them from the plunderers were brought to town. Every kraal and garden was way nigh filled with sheep and oxen...from what I have written you can now form an idea of the unsettled state we are in ... & the weak state of the military defence...has finally been the destruction of the once flourishing country & travellers may now traverse the Country and meet nothing but [Arid] people, the farmers in cases stripp'd of their cattle and laid waste, the inhabitants fled...Their 15 year labour is reduced in so short a time to nothing.

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[33] MS5672
[34] MS5675.
[35] Mary Anne Webb mentioned cattle in every letter.
[36] MS5671

She seems to have measured the effects of the war in terms of cattle losses and gains and their effects on either side. It is easy to see from this account exactly how cattle held both symbolic and literal value - on the frontier they were both the means of success and a symbol of success.[37]

This symbolic value is particularly evident when we consider the number of settlers who actually owned cattle or farmed cattle. I refer back to the figures at the start of this chapter in which I discussed the number of settlers who actually remained on their land after two crop failures. The Webbs may have owned cattle, but by 1835 only in their capacity as transport riders. Most of the inhabitants of Grahamstown would not have owned significant numbers of cattle, yet stories of cattle losses feature strongly in most accounts of the frontier war. Cattle ownership therefore had meaning even for those people who did not own any. Cattle, however, did not only have meaning for the British settlers. Their ownership and possession meant different things to the people on either side of the frontier. Jean and John Comaroff have discussed the importance of cattle in the African world.[38] To the settlers they were a way to succeed; owning cattle opened vistas to farming, to transportation, to trading - early routes to prosperity for the British in the Eastern Cape. Mrs Webb's letters are testimony to the importance of stock and cattle. However, cattle were also at the interface of black-white conflict. They were not only symbolically but also physically a contested site. The eastern frontier was the subject of frequent raiding and counter-raiding, where cattle moved from the possession of the

[37] And incidentally, their symbolism was very much tied up with symbols of masculinity. No impotent cows on the frontier.

[38] Comaroff, Jean and John. 'goodly beasts, beastly goods: cattle and commodities in a South African context', American Ethnologist17 (1990) pp.195-216. My argument about the way cattle functioned as cattle and as symbols is very simplistic, and the Comaroff's article should be read for more insight into what is a very complex issue.

Xhosa to the settlers and back again. The settlers viewed Xhosa attempts to retrieve their cattle as nothing more than theft, and vice versa. Through following the track of cattle through Mary Anne Webb's letters, therefore, we can follow her opinion of the Xhosa.

Cattle theft, however, was not the only negative trait in the Xhosa character that Mary Anne Webb saw revealed to her. In 1827 Mary Anne Webb also began to touch on the labour issue: "I forgot to inform you that some of the tribes were given out among the settlers and we obtained 3. after being at great expence to cloth them...the crows all took flight in the night & we were left without any people except one Hottentot"[39] Not only, Mary Anne's view, were the Xhosa thieves, but ' ıey were also incurably lazy.[40] This is quite evident in the rest of the same letter:

> of all countries I think this is the worst for servants The Government shows such favour to the Hottentots that they have the assurance to think themselves equal to other people & will not contract nor work without. - by contracting is meant an agreement with a Master for such a time but not they say they are their own Masters.[41]

It is clear from this that Mary Anne Webb viewed the behaviour of the Xhosa and the Khoi as upsetting some 'natural' order, in which both groups were supposed to render up their labour to the British settlers. When this did not occur Mary Anne Webb began to rationalise Xhosa and Khoi resistance to incorporation into the labour market as a inherent character trait. That her perception of the Xhosa as lazy was tied into an understanding of the labour market is shown by her acceptance of slavery: "Slavery here is nothing to

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[39] MS5672

[40] But it is interesting to note that it was not only the Xhosa who were castigated for their laziness. In the first decade of settlement the more wealthy settlers were more apt to criticise their indentured servants, as these words by the bailiff of Barville Park indicate: "My men have turned out as bad as I expected; they do not earn 8d. each per day; they are too lazy to work" (Collett, J. A Time to Plant (Kat River, South Africa: Joan Collet, 1990) p.11).

[41] MS5672

complain of, only the idea of it".[42] She did not see anything inherently wrong in the condition of slavery.

Mrs Webb's language therefore reveals the development in her own mind of a negative categorisation for the Xhosa (and by association for the Khoi). Her references to them in her first letter home were relatively neutral. In the course of her letters the Xhosa were to metamorphose from people into crows into "real savages" in a situation where Grahamstown was filled with "Caffer hunted distressed inhabitants".[43] The Xhosa had become even worse than the lions and tigers in Mrs Webb's first letter, which were "not very bloodthirsty". In her writing the Xhosa were transforme· from relatively harmless people into animal predators of the worst kind (preying on both cattle and people).

Clifton Crais has traced the development of an African stereotype among settler society based on such characteristics.[44] In their initial contact with Africans, the settlers were not inclined to view them as racially inferior. As labour became more difficult to access, and land more scarce, the emerging settler aristocracy began to turn against those people they saw as responsible for these shortages - the Xhosa. This shift in perception was evident in Mary Anne Webb's letters. However, what Crais does not show is how this stereotype began to take shape as part of individual consciousness - his account is more of racial discourse moulded in the minds of a settler-elite than shaped through the experiences of the majority of British people on the frontier.[45] Mary Anne Webb came to the Cape with almost no knowledge of Africans. As the Webb's lost their farm, suffered loss of cattle

[42] MS5675
[43] MS5675
[44] Crais, C. The Making, p.126, 129.
[45] Crais, C. The Making, chapter seven.

(when they had them), failed to get servants to help on the farm, and observed the results of the Seventh Frontier War, Mary Anne Webb developed a perception of the Xhosa that took account of those experiences. Furthermore the Webbs were quite aware of similar processes happening to other settlers. At some level, in order to obviate the need for explaining why the Xhosa behaved in such a way, Mary Anne Webb began to need to see the Xhosa as inferior - and therefore suited to render all their cattle and their labour to the British.

Hannah Dennison[46]

Hannah Purcell was born in Ireland in 1791. Between that date and 1812, when she married George Dennison a framework knitter, she moved to England.[47] In 1819 she and her husband signed on under Thomas Calton to emigrate to the Cape. They arrived at Algoa Bay on the "Albury" in May 1820.[48] After nearly seven weeks at Algoa Bay, the Dennisons and the rest of their party departed for their allocated land, north of the Kowie River.[49] The Dennisons had two sons and two daughters when they arrived. After 1820 Hannah had three more sons and two more daughters. By 1825 the Dennisons had left their land and moved to Graaff-Reinet.[50] It seems likely that Dennison earned his living as a waggoner. By 1834 the Dennisons had moved to Grahamstown.[51] In 1834 (the date of

[46] Just before completion of this thesis it came to my attention that Hannah Dennison has also been the subject of a recent article by Wendy Woodward ('Marginal Midwifery: Hannah Dennison and the textualising of the feminine settler body in the Eastern Cape 1834-1848', Current Writing 7 (1995) pp18-33. Unfortunately this material was too late for incorporation into this thesis.
[47] Edgecombe, D.R. 'The Letters of Hannah Dennison, 1820 Settler, 1820-1847' (MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1968) p.1.
[48] Jones, E. Morse. Roll of the British Settlers in South Africa p.33.
[49] Edgecombe, D.R. 'Hannah', p.20.
[50] Edgecombe, D.R. 'Hannah', p.29,
[51] Edgecombe, 'Hannah', p.30.

the first letter) Hannah left her husband and moved to Graaff-Reinet with her two youngest children, William and Richard.[52] From Graaff-Reinet she moved to Colesberg, in both places earning her living as a midwife and trader.[53]

Hannah Dennison's letters were written to the children she left behind when she fled Grahamstown. Most were written to Charlotte, her second eldest daughter. Her other correspondents were Anne Scanlen, her eldest and married daughter, and George, her eldest son. The Dennison letters also included correspondence between the Dennison children, and between them and their father. The letters concern her relationship with her children and her husband, her employment, the activities of people in the places she lived as well as her interaction with religion. There is very much a sense that the content of these letters was intimately connected with their audience; the comments that Hannah Dennison made were very much tied up with and influenced by her relationship with her children. The letters have been transcribed and appear with discussion and editorial comment in Ruth Edgecombe's MA thesis at Rhodes University in 1968.[54] These letters only cover the period to 1847, at which point Hannah Dennison seems to have disappeared from the record. According to Ruth Edgecombe, it is likely she died in about 1850.[55]

Hannah Dennison's letters were inspired by the separation from her children which was the result of her flight from an inadequate marriage and a unsupportive husband.[56] Her correspondence and the reason for it begin, therefore, to show the sorts of concerns and

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[52] Edgecombe, 'Hannah', p.i..
[53] Edgecombe, 'Hannah', p.1.
[54] Ruth Edgecombe's thesis contains an excellent discussion of Hannah's letters, and covers much more ground than I cover in this chapter. The letters are currently being edited for the Grahamstown Series by Ruth Edgecombe and Judith Parle at the University of Natal-Durban.
[55] Edgecombe, 'Hannah', p.87. According to Ruth Edgecombe, Hannah Dennison does not appear in either the records of the Bechuanaland Missionary Circuit, or in any of the memories of her descendants among the Gush and Dennison families (p.i).
[56] Edgecombe, 'Hannah', p.32, p.131,132.

ideas that affected Hannah Dennison. Marriage and family were at the centre of Hannah Dennison's world, and these topics featured repeatedly in her letters.[57]

When Hannah fled Grahamstown in 1834, it appears as if she was motivated by two related impulses. The following extract is from the longest piece she wrote about her husband.

> what is the use of our having the name of husband and wife how is he a husband to me a husband is one that maintains his wife and does he do that answer me what has he done for the children since we parted and what has he done for me why then should you all wish me not to do this have you more love for him than me that you all seek his happyness and not mine I should be sorry if you did not love him but who has showed themselves a parent he or me you of course say more is expected from me why he is your father he has means what does he do with them does he in any measure contribute to the support of his family58

Hannah was clearly very unhappy with George's behaviour as a husband and a father. This was not an isolated reference in her letters, and as in this case, these references were often coupled with comments about her children's neglect of her. In March 1838 she wrote to Charlotte "thanks to a bad father and a worse husband or my children would not have dared to treat me with such disrespect...I would ask what have I done to you that you use me thus I am sure that wile you lived with me I allways studied your happyness in preference to my own".[59] This pattern of criticism of her husband coupled with comments on her ungrateful children is found elsewhere. Prior to the passage quoted above, Mrs Dennison complained to Charlotte that "you are very comfortable there and I

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[57] Ruth Edgecombe discusses "The Ideas, Attitudes and Beliefs of Hannah Dennison" in the last chapter of her thesis. Many of her ideas are similar to mine. When I initially began work on Hannah Dennison, I only had access to the transcripts of her letters. It was only subsequently that I received the rest of the thesis in which Ruth Edgecombe discusses Hannah Dennison's life and her ideas. For this reason I do not make reference to the commentary contained in the thesis as much as I could - I have arrived at similar analysis of Hannah Dennison's life, though through an independent process.

[58] Edgecombe, 'Hannah', p.132.

[59] Edgecombe, p.131.

dare-say never give me one thought".[60] In fact, she commented much more frequently on her children's neglect of her than she did on her husband's deficiencies.

Among her reasons for leaving Grahamstown, then, was Mrs Dennison's perception of her husband as unable to fulfil his allotted role as husband and father. In addition to this neglect, however, it is also possible that Mrs Dennison left her husband in order to escape physical abuse. She began the long extract quoted above with a reply to her daughter about an obviously sensitive issue: "you say you are perswaded your father will not molest me", but it is difficult to determine whether she was referring to physical or mental abuse. It appears too, as if one of her sons may also have been abused by his father: "what did he do with William that poor child will have reason to remember long as he lives". Whether or not Mrs Dennison was abused by her husband, it is clear that she believed that she was in some form or another. This discussion should be born in mind when considering her feeling of ill-use by her husband and her children which I shall now discuss.

Hannah Dennison's criticism of her husband and her children resulted from a distress which was occasioned by her perception of inadequately filled family roles. With her husband, her distress was on two levels. In the first place, as the extracts from her writing indicate, she felt that George Dennison was not providing physically for his wife and children. In the second place she felt that he was not behaving as a model husband and father should.[61] After 1834, she could only reflect back on her husband's behaviour, but the behaviour of her children provided a substitute for her feelings of ill-use. I think there

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[60] Edgecombe, p.132.

[61] From the few letters we have between George Dennison and his children, it is apparent that his interest in them was never enough to inspire letters of more than ten lines long (Edgecombe, p.147, 150, 151).

were several impulses behind Mrs Dennison's belief that she was neglected by her husband and her children, all tying in with middle class perceptions of appropriate gender behaviour which I discussed in chapter one. Mrs Dennison's concern over appropriate family roles was a result of a commitment to this ideology, and was particularly apparent in her cry of "how is he a husband to me a husband is one that maintains his wife". Her distress at this arose from two realisations - that she had an inadequate husband, and that, given contemporary gender roles, the blame for the breakdown of their marriage would be laid solely at her door (she left him). This latter perception is particularly apparent in the justification she feels required to provided to her children about the break-up of her marriage.

According to the middle class ideology, fathers and husbands were responsible for the physical maintenance and wives and mothers for the moral upkeep of their families. Though this may have been far from reality, it was how gender roles were represented in popular writing, both fiction and factual (see chapter one). Through a rather curious conceptualisation, women were perceived to be "the embodiment of both the positive and negative qualities associated with irrationality".[62] Driven by emotion they could either govern the moral values of a family, or lead it in the opposite direction. Given these ideals of behaviour, Hannah Dennison was faced with a conundrum. Leave her husband who did not conform to the middle class view of a husband, and she would be breaking up a family and exposing the negative side of her feminine nature.

I have repeatedly stressed the difference that existed between these ideals of masculine and feminine behaviour and reality. However much Hannah Dennison may have felt she

[62] Davidoff, L. and Hall, C. Family Fortunes. p.27.

needed to leave her husband and her children, she seems to have suffered a fair amount of guilt over this action; both her own and also possibly imagined guilt emanating from her children. This latter point is very evident in the manner in which Hannah Dennison begged her children for reassurance that she had been a good mother and wife. It is difficult to judge whether they really did hold their mother responsible for the break down of the marriage; Mrs Dennison certainly felt as if they did and this conception was part of the motivation behind the frequent complaints she made about her children's neglect: "your af[ectiona]te Mother though neglected".[63] On the one hand, she was aware that she was not responsible for the marriage breakdown, on the other her whole ideological training had taught her that she was responsible.

Hannah Dennison's guilt, however was not enough to prevent her wanting a legal separation from her husband.

> I do not wish to trust to (uncertainty) any longer and if it does not cost to much it would be much better that it took place and then I could have some securyte for future your sister stats that your fathers health is breaking fast I am sorry to hear of it but in the event of anything happening to him you are all aware that I then stand at the mercy of his credeters and by not being free be obliged to be as it were allwayes on the shuffle or making excuses wich you know is a thing I cannot bear if he chuses he can cause it to be little or not expence by consenting for that reason I wished George to get some one to speak to him on the subject before it must be to the lawyer I know the deed must be drawn up by a lawyer and signd by witness and I wish it to be understood that I give my claim on him entirly up for ever and only want him to do the same by me

Further evidence of Hannah Dennison's perception of appropriate gender roles is displayed in her attitude to other marriages. Her understanding of the behaviour she

[63] Edgecombe, p.130.

deemed suitable in women was very apparent where she wrote to Charlotte in 1841 on the subject of a rejected suitor. Hannah wrote "my dear girl I am concerned what will a world say if Charlotte Dennison can treat a man in that manner so may I".[64] She castigated Charlotte for rejecting the gentleman, despite whatever he has done to Charlotte, for Charlotte, she said, had led him on (to hope for her favour).[65]

The issue of Elizabeth, her second youngest daughter, sorely taxed Mrs Dennison. Elizabeth may have had an illegitimate child in 1843.[66] This incident was only part of a pattern of bad behaviour on Elizabeth's part. It appears from Hannah's letters to Charlotte as if Elizabeth was very fond of flirting with young men. After her fall from grace, she refused to settle down and marry with one of two eligible suitors; instead she ran away to live with another man, only marrying him fifteen years later: "she has taken a step wich I fear has sealed her doom the agonizing thought that she has become I must say a kept mistress alas there is no other term for it"[67]. However much Hannah objected to this sort of behaviour, and how ever much she complained in her letters to Charlotte, she always stood by and supported Elizabeth. Although Elizabeth's behaviour "alla most turned my Brains" Hannah always stood beside her.[68]

Mrs Dennison's concern for appropriate gender roles is apparent elsewhere in her writing, and again in references to marriage. Her first few letters were full of references to other peoples' marriages. [69] Interestingly enough these references taper off as her references to

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[64] Edgecombe, p.157.
[65] Edgecombe, p.157.
[66] Edgecombe, p.60.
[67] Edgecombe, p.77.
[68] Edgecombe, p.78, p.89.
[69] Edgecombe, p.130, 131, 132,133,134.

her ungrateful children taper off - by the end of 1838 she seems to be reconciled with her children to the extent that she no longer accuses them of neglect. The end of 1838 also corresponds to her move to Colesberg. It is also possible that her discussions about people getting married may have been for Charlotte's benefit, Charlotte having lived in Graaff-Reinet with her for a period. The society in Colesberg would have been unknown to Charlotte, hence the lack of 'gossip' being purveyed by Mrs Dennison. Charlotte, however, visits Colesberg a couple of times in the next few year, and Mrs Dennison moves away from her preoccupation with marriages.

A growing religiosity also contributed to Hannah Dennison's preoccupation with appropriate gender roles.[70] Her belief in Christianity appeared to become more fervent after she moved to Colesberg, because from this point on phrases regarding 'the will of God' being done, 'the meeting place in the glorious hereafter', and Mrs Dennison's 'submission to His will' are recurrent and intersperse her writing on all conceivable subjects.[71] She used this sort of phraseology in her earlier letters. However, what was distinctive about her letters written from Colesberg were their references to both Methodism, which she "has reason to bless...for me and mine", and also the references she made to the spread of the possibility of church going, and the spread of church going among the English in Colesberg. She became more involved in religious life to the extent of comparing denominational beliefs and commenting upon the religious perfidy of others, especially the English in Colesberg : "there are many english here without god in all there ways these creatures have souls oh what a pity to leave them to themselves."[72]

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[70] See Edgecombe, p.97-102 for her discussion of religion in Hannah's life.
[71] Edgecombe, p.136,137,138,139,140,141 etc. See also Edgecombe, p.33 for a discussion of Hannah's religiosity, though we differ somewhat on when this occurred.
[72] Edgecombe, p.142.

The practice of Christianity and the salvation of souls, from being a very peripheral interest, becomes a central concern of hers. Her religious beliefs seemed, in a measure, to give Mrs Dennison greater self-confidence. There is a sense in her letters that she felt a very real ease of her burdens and self-doubt through sharing them with God. At least that is how Mrs Dennison perceived it. It is also possible that the friendships she built up within church circles (or what there were of them) in Colesberg made her less lonely and happier with herself.

Initially in Graaff-Reinet Hannah Dennison had employment as a midwife. Graaff-Reinet, however, offered her little opportunity to exercise her skills, and in 1838 Hannah moved to Colesberg.[73] In Colesberg she continued in this practise, branching out, however, into a contract with the WMMS for her to act as a midwife to missionary wives on the WMMS stations on the Bechuanaland Circuit. She also set up as retailer of some kind, arranging for goods to be bought by her children in Grahamstown and sent to her on commission, or for resale in Colesberg. She sold hats made by Charlotte and clothes made by George. She also rented rooms in her house on occasion and did needlework for people.[74] In 1839 she had "a shop to attend and my own Business besides that is not much as the place is small but I have what there is as there are none to oppose me" while in 1841 her midwife duties "with the shop makes me tolerably easy".[75] Although she was occupied in all these endeavours, however, Hannah never seemed to make enough money to get out of the debt she so often referred to in her letters. Her lack of funds finally

[73] Edgecombe, p.46.
[74] Edgecombe, p.157.
[75] Edgecombe, p.149, p.156. See also p.55-57 for a discussion of her business in Colesberg.

prompted Mrs Dennison to take up a position as midwife on the Bechuana Circuit, and she moved across the Orange River in 1844.[76]

Mrs Dennison's occupation as a midwife is particularly interesting for the information it provides on ideas about childbirth on the frontier in the first half of the century. In addition, her skills as a midwife appear to have been a source of much personal confidence. The first indication of her occupation as a midwife is given in an 1825 petition to the Governor of the Cape, for the position of midwife open in Graaff-Reinet.

> To His Excellency General Lord Charles H. Somerset The Petition of Hannah Dennison Humbly Showeth That your Petitioner having had considerable opportunities of Gaining experience in Midwifery... and understanding that a similar appointment exists in Uitenhage; Solicits your Excellency will be pleased to appoint her in this capacity to the Graaff Reinet District and in support of her request your Petitioner begs to send the enclosed certificate from Dr Marr Surgeon to the Troops at the Kaka post77

I cannot determine whether Hannah was appointed to this post (the letter was referred to another board for consideration) but it indicates that she had been engaged in helping women give birth for many years prior to 1825. However, Hannah's skills as a midwife were of assistance not only to other women but also to herself. The appearance of a woman in need of help seems to have banished any doubts about her status as a person from her mind. Her self-doubt disappeared in these instances, and her abilities seem to have produced in her a definite degree of self-confidence, which was reflected in her writing.

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[76] Edgecombe, p.65.
[77] CA CO 3928

In 1834, when Anne was expecting her (presumably) first baby, Mrs Dennison had the following advice.

> I would advise you not to trust yourself to any one but if you can get either Mrs Mison or doctor Campbell or if you like it take Atherstone but neglect not to send in time better they wait on you than you wait for them...Do not think if it should please god to give you a good getting up that because you feel well that you are out of danger and should it please god to give you a living babe let it be put to the breast about 3 hours after it is born and take care of your bosom keep a piece of new flaning in it and it will prevent your taking cold has that I never had a bad breast in my life nor has any one had a bad breast that I attended.[78]

It is interesting to note the amount of concern Mrs Dennison lavished on the health of the mother. In the above extract she admonished Anne not to catch cold. Her comments show her belief that only women in childbirth could have an understanding of what they were suffering and feeling - "better they wait on you than you wait on them". It is interesting to note, also, that although Hannah Dennison believed her daughter would know better than the local doctors during childbirth, she could not possibly know better than her mother. It is apparent that in the hierarchy of knowledge about childbirth, Mrs Dennison rated her skills at the top: "For what her own Midwife could not Do with even the assistance of Dr cribe mrs Dennison did without any other help than that of her own skill and the blessings of god attending her labour".[79] In 1838 she attributed the death of a Mrs Klingbiel two weeks after her confinement to the ignorance of a Hottentot midwife in allowing Mrs Klingbiel to catch cold - Mrs Klingbiel rather than her new baby was the one to die.

However much Mrs Dennison's self-confidence may have fluctuated in the face of an unhappy marriage, loneliness and financial difficulties, the assurance related to her skills as a midwife never left her. This was one area in which her confidence never deserted her.

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[78] Edgecombe, p.128.
[79] Edgecombe, p.137.

Mrs Dennison's world was centred around her family, and most of what I have discussed relates to a perception of a world in which middle class family values were paramount.[80] Mrs Dennison believed in these values and attempted to mediate her world through an understanding of middle class values which drew sustenance from behaviour linked to middle class gender stereotypes. In her dealings with her family and in her work her sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious thinking always measured her actions in terms of how far they approximated or deviated form her ideal of womanhood. It is not surprising then, that Mrs Dennison seldom thought in other categories of person. This is apparent in her references to Africans. In her letters before leaving Colesberg for the Bechuana Circuit she made only one reference to a non-European - the Hottentot midwife who allowed Mrs Klingbiel to die of cold. In Ruth Edgecombe's chapter on Hannah's activities on the Bechuana Circuit she comments that little of the tension over land struggles and claims on the other side of the Orange River affected Hannah.[81] Hannah Dennison did comment upon the Seventh Frontier War which broke out while she was stationed at Ratabani (a mission station in Basutoland), but only briefly: "O my Dear this is a scourge those outbreakings of the caffers continually".[82]

Apart from these and a few other comments her writing reveals no hint that she considered Africans important enough to need to reduce them, as Mary Anne Webb did, by creating for their description a negative and inferior stereotype. This is interesting, because even a brief glance at her daughter Sarah's letters shows a different perception. Sarah

[80] This view is also shared by Ruth Edgecombe, p.88.
[81] Edgecombe, p.72.
[82] Edgecombe, p.79.

accompanied her mother on the Bechuana Circuit and was still a teenager during the Seventh Frontier War.[83] She wrote to her sister, after the outbreak, that "the kaffers they are from all accounts murdering and mutilating the English" - a very different attitude to someone who has shared the same experiences.[84]

CONCLUSION

I have headed this chapter with a quotation from one of Mary Anne Webb's letters - "thinking it wrong to remain unemployed in these pressing times" because it is particularly apt given what seems to be a pattern emerging among Grahamstown women uring the 1820's and 1830's.[85] Both the settler women I discuss had to work. Mary Anne Webb kept a school in order to contribute to her family's upkeep. Hannah Dennison (although not resident in Grahamstown) had to support herself and her two youngest children when she left her husband.

The examples of Mary Anne Webb and Hannah Dennison point to men who were not fulfilling their socially designated role. They were not sufficient as either protectors or breadwinners for their families. George Dennison, from Hannah's letters, was manifestly not interested in providing for his family. The impression of women having to act for their own benefit is reinforced by the records of women householders in Grahamstown at the end of the first half of the nineteenth century.[86] Whether these records are representative or not, they are fairly remarkable when compared with Cape Town's records for the first

[83] Edgecombe, pp.80-81.
[84] Edgecombe, p.81.
[85] MS5672.
[86] These records for both towns are in Appendix Two.

period. These disparate pieces of information lead me to believe that concepts of appropriate gender behaviour were not following the pattern that would have been, by and large, the norm in Britain. By the 1830's middle class ideology, based on a separation of spheres was well articulated, and increasingly practised in Britain, yet on the eastern frontier women were still visible as workers in their own right. The particular exigencies and tensions of living on a frontier militated against rigid adherence to such an ideology. In Cape Town, intra-class conflict resulted in social tensions. I suspect that in Grahamstown the effects of intra-class tensions have not been sufficiently studied, and may well prove to be an area of fruitful research. However, for the women I have studied (who were members of the lower middle class) issues of gender appropriate behaviour seem to have preoccupied them to the exclusion of class considerations, albeit that these were mediated through a lens of middle class values. Unfortunately this will only be confirmed through study of the post-1850 period, which is beyond the scope of my thesis.

Once prosperity on the frontier seemed assured the settler community could bring its behaviour more into line with middle class ideology as practised in Cape Town and its parent country. Despite the possibility opened for women's work in Grahamstown during the first half of the century, an increasingly prosperous society reversed this process. Moreover, with the frontier in turmoil as a result of a succession of Xhosa/colonist wars, internal stability must have been a priority among the English settlers - including the promotion of a well-behaved female population. Under these circumstances the English settlers were unlikely to think in terms of gender

Concern for race, rather than gender, seems to have dominated settler understandings of social difference at this point. Clifton Crais has written of a change of attitude towards the Xhosa on the part of the settlers which had occurred by the mid 1830's, which he calls a "growth of negative appraisals".[87] Mary Anne Webb certainly showed a growing perception of race, and a perception entailing inferiority, in her writing. This perception was very much shaped by experience (though whose is unclear) and points to the way negative appraisals gained ground in individual consciousness.

Hannah Dennison, however, was not interested in theorising on the nature of blackness. She was preoccupied with her family to the exclusion of anything else. Although she suffered as much financially as the Webb's, she seemed to blame her husband most of all for her travail. The Xhosa and later the Sotho and Tswana did not impinge on her life, therefore her consciousness did not have to explain hardship through the process of "othering" that Crais has referred to.

Settler agrarian capitalism came to dominate in the Eastern Cape, and it had two enemies (one to the east and one to the west) against which it developed different means of resistance. Both lines of attack involved a masculinist discourse expressed for instance in the pages of the Grahamstown Journal. This discourse required so much self-affirmation - confirmation of its correctness - that it carefully removed women's initiative out of sight. On an embattled frontier there was no space for women.

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[87] Crais, The Making, p.129.

CHAPTER FOUR

"THE USEFULNESS OF A MISSIONARY IN THE INTERIOR DEPENDS ALMOST MORE ON HIS WIFE THAN ON HIMSELF"

BACKGROUND

The women I have discussed so far lived in circumstances fairly similar to those which they were used to in Britain. For the wives and widows of missionaries - the third group of women I discuss - circumstances were very different. These women came to the Cape accompanying their husbands who were employees of the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Glasgow Missionary Society (GMS), the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS)and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS).[1] As missionaries and missionary wives, they considered it their task and duty to bring Christianity and civilisation to the various African peoples of the interior. They lived on isolated mission stations with very little European company, and experienced privation - both physical and spiritual - seldom encountered by the women on the eastern frontier and in Cape Town. Their experience of racial conflict and harmony was very different to that of the urban

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[1] There is a discussion of the various missionary societies in chapter one. This chapter represents a brief look at a field of study that has been the subject of much recent research. For a discussion of historiographical trends in this area the following are useful: Elbourne, E. 'Concerning Missionaries, the Case of Van der Kemp', Journal of Southern African Studies 17 (1991), and a paper given by Norman Etherington at Journal of Southern African Studies conference, York, 1994 entitled 'Recent Trends in the Historiography of Missions in Southern Africa: Quantitative Survey and Key Issues'. For an understanding of missionary activity at the Cape more generally the following are useful: Comaroff, J and J. Of Revelation and Revolution on the Northern Cape and the mission to the Tswana and Elbourne, E. '"To Colonise the Mind"', on the Eastern Cape, and their bibliographies. Also Craven, M.C. 'The New Culture Brokers: Women in the Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions to South Africa, 1799-1914' (Thesis, Princeton University, 1993) and the volume edited by Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood, and Sherry Ardener Women and Missions: Past and Present on women as missionaries.

women, and their writing is particularly expressive in this regard. In other respects, however, their lives were very similar to those of their urban counterparts, and I hope to show both the similarities and the differences in my discussion.[2]

In this chapter I shall be discussing the background to the selection and appointment of missionaries, the conditions they experienced living on mission stations, and the effect (if any) these conditions had on particular missionary wives. I then go on to take a critical look at the lives of three missionary wives - Helen Ross, Anne Hodgson and Elizabeth Rolland, though I also refer to other women like Alison Philip and Elizabeth Williams, who were both wives of LMS missionaries. The information on mission life beyond the borders of the Cape Colony in this period is limited, and of necessity I have had to base my account of station conditions on these, and others, experiences.

THE WORLD OF THE MISSIONARY

On Becoming Missionary Wives

In Chapter One I briefly discussed the growth of evangelicism and the background of the missionary societies in Britain. The evangelical revival was accompanied by mass conversions within the Church of England and non-conformist denominations which cut across class, regional, occupational, gender and familial affiliations. As a result the men selected to be missionaries could have very different qualifications. Ostensibly the

[2] This section is only intended to be an introduction to the subject of missionary wives in Southern Africa. I hope to follow up the subject in future research.

directors of the missionary societies chose men for their preaching and teaching skills, provided the candidates showed suitable enthusiasm for entering the missionary field. Joseph Williams applied three times to the Directors of the LMS before being admitted as a missionary.[3]

Behind these selection criteria, however, was another less conscious method of selecting missionaries. In most cases it seems as if the possession of a wife was the most desirable characteristic of a missionary - a factor that was recognised widely in missionary circles. In 1836 Eliza Fairbairn wrote to her sister that "Dr Smith says that the usefulness of a missionary in the Interior depends almost more on his wife than on himself".[4] Men without wives were not rejected as missionaries; rather the presence of a wife was considered crucial to the objectives of the missionaries. Missionary wives, in theory, had several roles to play - some which were recognised publicly and some which were more covert. They were necessary to prevent their husbands entering into sexual relations with black women. They were necessary for teaching black women and children, and for raising money through links to voluntary organisations at home for these endeavours. They were a necessary half to the model of domestic arrangements the British were trying to inculcate among the Africans - which again was recognised in contemporary missionary circles. In the same passage as above Eliza Fairbairn wrote, "the Scotch missionaries will never acquire much influence over higher classes of Caffres because their wives do not keep their houses clean or their children in good order" - imputing to missionary wives equal responsibility for the conversion of heathens. Without wives, the missionaries

[3] Holt, B. Joseph Williams (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1954) pp.7-9.
[4] Cory MS6155. Eliza shows definite shades of her mother, Jane Philip, here.

would have been unable to transmit the virtues of nuclear families, monogamous marriages and the sorts of gendered behaviour considered normal under middle class ideology - and which Pamela Scully has shown was a very real objective of British state attention to free and unfree blacks in the rural Western Cape over the same period. [5]

The missionaries themselves were very conscious of the importance of having suitable wives. In a much quoted passage from Jane Eyre, St. John Rivers told Jane that "You are formed for labour, not for love... A missionary's wife you must - shall be. I claim you - not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service."[6] Missionaries often chose their wives on the basis of their potential 'usefulness' in transmitting the values mentioned above.[7] This is very apparent in the writing of two of the missionaries whose lives I discuss.

Elizabeth Lyndall came in for quite heavy scrutiny on the basis of her suitability as a missionary's wife. As an infant teacher she was an ideal choice; however, her health was uncertain. After her marriage to Samuel Rolland Dr John Philip wrote: "He could have made no better choice, and if his wife's health holds, I have no doubt she will be an asset to the Mission...If it was not for her rather ill health one could say she is in all respects

[5] Patricia Scully's doctoral thesis 'Liberating the Family' posited this argument for the same period, and in this area I am very much influenced by her work.
[6] Quoted in Comaroff and Comaroff, Revelation, p.50. It is also used in Valentine Cunningham's article, '"God and Nature Intended You for a Missionary's Wife": May Hill, Jane Eyre and Other Missionary Women in the 1840s'.
[7] Hall, C. White, Male and Middleclass, p.222.

completely prepared to be the wife of a missionary".[8] Rolland himself was very direct about his reasons for taking a wife.

> Nadat ek die posisie waarin ons verkeer en waarin ons ook in die toekoms ongetwyfeld sal verkeer, verplig om self huis te hou en alles te bestuur, van alle kante bekyk het, het dit my voorgekom dat die hulp van 'n metgesellin vir my volstrek noodsaaklik geword het, sowel om my tyd to bespaar as om na die bestuur van die woning om te sien...Bowendien sal 'n metgesellin van groot nut kan wees met die stigting van 'n skool vir dogters. *Wat omtrent die nuttigheid van Christelike vroue op 'n sendigstasie gese word, is nie blote teorie nie* [my italics]. Ons het self die voordeel wat die heidene daaruit getrek het, gesien op die stasies wat ons besoek het. Ek dink dat die tyd wat 'n troue eggenote my kan bespaar, tesame met die hulp wat sy my in my roeping sal kan verleen, sal vergoed vir die sorg wat aan die ander kant deur 'n gesin vereis word, en my daartoe in staat sal stel om meer te doen.[9]

Elizabeth Rogers was slightly more fortunate in the way her future husband wrote of her. In 1815 he wrote to the directors of the LMS (to whom Elizabeth had been introduced as a potential wife before their marriage) that "I am very happy to inform you and I think it will give you satisfaction that my partner in life answers my utmost wishes".[10] Both the Rosses and the Hodgsons were married before coming to the Cape. However, as Helen Blair only married John Ross a few months before their sailing, her suitability as a missionary wife (if only in the sense that she agreed with her husband-to-be's plans) must have come under appraisal.

This scrutiny was not a one-sided affair. Women were equally interested and concerned about their suitability as potential missionary wives. Indeed, some of them wished wholeheartedly to conform to this model of suitability. For British women who wished to

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[8] Schoeman, K. Samuel Rolland: pioneer van die sending in die Vrystaat (Kaapstad: Human en Rousseau, 1984), p.57.
[9] Schoeman, K. Samuel Rolland, p.57.
[10] Holt, B. Joseph Williams, p.15.

enter the mission field their only route until later in the nineteenth century was through a husband (sometimes a brother).[11] For this reason women who had the possibility of marrying missionaries needed to be well-prepared. Advice was available for missionary wives who wished to know how they should behave. In 1836 the Rev. William Shaw wrote these lines in his Memoir of Mrs Anne Hodgson.

> No female can be called to occupy a station in society of greater importance than this...Entertaining these views the compiler is happy to be able to quote, as an authority on this subject, the recorded opinion of the late Rev. Dr. ADAM CLARKE; who in his introduction to the Memoirs of the excellent Mrs. Clough, remarks, - that in examining candidates for the missionary work, it is proper "to enquire whether they be not, or about to be unequally yoked with unbelievers; or with persons unqualified to be real help mates and true yoke fellows in the word and work of the Gospel. Where this is not the case, how heavily to the wheels of the Gospel chariot, on which such missionary is mounted, move on! - tarda volventia plaustra. Such a wife is not respected, because she is not useful; and she is not useful because she is unqualified for the station tht she rather encumbers than fills.[12]

The advice however, seemed to offer very little in practical hints. The Wesleyans, in particular, were more concerned with a woman's spiritual suitability than with her practical talents. In the London Missionary Society, practical skills were not frowned upon. Alison Philip wrote to her future husband asking his advice on how she could work on becoming a useful missionary's wife, and among other things he advised her on "necessary acquisitions" such as making "soap, candles, butter and cheese etc".[13]

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[11] Hall, C. White, Male, p.222-223.
[12] The Rev. William Shaw, in The Memoir of Mrs Anne Hodgson, (London: J.Mason, 1836) p.108 (hereafter MAH).
[13] CAS BC742, William to Alison, 4 October 1839.

The Preservation of Missionary Wives' Writing

The experiences of missionary wives are also interesting because of the way they were represented in public in published accounts. When the missionary societies sent people into the field they expected regular reports from them. These included official reports to the Society Directors, as well as contributions to a number of national and local church and society magazines. In addition, the congregations associated with the various societies were also avid for news of Africa.[14] The experiences of missionaries were of great interest to people, both as a source of Christian homily and anecdotes about salvation, and as a source of information on black people.[15] Letters home were published in the Monthly Missionary Magazine, or the Edinburgh Quarterly Review. Diaries and collections of letters were published in their entirety. These accounts are fascinating because of the form they could take; women's experiences were chronicled, not only by the women involved but also by senior men in evangelical circles.[16]

In 1824 Dr John Philip published a book called the Memoir of Mrs. Matilda Smith about a South African woman who had worked at Bethelsdorp (one of the first LMS stations in the Eastern Cape), based on and containing some of her own writing. In his Researches in Southern Africa published in 1828 he also included extracts from the journals and letters of Mrs Elizabeth Williams, wife of one of the first LMS missionaries in Xhosa territory.

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[14] Comaroff and Comaroff, Revelation, p.55.

[15] Catherine Hall has written of the need for middle class Englishmen to define themselves as a class, in part by defining themselves as what others were not. Information on blacks was needed to show what Englishmen were not - part of the process of "othering" (White, Male, p.209). Elizabeth Elbourne also makes the point in her thesis that missionary reports were vital to the dissemination of knowledge of Africans in Britain (p.225). The Comaroffs also discuss the "othering" of Africa that occurred through the dissemination of information on Africa back to Britain, some of it from missionaries (p.105).

[16] Hall, C. 'Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in the 1830's and 1840's' in White, Male , p.225.

The Rev. William Shaw published, in 1835, a biography of Mrs Anne Hodgson, wife of the missionary Thomas Laidman, based on her letters.[17] Memoirs of missionary wives, written by senior male members of their churches, were in fact a common occurrence.[18]

Apart from any other conjecture to be made about this practice, it points to the possibility of a high rate of mortality among missionary women, since the memoirs were not written until they were dead.[19] In addition, missionary wives (preferably who died in foreign countries) provided ideal examples of Christian love and purity attained through sacrifice for the societies' members back home. The lives of these women were turned into examples of souls that had conquered sin on earth and having no more reason to be on earth, were removed to the ultimate Christian goal of heaven.[20] The sanitisation of experience that occurred in such instances was necessary in order for the memoirs to be cast in the form of a journey to spiritual redemption. Both Anne Hodgson's own letters, and versions of these letters edited by the Rev. Shaw are available, and in her case it is possible to check the editing done by the male missionary voice. Doubts and complaints about her situation have been edited out by Rev. Shaw, so that she appears at the end of his account like a stoical saint. Her account of herself was slightly different, as I discuss below.

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[17] This practice was widespread. Mary Anne Hutchins, wife of a Baptist missionary to Jamaica, had her memoirs written by her father in The Memoirs of Mary Anne Hutchins, (Hall, White, Male, p.235.

[18] William Shrewsbury, the Methodist missionary, published a memoir of his wife in the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Magazine in 1838 (Fast, H. 'African Perceptions of Missionaries and their Message: Wesleyans at Mount Coke and Butterworth, 1825-1835' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991) p.36).

[19] This is an impression, based on what I have read of individual missionary wives, and on figures given by Hildegard Fast. She has noted (and I am grateful to her for pointing this out) that out of some eight or so missionary wives in the Eastern Cape between 1830 and 1835, four died prematurely ('African Perceptions', p.36).

[20] Further research on the reception of these sorts of texts needs to be done. I am basing my statements on what I know of the content of these texts, and the importance the evangelicals placed on salvation, and tales of salvation, rather than any reader research.

The interest in missionaries' lives had implications, both for the way in which these missionaries wrote, and for the preservation of their accounts. It seems likely that a home interest in missionary activity encouraged missionaries and their wives to write prolifically, while the interest in their writing promoted its publishing in many instances - a factor in favour of this writing's preservation. This is a very brief discussion of a subject that probably deserves a thesis of its own.

CONDITIONS ON THE MISSIONS

It is difficult to generalise about the mission stations as I have done for Cape Town and Grahamstown. The conditions on the stations were not only different to these towns, but also to each other. My intention, therefore, is to give a brief overview of life on mission stations.

My observations are drawn from stations clustered in two areas of the country. They were also drawn from stations attached to the different missionary societies. While the latter seems to have made relatively little difference to circumstances on the stations, the former certainly did. The stations of Pirie, Lovedale and Kat River (variously GMS and LMS) were situated in Xhosa country beyond the borders of the Eastern Cape. From these stations it took an average of two weeks travelling in a wagon to reach Grahamstown. The stations themselves were fairly close together - generally about a days' horse ride. These stations were all affected by and involved in the series of frontier wars that occurred between the Colony and the Xhosa.

The other stations I discuss were all located north east of the Colony borders among either Sotho or Tswana speaking people. They were very much more isolated than the Eastern Cape stations and comparatively further apart. The stations among the Tswana were Maquassi, Platberg and Boetsap (or Bootchuaap). These were all run by the WMMS. Boetsap and Platberg clustered around the banks of the Vaal, and Maquassi was just north of the Vaal River. These stations were affected by the disturbances and movement of people known as the Mfecane. To the north east of the Colony (and in present day Free State) Beersheba was a PEMS station situated among the southern Sotho. It was settled later than the other stations I discuss, and so avoided becoming involved in the turmoil occasioned by the Mfecane.

Political Tensions on the Eastern Frontier

The Eastern Cape stations were situated beyond the borders of the Cape Colony in Xhosa territory. After the Fourth Frontier war of 1811 the Xhosa had been driven eastwards across the Fish River and out of the Zuurveld (which became Albany District where the 1820 settlers settled).[21] More pressure was then put on the land to the east of the Fish River, which was occupied by several competing Xhosa clans, notably those led by Ngqika and Ndlambe.[22] Rivalry between Ngqika and Ndlambe led to the Battle of Amalinde in 1818. In order to show support for their punitive ally, Ngqika, the British government sent out forces against Ndlambe. The result was the Fifth Frontier War between the British and some Xhosa between 1819 and 1820. The British defeated

[21] Peires, J.B. The House of Phalo (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1981) p.60.
[22] Peires, J.B. Phalo, p.61.

Nlambe's forces, leaving Ngqika paramount in the Ceded Territory. However, as a cost of their assistance, the British demanded the land between the Fish and the Keiskamma. This effectively marked the start of government expansion east, and resulted in a series of land conflicts culminating in the Sixth Frontier War (1834-1835).[23] It is worth understanding some of this conflict, as it involves a Xhosa chief closely associated with the Rosses at Pirie. Maqoma was a son of Ngqika, who fell out with the latter after Ngqika's involvement in the Fifth Frontier War. Maqoma had territory in an area around the Kat River, which became part of the allotment extracted from Ngqika. Between 1820 and 1834 the British forced him to remove from his land on three occasions, the last causing him to take up arms against the British.[24] The hostility between the British and the Xhosa continued after 1834, escalating into war again in 1846 and 1851. It affected all the mission stations in this area.

Amongst all of this, the missionaries found themselves involved in more than they might have wished. The missionaries aims were to civilise and Christianise. While they believed that their powers should only be exercised in and for religious pursuits, they were often ambivalent about how far the need to Christianise allowed them to interfere in secular matters.[25] The missionaries viewed their activities as means towards a Christian end. Although they involved themselves in the political manoeuvring between the Xhosa and the government at the Cape, supporting sometimes one and then the other, they justified their actions through a complex hierarchy of good and evil. This attitude allowed missionaries like John Brownlee to leave the LMS to become a government missionary,

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[23] Peires, J.B. 'The British and the Cape', p.483.
[24] Peires, J.B. 'The British and the Cape', p.483.
[25] Comaroff, Revelation, p.253.

and then to leave off being a government missionary to rejoin the LMS according to pragmatic spiritual expediency.[26]

Much of the current research into the history of the missions in the nineteenth century is tied up with the role of missionaries, and their tacit or complicit involvement in the extension of British rule (and all that this entailed). The introduction of Elizabeth Elbourne's thesis is very much concerned with trying to understand missionary motivation outside of the "footsoldiers of capitalism" thesis: we need to understand missionaries' responses in particular contexts before designating missionaries either as footsoldiers or anti-capitalist hecklers.[27] This is not really the place to summarise such a complex debate and I shall come back to this at the end of this chapter. Relevant, however, at this point, is the reaction of the Xhosa (in this instance) to the missionaries.[28] The missionaries may have viewed themselves as acting with the best motives. According to Jeff Peires their potential flocks were more ambivalent about these motives, and had equally varied responses.

> The chiefs agreed to receive the missionaries for a number of reasons, all of them secular. Political prestige, the provision of a regular channel of communication with the Colony, and fear of the consequences of a refusal all played their part. But these benefits were offset by suspicions of the missionaries' secular motives. Some were viewed as spies (which in a sense they were) or, even worse, part of a plot to destroy the Xhosa by drought and disease.[29]

Initially Christianity offered no long-term material gains to the Xhosa.[30] It attacked too many Xhosa institutions to be a viable religion - it decried polygamy, bridewealth and

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[26] Holt, B. Greatheart of the Border: The Life of John Brownlee (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1976).
[27] Elbourne, E. 'To Colonize the Mind', p.17.
[28] For a more detailed discussion of the African reaction to missionaries on the Eastern Frontier see Fast, H. 'African Perceptions'.
[29] Peires, J. Phalo, p.76.
[30] Peires, J.B. Phalo, p.75.

witchcraft among others, which were all fundamental to the Xhosa way of life. Although the missionaries may have had their own agendas in setting up mission stations, these were not always compatible with the intentions of the Xhosa, and relationships between the two groups at the establishment of the first stations (c.1820) were wary, deteriorating into open hostility after the 1834 war.[31]

The question of reasons for conversion among the Xhosa is a complex one. The view outlined above seems to be generally accepted by historians working in this field, as Hildegard Fast's thesis has demonstrated.[32] However, the work of people like Elizabeth Elbourne has demonstrated that conversion, at least among Khoi on mission stations in the Eastern Cape, is a far more complex process than we might imagine.[33] Conversion among the Xhosa needs to be re-examined in the light of this research. It might well reveal the possibility that Christianity as a religion had an appeal to some Xhosa that is lost in studies which explain why the Xhosa did not want to convert.

Political Tensions among the Tswana and the Sotho

When the Hodgsons first travelled inland in 1822 it was their intention to establish a mission among the Tswana-speaking people beyond the north-east borders of the colony. When they arrived at Griquatown, they were advised to go no further, because of unrest in the area they intended to visit - the result of the dispossession and movement of African

[31] Fast, H. 'African Perceptions', p.125.
[32] Fast, H. 'African Perceptions', ibid.
[33] Elbourne, E. 'Christianity, colonialism'.

people more commonly known as the Mfecane.[34] When the Hodgsons first encountered the Seleka-Rolong, amongst whom the missionaries wanted to settle, they were in flight after being routed by the Taung people from south of the Vaal.[35] Maquassi was destroyed both times the Hodgsons' attempted to settle there. The Rolong under Sekunyelo followed them to settle at Platberg, and later under the Rev. Archbell, the entire settlement numbering some thousand moved to Thaba Nchu.[36] This dispossession may well have had an effect on the missionaries relationship with the Seleka-Rolong, turning the balance of power in favour of the missionaries. Mrs Hodgson made references to Sekunyelo becoming more tractable after the second sacking of Maquassi.[37] However, it is difficult to know whether this had any fundamental effect on the process of conversion.

The Rollands established a mission station among a branch of the southern Sotho at Beersheba. They arrived in 1835, by which time the Sotho under Moshweshwe were fairly settled. Their experience of political unrest falls at the end of the period under discussion. In 1857, during the first Sotho-Boer war they were forced to flee the mission station. Although they returned they never managed to restore it to its former prominence because of opposition from the local Boers. Despite several years of negotiation with the British, Moshweshwe had not managed to retain sovereignty over all the land between the

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[34] The existence of an 'mfecane' has been the subject of very vigorous historiographical debate in the last twelve or so years, beginning with Julian Cobbing's unpublished 1984 paper 'The Case Against the Mfecane'. It is also my intention to avoid entering into this debate in this thesis. There seems to be some agreement among historians that there were a series of dislocations experienced along the borders of the Cape Colony during the first decades of the nineteenth century, for various reasons and precipitated by a combination of black and white activity, which resulted in the movement of many different African groups away from their established areas of residence. For further information on this debate the following are useful: 'Colloquium: The "Mfecane" Aftermath: Towards a New Paradigm' (Etherington, Maylam, du Bruyn, Webster and Meintjes), South African Historical Journal 25 (1991), and also the articles by J.D Omer-Cooper and J.B. Peires in Journal of Southern African Studies 19(2)(1993).

[35] Comaroff and Comaroff, Revelation, p.181.

[36] Ibid, p.12-13.

[37] MAH, p.175,181.

Orange and Caledon Rivers granted him in 1843. Conflict over land (between the Sotho and the Boers) finally resulted in war in 1857.[38]

The Daily Round

The lives of missionary women revolved around two separate, but associated sets of duties. They were required to be missionary wives and mothers, and they were also required to perform certain duties associated with their role as female missionaries. The two sets of duties were not mutually exclusive. They involved the same tasks but were directed towards different people. These duties and tasks tended to coincide with the middle class sexual division of labour, though not always. The missionaries were occupied in preaching (sometimes spending days riding to outlying settlements) and giving classes in conversion, translating the Bible into the local language, and building a succession of houses and churches.[39] Their wives provisioned the station, supervised any servants, sewed for themselves and the converts, taught the women inhabitants, established infant schools and looked after their own children.

The missionary wives had to be adept in all the domestic arts. Helen Ross wrote of her daily round:

> I have a great deal to do here tho I have a girl we have no shops to buy our candles bread butter nor cheese we have to make them & no tailor I cut & pin the peoples clothes & have to make all our clothes & the children's[40]

[38] Davenport, T.R.H. South Africa: A Modern History (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1977) p.105.
[39] This is not a flippant comment. The missionaries changed station so often, and had their houses burnt out from under them so often that they were forever building.
[40] Cory MS7807.

At Beersheba Elizabeth Rolland had to put her hand to baking, shoemaking, and gardening. At Maquassi, Anne Hodgson wrote "I must attend to oxen slaughtered for food, and also make butter, candles &c".[41] Elizabeth Rolland was the daughter of a middle class preacher, and a teacher before she married Rolland. Laidman Hodgson was a circuit preacher, and Anne Hodgson had spent most of her time in Britain either taking Bible classes or visiting the poor. Helen Ross had barely left home when she married John Ross. Only Elizabeth Williams, who was apparently a domestic servant before her marriage could have had any experience of sustained domestic labour. These women would all have known how to make candles before coming to the Cape; only one of them had probably ever had cause to make them on a regular basis in Britain.

The need for these sorts of skills on mission stations as opposed to in Britain is illustrated in the following quote from William Philip, son of the Philips, to his fiancé, Alison.

> My sister was asking me today if you knew how to make soap, candles, butter and cheese etc. as they would be very necessary acquisitions in Cafferland. I said I thought you knew how to make most of them. If you have time and the opportunity you might practise these operations as we might often be put to strange shifts in the interior of Africa.[42]

After they had completed the daily tasks necessary for the running of a missionary's house, the mission wives were not idle. In addition to their other duties they were expected to hold classes for the female inhabitants and children on the stations. For local women they held classes in what Elizabeth Rolland referred to as 'maternal' matters. "I have a Bible Class once a week for the [women] which I try to make as maternal as I can, by

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[41] MAH, p.147.
[42] William to Alison, CAS BC742, 4 September 1839.

encouraging them...to speak about their children".[43] By this point Elizabeth Rolland had handed over the teaching of the Infant School on the mission to Mrs Maeder as she felt it took too much time from her own children. The infant school had been established soon after her arrival at Beersheba: "...our first infant school was commenced. Nothing better than an open space enclosed by tall reeds called by the natives 'lelapa', could be found to receive the wild naked children who crowed into it one sabbath morning, and afterwards came regularly everyday".[44] At this school she taught the children marching, singing, clapping and reading.

Not all the missionary wives had the time to teach. The difficulty the Hodgsons experienced in establishing a permanent station prevented Mrs Hodgson's establishing a school at Maquassi. However, at Platberg she established an infant school with Mrs Archbell to teach the Rolong women sewing and catechism. When she was on her own at Boetsap her efforts were limited to teaching sewing, and contributing at the regular prayer-meetings.[45] Mrs Williams' husband wrote to the directors of the LMS that she was teaching the local Xhosa women to sew and make bonnets out of reeds.[46] Mrs Ross's letters make no reference to her teaching, though it seems as if she may have done in the period after 1850.

The missionary wives' labours might or might not be assisted by servants. Elizabeth Rolland makes no mention of domestic help, but it is difficult to imagine how she survived

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[43] A663.
[44] Schoeman, K. (ed) The Recollections of Elizabeth Rolland 1803-1901, (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1987) p.72-73 (hereafter RER).
[45] A567 17 December 1829.
[46] Holt B. Joseph Williams, p.43.

at Beersheba without any, especially when her three children were small. Anne Hodgson had the services of Orphena, an orphaned Rolong child they found in a deserted village. They found her when she must have been about eight years old, and she eventually accompanied them to Britain when they returned in 1831. The Hodgsons also had the use of a prize slave[47], who they employed in Cape Town before their second journey into the interior. In addition Mrs Hodgson makes mention of a local nurse she had for her third daughter.

There is much more information on Helen Ross's domestic help. At Inchera she had:

> two a big one & a small one. The older has been with me since I came except & months her name is Sarah...I have learned her to do everything for me She makes candles - salts meat churns bakes cooks washes & dresses sews knits stockings & darns them as well

Unfortunately for Helen Ross, Sarah left her in 1826 and she never again had such a good servant. The numbers of servants working for her in the house never numbered more than two, and she felt it quite hard that she could not hire white servants from the colony as the wives of the Wesleyan Missionaries did.[48] It seems likely that these women's letters do not represent accurately the number of people who may have assisted them in their work.[49] They only referred to their house servants, and in particular to their women servants.

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[47] Prize slaves were slaves apprenticed to people at the Cape, after the ships they were travelling upon had been captured by British navy ships. They were themselves captured by European nations who had not ceased to trade in slaves when Britain did.

[48] MS8247.

[49] The Comaroffs refer to this in connection with the labour of the missionaries. Contemporary pictures show black men working and the missionaries looking on, while the missionaries represent themselves verbally as working (Revelation, p.176).

Living on a Mission Station: Shelter, Food and Medicine

At Incehra, John Ross and Mr Bennie gradually built themselves a fairly substantial stone house. It was, according to Helen Ross, 45 feet long, fifteen broad and 8 high, with two side wings and an extra one at the back.[50] Their quarters were not always so well equipped. At Pirie, initially they lived in a two room house that had to double as a church until John Ross finished the church he was building single-handedly.[51] Mrs Williams also described the Williams' house in terms of its volume. Their first house was of rushes, sixteen feet long, fourteen wide and thirteen high.[52] The Hodgsons spent long periods of time living in their wagons. Their first journey into the interior took eight months, during which time they refused to sleep in any houses on the farms they encountered, for fear of finding it too difficult to return to sleeping in their wagons. The Hodgsons also travelled around so much, between stations, and between establishing stations, that they seldom lived in anything more sophisticated than a reed or wattle and daub house.[53] Finally, in late 1829 the Hodgsons moved into the most elaborate house they had occupied on either of their interior sojourns: "we inhabit a neat stone house, four rooms in front and a garret above. Laidman's study behind at one end and our pantry at the other with a garden twice the width of the house and as long as we wish".[54] When the Rollands arrived at Beersheba they first occupied a local hut: "the hut in which we had slept the previous night had been swept and "smeared", a partition raised, and by such arrangements as Africans can understand and accomplish, bedroom, dining-room and pantry had, by taking different

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[50] MS824.
[51] I am cautious of Helen Ross's descriptions of her husband labouring single-handedly. I suspect she means one European labouring with a number of Xhosa converts, though there is no way to prove this. MS7792.
[52] Holt, B. Joseph Williams, p.43.
[53] MAH, p.179, 189, 201 also A567.
[54] A567 17 December 1829.

articles out the waggon, been established."[55] After two years Rolland built a house of four rooms, with a separate kitchen, and a garden all round.

The missionaries were often short of food, as they had to be reliant on their own produce for long periods of time. They were dependent on what they could grow for their fruit and vegetables, and drought, hail and locust plagues were omnipresent threats.[56] For several years the Ceded Territory was subject to drought-related famine, and no corn was available locally. In 1832 their rainmakers forbade the local Xhosa to sell their corn to the Europeans because doing so might prevent the coming of the annual rains.[57] After the 6th Frontier War (1834-6) there was again famine in the Ceded Territory as the war had prevented the sowing of any crops. The Rosses had taken the precaution of walling in their kitchen garden, otherwise the few vegetables they had would have been lost.[58] Nevertheless they too were affected by the famine and had to import flour from Grahamstown. Helen Ross records the price of bad American flour at £2-10/barrel.[59]

Similar pressures on land made harvests unpredictable beyond the Orange and the Vaal Rivers. "Sufferings and privation were our daily lot. Our children learned to eat the coarse food of the natives, but it was not easy to do so. Often the only meat was to be obtained from the chase, the springbok, the eland, the gnu. Our little river supplied fish, and my husband's gun brought wild fowl to the table. The planting of a vineyard was a work of immense toil. The soil of our garden being composed entirely of pot-clay,

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[55] RER, p.66.
[56] See RER, p.82, also Holt, B. Joseph Williams, p.43.
[57] MS7807.
[58] MS7794.
[59] MS7794.

nothing would grow."[60] At Boetsap several of "our people" went on an annual hunt during the wet season to stock up on giraffe, wild cows, and springbok, which Mrs Hodgson told her sisters tasted rather like venison.[61]

The stations had to be largely self-sufficient. When at Boetsap Mrs Hodgson wrote that "our lives resembling those of English Farmers, having no market within a fortnight's journey we must necessarily make and do all within ourselves".[62] What the missionaries could not make themselves had to be brought great distances, often at a cost too prohibitive for the purchase of necessary articles. Apart from the trading fairs at Fort Willshire which provided some basic foodstuffs, everything the Rosses needed had to be brought from either Grahamstown or Cape Town. Even then there was no guarantee that the goods requested would arrive: "It is not so much for the price as we can scarcely get any article such as we want. I sent to Grahams Town for 6 yrds of dark print for frocks to the children...they sent it of white ground with a black dot...We send once a year to Cape Town for our goods..."[63]

Because they were so short of money the missionaries wives became very adept at writing home to request such items they required, both for themselves and their converts. Some items were bigger than others - Elizabeth Rolland wrote to the ladies of PEMS in Paris for money to build a school. Anne Hodgson wrote to ask her sisters for any old clothes they

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[60] Schoeman, K. RER.
[61] A567 5 August 1828 and MAH, p.166. It is unclear whether the missionaries in the latter case were supplying the Tswana and Griqua with guns for hunting, whether the latter two groups had their own guns, or whether guns were used at all. This obviously has implications for the sort of relationship that existed between the missionaries and their subjects.
[62] Mrs Hodgson, A567 1827.
[63] MS7783.

had, so that she could clothe decently the converted Tswana and Griqua at Boetsap. Helen Ross, as I shall show, elevated this practice into a full time occupation. These requests are poignant in the extreme - pointing to the effect that the simple absence of western commodities had on these women.

Not only did the missionaries families suffer from periodic shortages of goods - food and clothing - they also suffered through the lack of medical attention in the immediate vicinity. [64] Joseph Williams died of an unidentified fever, just seven days after falling ill. Elizabeth William's diary describes his dying - her only solution was to pray for redemption.[65] Helen Ross's first three children died at Incehra: Margaret from whooping cough, Richard and John from dysentery. The children all lingered a few days before they died and were treated with various medicines including antimonial wine, injections of starch and laudanum, syrup of squills, rhubarb and magnesia plasters.[66] Most of these cures seem to have had laxative properties, from the way Helen Ross describes them. The Rosses consulted a medical textbook called "Dr Burn's of Glasgow" but to no avail.[67] At one point John Ross was bitten by a rabid dog and had to treat the wound himself by cutting out a portion of his flesh.[68] Anne Hodgson was treated for breast cancer before she left Britain. During her last eighteen months at Boetsap she was aware of the regrowth of the tumour. "As a token of my Father's love, I have reason to believe the cancer in my

[64] All of the missionary wives gave birth with the assistance of local women as midwives. I am not quite sure what it speaks for that none of them died in childbirth, or had children still born.
[65] Holt, B. Joseph Williams, p.85-86.
[66] MS7787, 8241.
[67] MS8241.
[68] MS7802.

breast is confirmed; and, humanly speaking, before I can procure medical advice, it will be incurable."[69] Her supposition proved correct.

European Contact

For company and friendship the missionaries and their families also had to be relatively self-sufficient. At most stations they and their children were the only Europeans around. While they may have formed close relationships with some of their converts, this did not substitute for social interaction with other Europeans.[70] There were a few possibilities for contact with other Europeans. The Rosses nearest British neighbours were resident on nearby missions (Chumie and Lovedale), or at Fort Willshire. By 1830 the Wesleyans had six stations, and the GMS four to the east of the Great Fish River, and most had at least one missionary and an assistant missionary, both of whom might have had wives. However, Mrs Ross seems to have been suspicious of the Wesleyans, and there is little record of her contact with them. Sometimes itinerant European traders settled near their mission stations.

Helen Ross's friends were the wives of the other missionaries in the area. The Rev. John Brownlee, sometime government and sometime LMS missionary, had arrived with his wife in 1820. The Brownlees were first stationed at Chumie and after 1826 at Buffalo. The Rev. and Mrs Ritchie of the GMS arrived in 1821 and were stationed at Chumie until they founded a new mission in the Kat River Settlement in 1830. Mrs Ross, Mrs

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[69] MAH, p.224.

[70] Though as Hildegard Fast as shown, the Methodists were rather suspicious of becoming friendly with their converts ('African Perceptions', p.110).

Brownlee, Mrs Thomson and later Mrs Bennie kept in contact as much as their activities and their children allowed, and attended each other's confinements. These contacts were important to Mrs Ross, and she frequently mentioned the other women in her letters: "I had a visit lately from Mrs Thomson and family She Mrs Brownlee Mrs Bennie and myself are on the same good terms with each other as we have always been".[71]

On their first trip into the interior the Hodgsons were accompanied by the missionary Broadbent and his wife. Mrs Broadbent was younger than Mrs Hodgson, and seems to have required the assistance of the elder woman quite a lot - she was frequently pregnant. When the Hodgsons were at Platberg they had the company of the missionary James Archbell and his wife. At Boetsap they were only two days away from Platberg; nevertheless visiting between the two stations was not very frequent.

Although Elizabeth Rolland makes no mention of other Europeans at Beersheba, they did in fact have the company of other PEMS missionaries. The Rev. F. Daumas assisted Samuel Rolland between 1836 and 1838, after which he was replaced by the Rev. F. Maeder. Rev. Maeder married a Miss Clarisse Delatte in 1841, who had come to teach on the station in 1838. Mrs Maeder in fact took over many of Elizabeth Rolland's missionary duties, giving her more time to spend with her children.

[71] MS7791.

MISSIONARY WIVES: PERCEPTIONS AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS

Mrs Helen Ross

Helen Ross was the wife of the GMS missionary John Ross. The Rosses were married in Glasgow in April 1823 and shortly after left for the Cape. In August 1824 the Rosses arrived in the Ceded Territory, where they took up residence at Chumie Mission Station (see Figure 4.1).[72] Later that year they moved and founded Incehra Mission Station. Between 1824 and 1831 they were stationed at Incehra, which was renamed [Old] Lovedale after 1826. In 1828 they moved for a time to Balfour Mission St .ion, to the north of Lovedale, and in the Kat River Settlement. In 1831 they gave up Lovedale and moved in 1832 to Pirie Mission Station. They remained at Pirie until their deaths, although they had to flee the station during the Sixth (War of Hintsa), Seventh (War of the Axe) and Eighth Frontier Wars.[73]

All of Helen Ross's children were born at the Cape. The Rosses had seven children, three of whom died in their infancy. The Rosses were sometimes the only Europeans resident on the mission stations they tended. Helen Ross was frequently left on her own without the company of other European adults. This solitude and the death of several children were to have a profound impact on Helen Ross, and this is reflected in her letters. She wrote to her relatives, principally her own parents Mr and Mrs Bryce Blair in Glasgow. After 1834,

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[72] The Ceded Territory was an area of land between the Great Fish River in the West and the Kei River in the East, which Lord Charles Somerset had declared neutral territory after the war of 1819. All the Xhosa, except those under Ngqika were removed out of this area to create a buffer zone between colonists and Xhosa. Theoretically noone was allowed into this area, except some missionaries with government permission.

[73] Peires, J.B. Phalo, p.142-146.

when her mother died, she wrote to her father. She also wrote to her brothers and sisters, and her sisters-in-law. When her children moved away, to attend school or to visit their relatives in Scotland, she wrote to them.

In his book Lovedale South Africa 1824-1955 the Rev. R.H.W. Shepherd described Mrs Helen Ross as "true Lowland in physical strength and genial frankness...Five times she had to flee amid the perils of war for refuge in the Cape Colony. Four times her home and most that it contained was given to the flames. Never a murmur and never a sign of despondency was noticed. Comfort to all in trouble, cheer and encouragement to the despondent, and a truly Scottish welcome and hospitality marked her home to the last".[74] The Dictionary of South African Bibliography, obviously taking its cue from Shepherd, similarly describes her in rather bovine terms: "His wife, again, was lowland in physical strength; cheerful, genial and frank, she had the gift of management and was able to see to cattle and horses, hospitality and providing."[75]

These descriptions were culled from obituaries written by Lovedale inhabitants after her death. The only other accounts we have of her were written by her husband. Firstly, from the memorial written after her death by her husband. "There were not a few of her sable flock who looked up to her as a mother and found in her a teacher, a comforter, a guide. [She was] a faithful, loving, earnest fellow worker...she was his companion in youth his strength and consoler in maturity and in declining years she shared his sorrows and divided is joys".[76] And in a poem:

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[74] Shepherd, R.H.W, Lovedale South Africa 1824-1955 (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1971) p.5-6.
[75] Dictionary of South African Bibliography Vol. I, p.682.
[76] MS8128.

Oh! Helen dear Helen! It never can be
That age, time or death can divide thee and me
For that spot on earth that's aye dear to me
Is the turf that has covered my Helen from me[77]

Helen Ross's letters, however, indicate yet another character. In September 1829 she wrote to her mother "I find My Dear Mother was concerned about me being in low spirits but I have not been so since a short time after I wrote Miss Beglie".[78] Mrs Ross had every justification for low spirits. Her first three children had died within a year or two of their birth. Margaret, born 1824, died in 1825, and Richard (born 1825) and John (born 1826) died in 1828. In 1827, after having been four years at the Cape she wrote to her mother-in-law: "Dear Mother It is now upwards of four years since we parted and in that time I have been called upon to endure more affliction than in all the previous course of my life".[79]

While these comments were not contemporaneous (Helen Ross died in 1862), they do indicate a struggle between Helen Ross's public persona, and the person she was in private. Apart from the above accounts, there is very little information on Helen Ross. Most of what we know originates from her letters. These letters reflect how she felt about living in Africa, how she felt about being a missionary wife, and what she thought about the people around her. She wrote in a mixture of styles and on a combination of subjects, her writing voices being shaped by what was occurring around her. I begin my discussion of Helen Ross's subjectivity with a subject and a style which was exceptionally prominent in her

[77] MS8129.
[78] MS7802.
[79] MS8247.

writing. Aware of it or not, Helen Ross had a tendency bordering upon an obsession to write in lists, and in particular, lists of clothing or cloth necessary to make clothing.[80] Through its status as a recurrent subject, this tendency reflects on her relation with her family, her servants and the Xhosa she encountered. It provides a useful route into some of her perceptions.

In a letter home to her mother, written in 1824, she requested:

> 6 pairs cotton stockings, 9 yrds bombazet, 7 yrds dark print, 6 white spencers made - 6 1/2 yrds tick (1 1/2 yrds tick cord) 2 yrds white fringe 3 yrds green gauze for the windows 80 yrds strong cotton cloth at 6d. a yard a remnant of freeze for spencers to M 5 lbs first and second [caring] sweets & some sewing cotton...[81]

This was not an uncommon occurrence. Her lists of requests for goods from home often filled whole pages (quarto size) of letters home. In addition, while she also requested other goods like small shovels and clocks, the majority of her requests related to cloth or ready made clothes.[82] This tendency was too marked to be ignored. It was not a function of scarcity of goods, despite Helen Ross's remarking upon this: "It is not so much for the price as we can scarcely get any article such as we want. I sent to Grahams Town for 6 yrds of dark print for frocks to the children & 2 rattles they sent it of a white ground with a black dot such that you would pay 8d. a yard was 21d. they had no rattles but silver bells at £2.6 each.[83] By 1825 Grahamstown, only 70 miles away, was a thriving small town with supplies of all necessities and most luxuries. In addition, the opening of the

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[80] See: MS7783, 7784, 7785, 7786, 7788, 7791, 7792, 7793, 7795, 7799, 7800, 7802, 8235, 8239, 8241, 8244, 8246 for lists more than two lines long.
[81] MS8246.
[82] She also had a propensity for listing in other circumstances - ten lines to her brother devoted to a listing of wild animals in the vicinity of Chumie.
[83] MS7783.

Government Fair at Fort Willshire in 1825 meant that the Rosses could use the traders travelling between Grahamstown and Fort Willshire to transport the goods they required.[84]

In addition to this tendency to list clothing and cloth - most of which was intended for other people - Helen Ross also wrote frequently on the subject of clothing, and more often than not on the subject of clothing the Xhosa: "I gave her 4 frocks, 2 bedgowns, 2 petticoats, 2 shifts & 2 aprons".[85] She also refers to articles of clothing sent from home: "The good Caffer woman Elizabeth Mackindlay was indeed very thankful for the gown Dr Mackindlay sent to her."[86] In addition, sewing classes comprise Helen Ross's only exertions (at this point) in teaching the Xhosa women.[87]

Clothes, clothing people and teaching people how to sew formed very prominent elements of Helen Ross's discourse. There are patterns to the appearance of these elements, however. The lists requesting clothing from home became shorter the longer the Rosses were in Africa. By 1835 they no longer form whole pages of Helen Ross's letters, though requests home still feature in almost every letter. Helen Ross's requests for clothing for her family became fewer, and she also made fewer references to the clothing her children were wearing. When they were small she referred to them dressing in native fashion - wearing animal skins and being "painted all over with red clay & fat". [88] She also referred to their wearing out their clothes very quickly. "I ...have to make all our clothes & the childrens & they wear a great many".[89] As they got older references to their clothes

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[84] MS7783.
[85] MS7784.
[86] MS7794, also MS7784.
[87] MS8241, 8246, 7783, 7785, 7802.
[88] MS7783.
[89] MS7807.

became very few, though she did discuss outfitting them for the hostel at Lovedale Seminary.

I think there are several reasons for Helen Ross's fixation on clothing, related to her perceptions of appropriate gender behaviour, to her perception of different categories of race, and also, to an intense homesickness. I shall deal with the latter first.

Very few of Helen Ross's letters home in her first ten years at the Cape do not begin with her begging her family to write more often: "If you knew how it refreshes me when I get a letter from you in this wilderness."[90] She was clearly unhappy - the result of an unfamiliar country, unfamiliar people and the death of her first three children.[91] I do not think we can underestimate the effect the deaths of her children had on her. When she gave birth to a son in 1828, she named him Richard John after his two dead brothers. Comparisons between this Richard and his predecessor were common in her letters: "We think he is like his namesake tho his eyes are dark and his skin not so pure".[92] The dead Margaret was also reincarnated in another daughter born several years later. In order to remove her misery at her children's deaths she attempted to recreate them in her other children.

Her lists, from this point of view, can be seen as an attempt to transport the form of Scotland, of home, onto the Eastern Cape landscape in an attempt to refashion her

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[90] MS7784.

[91] It is possible that Helen Ross was suffering from what Freud has termed as melancholia, rather than mourning, the difference being (in this instance) that a melancholic can react to loss in an obsessional way (Schiesari, J. The Gendering of Melancholia, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) pp.38-39). A discussion of her behaviour in these terms, however, would take my analysis in a direction other than that which I am following.

[92] MS7802.

surroundings into familiar territory - to clothe the countryside in familiar garb. She wanted, literally, to make those closest to her more familiar by dressing them in European clothing. Her habit of naming mission servants after European friends - which I discuss below - can also be viewed in this light. In addition, her giving clothing to people was one way of setting up relationships, especially with the Xhosa women whose assistance she needed. As she gave clothing, she was enhancing her own status and creating what she may well have hoped were ties of obligation.[93]

Gift-giving was an important form of establishing relations among the Xhosa, as was emarked upon at the time by Stephen Kay, a Wesleyan missionary: "The reciprocity of friendly tokens is the customary mode of forming attachments, & establishing connexions throughout the whole of Kaffraria."[94] The following comment about Chief Maqoma's mother is revealing in this regard: "I was very sorry about parting with them particularly the Chief's Mother & daughter They generally sat three days of the week with me, they sewed sometimes: the Mother was very desirous to have cloths to come with I gave her a gown shift & napkin for her head."[95] As Mrs Ross became accustomed to living in Africa, and as she bore children who lived her confidence increased and her preoccupation with clothing everyone around her in European style waned.

Helen Ross was conversant with the behavioural standards of contemporary gender ideology. Her homesickness, and her attempts to alleviate it were articulated in behaviour

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[93] In this last she may well have been mistaken in her thinking. She refers to women beating the clothes to pieces on the rocks twice, in 1826 (MS7783) and again in 1832 (MS7807). It seems as if the women were less than happy about her strictures on wearing European clothing. It might be nice to think that their reluctance to washing clothes the European way was resistance to the forces of colonialism.
[94] Quoted in Fast, H. 'African Perceptions', p.113.
[95] MS7802.

appropriate to her gender - hence her preoccupation with sewing and clothes, and her focus on moulding native women into the European image. This latter point is important, because in their first few years in the colony, Helen Ross's perception of Africans was moulded by her perception of differences between men and women. The majority of her early comments about Africans were about women. Initially she made frequent references to her attempts to clothe her women servants, and (perhaps more importantly) to the frequency with which they wore through their European clothing: "The girls are very sore on clothes..."[96] and also "It is a great trouble to get strong clothes for them here & they wear so many having been accustomed to the skin karosses".[97]

While Mrs Ross understands the reason for their wearing through these clothes, there is an additional element to these descriptions. There were definite similarities between the manner in which Mrs Ross described her young male children (see above), and the manner in which she described adult Xhosa women. Both had a resistance to wearing European clothing, and both wore through their European clothing rather rapidly. In her accounts of her women servants she always referred to them as girls: "you enquire about the girls and what they can do for me I have two a big one & a small one".[98] This similarity of description may have arisen because the children spent so much time with their Xhosa nurses, but it also indicates some of Mrs Ross's thinking on hierarchies of categories of people. These descriptions of Xhosa women relegated them to the status of children - an infantilisation that must reflect something of they way Mrs Ross perceived them. It is interesting, too, that Mrs Ross only compared Xhosa women to her children and not vice

[96] MS7784.
[97] MS8247.
[98] MS7783.

versa: her children such as Richard who had "most of the Caffre Character" were compared to adult Xhosa.[99]

This attitude is paradoxical, given Mrs Ross's obvious need for the labour and society of Xhosa women. I would suggest that she felt intensely ambivalent about Xhosa women - close to them because they were women and separate from them because they were black. As the Rosses spent more time in the Eastern Cape, however, her references to clothing her women servants, and to her women servants at all, tapered off. By 1835 she referred to neither. Either Helen Ross's women servants were all sufficiently clothed, or there no longer existed the reason f· ·her preoccupation with clothing.

In comparison to the number of references she made to Xhosa women in her earlier letters (until about 1835) Mrs Ross made few references to native men - with or without clothing. Furthermore, the references she made differed qualitatively from her references to Xhosa women. Her descriptions of African people in fact, fall into three categories - black women, black men, blacks generally (which category, as I will show, can be further divided). In her first description of African men she contrasted them strongly with African women.

> you wish me to let you know something of the Caffres. I will attempt to give you some account of them. The men generally are tall & strong & generally lazy. Their manner and habits dispose them to be so. They look after the cows milk them, hunt, make their assegaais shields, ornaments, scrape the skin for the karosses & the milk sack, make the fence around the garden & the cattle kraal and cut the corn. The women sow the corn, beat it out & sow all things, make the houses, bring the wood & make the karosses [a description of kaross making, half an A4 page long, follows][100]

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[99] MS7791.
[100] MS8246.

This was behaviour totally at odds with what she would have come to expect from European men. African men were therefore different, not only because they were black, but because they behaved unlike European men. While she often accused Xhosa women of being careless, she never accused them of being lazy. She seemed to have reserved different judgements on Xhosa men and Xhosa women, with the former falling very much into a developing stereotypical category of idle black men.[101]

In a conversation with her son Richard, reported in a letter home, she revealed further biases against African men.

> Last night I was speaking to hir about hell & all the wicked people there He asked what like was the devi. vas he black or white & what he did He asked if the Caffres go there I said good Caffres go to heaven He asked who are the good Caffres I mentioned Henry...& Robert Balfour he added John Burns I asked him, if John was good He said yes he goes with trousers.[102]

Several things emerge from this passage. Firstly, it is apparent that in Richard's mind, Africans were going to hell, and secondly Richard thought that good Africans were those who wore trousers. Mrs Ross's thinking is slightly more opaque. She acknowledged that Africans had as much chance of entering heaven as the English, but in her mentioning only two African men who qualify for heaven her thinking condemned every other African male (and all African women?) to hell. She felt intensely ambivalent about African men. In this instance she only felt able to comment upon Xhosa men who had ostensibly converted to Christianity (as their names indicate). African women were much more approachable for her, and her writing of them reflects this. However, her sustained silences on the subject of African men hints at a category of blackness that was too

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[101] See for instance, Coetzee, J.M. White Writing (on the Culture of Letters in South Africa) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
[102] MS7789.

foreign, and too male, for her to come to grips with - except in terms of stereotypes that were becoming common property among whites.

Her comments about Africans collectively fall again into several categories - descriptions of political happenings (specifically associated with Maqoma), accounts of mission converts, and descriptions of the Khoisan. In addition her letters contained one description of African indigenous life, most of which ironically (and predictably) was devoted to a discussion of traditional Xhosa clothing. She seldom used any adjectives when describing the Xhosa - she generally described what they did rather than what they were like. She referred to them as Caffres, occasionally mentioning `amboekies and Mantatees.[103] She never referred to them as savage or wild people, but rather as not fitting into these categories: "The Caffres are not savages".[104] As time passed, however, her references to the Xhosa became more generic and a note of disapproval entered her descriptions. "The people however are far from being properly affected by the goodness of God. They do not hate & turn from their sin to God, nor cry to Him to be merciful to them...They are much given to feasting and dancing...Still we are not left without much encouragement in our work".[105] As Helen Ross settled into her life as a missionary wife, she ceased to reflect her interactions with the Xhosa as on a personal level, and she began to reflect her interactions through the mediation of the missionary eye, listing numbers of converts etc.

While Helen Ross may have had difficulty in knowing how to think of Xhosa men and the Xhosa more generally, her opinion of the Khoisan was unequivocal. She mentioned the

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[103] The Thembu and southern Sotho.
[104] MS7783.
[105] MS7798, the date of the letter is 1840.

Khoisan with no trace of discomfort, as if any threat they might pose to her would be very negligible. "They have gone [to the Kat River Settlement] to be relieved from the burdens & oppressions they are subject to in this country - such as stealing the burden of their friends, who whenever they see them have anything, will sit for days at their houses asking it, & the idle stopping for months with the industrious."[106] She regarded them as lazy good for nothings, who preyed upon the better off and removed what was rightfully theirs. In particular she resented their acquisition of land on the Kat River, which she believed belonged to Maqoma.[107]

Helen Ross was in her early twenties when she arrived at the Cape. Her husband was highly educated and it seems likely that she was too. His education - Latin, Greek, Logic, Moral Philosophy, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Geology and some Anatomy - was based on models of education typical of the Scottish Englightenment.[108] Both Rosses were conversant with the anti-slavery debate, and the parcels from home contained books and journals to keep them up with world happenings in fact and fiction.[109] Despite this liberal outlook, personal hardships and the situation on the eastern frontier served ultimately to stifle any empathy she may have had for Xhosa women. At the end of her life she was the model of an ideal mission wife, whatever her deficiencies in this role to begin with. As an ideal missionary's wife she espoused a form of racism in which black

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[106] MS7789.

[107] John Ross was very friendly with Maqoma, the son of Ngqika, whose access to land in the Ceded Territory had been disallowed to make way for the Kat River Mission Station. Privately Mrs Ross did not share her husband's sentiments, but in public she supported Maqoma's cause.

[108] Berning, M. and Fold, S. 'Scottish Missionaries on the Frontier', p.5. for Ross's education, Chitnis, A. The Scottish Enlightenment (London: Croom Helm, 1976) pp.6-8, 125-5 for a discussion of education and the Scottish Englightenment.

[109] Also Bank, A. 'John Philip and the Ambiguities of Early 19th Century Liberalism at the Cape'.

was inferior, but in which devotion to God and the adoption of Western material trappings - particularly clothing - could lessen that inferiority.

Mrs Anne Hodgson

Mrs Anne Hodgson was the wife of the WMMS missionary, Thomas Laidman Hodgson. The Hodgsons arrived at the Cape in 1821. In 1822 they travelled east, and then north beyond the Vaal River to establish a station among the Rolong at a place called Maquassi. In 1824 they returned to Cape Town, leaving the station in the hands of another missionary. In 1825 they returned to find the mission destroyed as a result o fighting between the Rolong, the Korannas and several other clans scattered as a result of the Mfecane. They then moved south of the Vaal River, establishing a station first at Platberg (1826), and then at Boetsap (1828-1830). In 1831 they returned to England to visit Anne Hodgson's ailing mother, and for Anne Hodgson's own health. She died the same year of breast cancer that had first been diagnosed and operated upon in 1817. Three years later Hodgson married Anne's sister Elizabeth and returned to the Cape. The Hodgsons had three children, all daughters. The first one died young in Britain, the second, Mary Anne (b.1822) died of a fever in 1826, and the third one, Isabella was born in Boetsap in 1829.

At the Cape Mrs Hodgson kept a diary and wrote letters home to her sisters and parents in Darlington, Durham. Her writing has been preserved in two ways. After her death, her husband was requested by her family and friends to write about her life. He felt unable to complete the task (according to Shaw), and requested the Hodgson's friend, and prominent Wesleyan preacher and missionary William Shaw, to write an account of Anne Hodgson's

life. The result is a biography by Shaw, called The Memoir of Mrs A. Hodgson. It is based on Mrs Hodgson's letters and a journal kept since age thirteen - it obviously begins much before the Hodgson's arrival in Africa. It also includes extracts from Laidman Hodgson's journal (these have subsequently been published in a volume edited by R.L Cope). In addition, some of Mrs Hodgson's letters home are lodged in the Historical Papers Department of the University of the Witwatersrand. They are typescripts from the originals, and differ quite substantially from their equivalents in Shaw's book.

The discrepancies provide an interesting way of examining stereotypes about women in the nineteenth century - Shaw has edited Mrs Hodgson's letters into an account that is specifically intended to prove the piety of women, abridging descriptive passages and concentrating on those that emphasise Mrs Hodgson's (triumphant) spiritual battles. This practice was intentional - Mrs Hodgson's life was intended to 'exhibit' (Shaw's word) to "the pious and intelligent reader" the grace and glory of God (sic).[110] I referred earlier to the importance of a literate missionary body writing for home consumption. Mrs Hodgson's memoir is one example of what was presumably a very effective propaganda machine operating in Methodist circles in Britain.

The Hodgsons spent a large amount of their time in Africa travelling. They made two long trips from the Cape across the Orange River and back again, several trips from the north of the Colony to Grahamstown and back, and a round trip from Britain to the Cape and back again. Initially, the idea of travelling appealed to Mrs Hodgson: "...it is considered quite a journey of pleasure...I feel quite pleased with the idea of our tour and wish I could have

[110] MAH, p.106.

some of you in the waggon with me."[111] After they had been travelling two months she wrote again to her sister: "the roads were not very good, the mountains very grand, and the nights very cold, but with the sails of the wagon made fast we slept very well, you can scarcely think how comfortable we can make the waggon".[112] Six months later she wrote "Our trials were not a few; travelling in a wagon for eight months, far from civilised life..."[113] After that, the novelty of travelling wore off quite rapidly, as well it might for someone travelling in rough conditions for extended periods of time.

However, Mrs Hodgson's increasing dislike of travelling was not only the result of physical discomfort. Accounts of travelling begun as descriptions of physical conditions would elide into accounts of spiritual travail. "Travelling in Africa is not congenial with my disposition, it is both unpleasant and unprofitable, but some must prepare the way". This is one of the earliest indications of Mrs Hodgson's perception that her journey through Africa was part of a spiritual mission. The journey existed for her on two planes - physical and spiritual - and the hardship of trekking for Mrs Hodgson was an entirely logical adjunct to her ideological mission.[114] She slipped so often between accounts of the Hodgson's physical journey and their spiritual mission that it is sometimes difficult to follow her writing.

It is important to note though, that Mrs Hodgson's spiritual mission had a spiritual twist. It had, as its primary focus, not the saving of heathen souls, but rather the saving of her own. Mrs Hodgson was quite clear on this. According to her, it was "a dread of divine

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[111] A567 7 February 1822.
[112] A567 21 December 1822.
[113] Shaw, W. MAH, p.146.
[114] The literary equivalent of Mrs Hodgson's writing is The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan.

displeasure" that caused her to acquiesce in her husband's decision to go to Africa. Neither "doing good, nor avoiding evil" could lead to personal salvation, "religion alone can give solid happiness".[115] This is why she was able to draw so many immediate, and unconscious parallels between the Hodgsons" journey and her quest for the eradication of her own perceived sin - to her the latter was a practically impossible achievement, beset by hardship and temptation at every turn. Given this agenda, it is not surprising that the presence of Africans sometimes seem peripheral to Mrs Hodgson's thinking (as I will go on to show).

It is easy to see how often Mrs Hodgson's thinking was structured in terms of beginnings and ends, wildernesses and settlements, and obstacles to be overcome. More often than not she used Biblical analogies and metaphors to achieve this structure. On their journeys, on two occasions, Mrs Hodgson wrote about their undertaking two difficult river crossings. For the first "I had no fear when in the water, but felt a little afraid before we entered, and truly thankful when on the opposite bank"[116] and the second "On leaving Cape Town our trials were not a few, in consequence of torrents of rain which fell, causing the rivers to swell as to be almost impassable".[117] These crossings have more significance than would at first be apparent. At one point she asks one of her sisters "Or are you on this side Jordan still?...Go plunge and bathe in that healing stream."[118] Crossing rivers has a metaphoric importance, linked to the overcoming of sin, and as the Hodgsons travel further into the countryside they create even greater distance between themselves, and the

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[115] A567 7 May 1825.
[116] A567 21 December 1822.
[117] MAH, p.168.
[118] A567 17 December 1829.

temptations and "iniquity" of the "Sodom" that was Cape Town.[119] It is not surprising then that Mrs Hodgson often compares the surface of the interior of the country more favourably than with the Cape landscape.[120]

The areas in which the Hodgsons chose to establish their stations were veritable havens in the wilderness. "Bootchuaap is situated upon two strong fountains which give sufficient water for a number of gardens, and some corn lands".[121] The ability to plant and grow food was important; the mission stations needed to be self-sufficient in order to support their inhabitants. Only if the inhabitants were fed, would they have time to turn to God. It was not surprising then that Mrs Hodgson's references to cultivation were also loaded with meaning. "But Africa is a barren land - Tho' preparing the soil is not so pleasant as sowing the seed, or reaping the harvest; yet it is equally necessary".[122] From this it appears that Mrs Hodgson's perception of the landscape and the indigenous people was framed by her knowledge of the Bible. At several points, when she was trying to refer to the land or her surroundings, her discourse elides into a description of what is part of her spiritual mission. She is so accustomed to thinking in religious terms that religious metaphors come to dominate her discourse.

Mrs Hodgson's perception of her physical activities as part of a journey that would allow her to complete her quest for salvation frames her discourse, but her religious metaphors were not the sum of her discursive strategies. When the Hodgsons arrived at the Cape they

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[119] A567 7 February 1822. Mrs Hodgson's description and opinion of Cape Town is unflattering to its inhabitants in the extreme - "drunkenness and fornication both in high and low life are scarcely considered as sins, and the Sabbath seems scarcely known" (A567 October 1821).
[120] Though sometimes she has to spoil her effect by referring to drought in the interior (A567 5 June 1826).
[121] A567 5 August 1828.
[122] MAH, p.167,170, A567 7 May 1825.

soon realised that it was vital that they learnt to speak Dutch, as it was the medium of exchange between both the Dutch themselves, and also slaves, servants and the African people of the interior. Not only was it the medium of communication, it was the language in which Africans were taught about God. There is a natural concern in Mrs Hodgson's letters about language. Without an understanding of Dutch the Hodgsons would be unable to perform their mission. However, Mrs Hodgson's references to language and its practice display a preoccupation beyond that associated with a lack of comprehension.

When the Hodgsons were in Cape Town for the first time, Mrs Hodgson's descriptions of people were often combined with references to the languages they spoke or did not speak. A French woman, for instance "could speak no other language tho' she had resided 30 years in Cape Town" while a Dutch minister could speak no English.[123] Quite obviously Mrs Hodgson was referring to a practical difficulty: "I find the difficulty of not being able to converse in the Dutch language tho' I can understand".[124] However, when the French woman found she could not converse with Mrs Hodgson, she called in "a slave to be our interpreter, she could read, write and speak all three languages". Mrs Hodgson goes on to add "If we had Mrs Broadbent with us we should have [understood each other], as she can converse in Portuguese, Cingalese, French, English and understands a little Dutch".[125] Mrs Broadbent was compared to an anonymous slave girl; while the latter spoke and read three languages, only Mrs Broadbent was capable of understanding them. Mrs Broadbent could have made the various European women understand each other, the slave girl could only function as an interpreter.

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[123] A567 October 1821.
[124] A567 October 1821.
[125] A567 October 1821.

Mrs Hodgson distinguished people, under certain circumstances, on the basis of the language they spoke. Europeans may not understand one another, but the inference is that understanding was a possibility. Between Europeans or between Europeans and Africans, Africans could only act as language conduits - interpreters. Orphena, the Hodgson's adopted Tswana servant, was a case in point: "Through the medium of Orphena I conversed with one of the Chiefs but he was as ignorant of divine things as the beasts that perish".[126] Orphena's work is edited out of Shaw's version of the letter - even he perceived her only as a conduit. To Mrs Hodgson's mind, there was very little difference between interpreters and Africans. She commented on their poor quality ("interpreters are sc bad to meet with") and felt unsafe in the interior, on one occasion, with "a poor Interpreter who is of a dreadful bad temper".[127]

Mrs Hodgson divided people into categories based on the languages they spoke and their proficiency in speaking them. Her categorisation, however, was not merely reflective of reality, but also referred to perceptions of status. What emerges from her writing is a hierarchy of languages - and conceptual ability. People who understood English were at the top of her list. People who understood European languages were near the top. African languages (which were "very difficult and unformed") fell very low down her list in terms of the abilities required to speak them. Furthermore, as her use of "interpreter" and "understands" shows, knowledge of a language did not guarantee understanding of what its words meant.

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[126] A567 7 May 1825 (these are from separate sections of the letter, also MAH, p.187).
[127] A567 June 1826 and A567 7 May 1825.

This discussion of language is informative because it not only reflects some of Mrs Hodgson's personal social hierarchy, but it also points to a method of social categorisation that subsumed racial differences for Mrs Hodgson. In several of her letters she referred to the difficulties of remaining faithful to God in a heathen country, one of the principal difficulties being the lack of religious services in English. Dutch was not an adequate substitute. Mrs Hodgson was quite convinced, not only that God spoke English, but that God was an Englishman. One's path to God was expedited through an understanding of English. It was therefore important to her to let her relatives know that "though the Dutch is still her [Mary Anne] language yet she repeats the Lord's Prayer and a few verses of hymns very correctly in the English language".[128] The Tswana, because they were - the inference is constitutionally - incapable of understanding English could never hope to attain the "true means of Grace". They needed the Gospel, but translated into Setswana it was an inadequate - and translated - version. It was an inferior avenue to spiritual enlightenment: not understanding English the Tswana could never hope to find God. The Tswana were not only black on the outside, they were also black on the inside - they were twice damned.

Mrs Hodgson did not come to this opinion immediately the Hodgsons arrived in the country. It is the result of an accumulation of perceptions and experiences. It can be detected in her language in areas other than the ones already discussed. When the Hodgsons first arrived, Mrs Hodgson wrote "Black faces are now so familiar to me...I feel quite pleased to see them".[129] She continued to be impressed with what she saw,

[128] A567 7 May 1825.
[129] A567 October 1821.

particularly with regard to the conversion of slaves.[130] She appears to have been familiar with the terms of the anti-slavery debate, and with anti-slavery literature in Britain (though her letters make no reference to reading anything other than the Bible). When a slave ship put into Table Bay, she wrote to her mother about the "inhuman traffic" and the "unhappy creatures who were nearly naked and looked wretched in the extreme".[131] However, as the Hodgsons spent more time in the interior and come into contact with the unconverted Tswana, she began to perceive blackness differently.

> I often thought before I came to this country that I had not a proper feeling for the Heathens, but I think I witness sufficient society to awaken it. - What an awful consideration that so many thousands of our fellow creatures are living destitute of the knowledge of God, heaven, hell, futurity, or even the existence of their souls until they find them lost for ever, thinking they perish as the brutes they almost live like them.[132]

Brutishness (a similar mode of reference to that of the 'beasts' quoted above) has replaced naiveté in Mrs Hodgson's vocabulary of race. This change had its origin in several places, but all hinge on a greater, rather than lesser acquaintance with blackness. This was particularly apparent when Mrs Hodgson discussed the Bushmen. In 1822 she described them as "a poor despised people and though called wild Bushmen, we never saw any cause for fear while travelling through their country".[133] In 1828 her tone had altered considerably: "they are certainly the most treacherous, cruel race I have ever seen and I greatly fear they will ever be civilised or converted". It would be interesting to see how

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[130] She repeats anecdotes told to her about the piety of slave children (A567 October 1821).
[131] A567 7 February 1822. Presumably she did not see the slaves herself, but was reporting what her husband had told her.
[132] A567 5 June 1826.
[133] A567 21 December 1822.

her descriptions affected her relatives' perceptions of blackness, and whether they contributed to changes in discourses around race in Britain.[134]

It is interesting to see that as Mrs Hodgson's opinion of the Tswana and other Africans drops, she began to couch her descriptions in ways which project a stasis onto the condition of being black. Once she uncovered their iniquity, she found they had always been depraved. It is therefore supremely ironic that most of her comments on depravity were based on particular behaviour. At one point in their travels she commented on the behaviour of some of the local women: "One of the women that we had with us offered to sell her only child about 6 months old for beads, upon asking if she had no affection for her offspring, she replied, she had love for the child, but more for beads.[135] Beads, tobacco and meat recurred in Mrs Hodgson's complaints about the Tswana and the Bushmen.[136] She referred to them generically on one occasion as "a people, who having never heard the glorious gospel, are dead in trespasses and sins and whose principal requests are: 'Give me meat', 'Give me tobacco.'"[137] with "their enjoyments almost exclusively confined to meat and tobacco".[138] Her comments in this vein only ceased once the Hodgsons had settled at Boetsap - where presumably meat, tobacco and bead distribution were regulated.

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[134] A subject touched upon by Elizabeth Elbourne in her thesis '"To Colonize the Mind"' and also in Catherine Hall's chapter on gender and ethnicity in White, Male. Unfortunately this sort of study was beyond the scope of this thesis.

[135] A567 7 May 1825. This quote touches on the issue of internal slavery in the Cape Colony, which forms a major part of Cobbing's thesis about the causes of the Mfecane.

[136] These items were traded with the Tswana and Bushmen in exchange for assistance, security and access to land. Rev. Hodgson used beads liberally in trying to negotiate a settlement between Sekonyelo and the Taung.

[137] A567 7 May 1825.

[138] A567 5 June 1826.

Mrs Hodgson condemned the Tswana and the Bushmen, ironically, for some of the very dependencies fostered in them by Europeans. Beads, moreover, were the basis of the currency the Hodgsons themselves depended upon for purchasing goodwill from the people around them. Mrs Hodgson is completely unaware of the ironies of her statements in this regard. To her, the material benefits of western culture were an integral part of the route to salvation. Although she eschewed the material luxuries of Western life she felt that she had very great difficulties in attaining a state of grace without proper churches and without English services.

While Mrs Hodgson has a very condemnatory attitude to most of the Africans she encountered - the result of being twice damned - some managed to escape this conundrum. The blacks she regarded with more ambivalence were quite specifically those who were proceeding towards conversion. However, as I have already shown, these aspirant converts could only ever hope to obtain second class Christian status, because their blackness made them inherently unable to grasp the full meaning of God's word. However, second class Christian status was better than none.

In this instance, Mrs Hodgson's relation with Orphena is instructive. The Hodgsons had found Orphena abandoned in a deserted Rolong village in early January 1823, when she was aged about eight. They took her in and named her Orphena Retford.[139] This is what Rev. Hodgson had to say about her: "and her natural disposition being most obstinate, her habits indolent and filthy, nothing but a sense of duty to God, and pity for the child, could have induced us to endure the distressing circumstances which frequently occurred with

[139] The latter a reference to the town in which Rev. Hodgson had been preaching prior to the Hodgson's coming to the Cape.

her".[140] Orphena never had a chance - even her first name was an adaptation of her status. She had to be tamed and moulded into the shape of a European, though she could never hope, in the Hodgson's eyes, to obtain European content - she could only be European on the surface. Two years later Mrs Hodgson wrote similarly to her sisters:

> Orphena is also a very engaging child, she sews very neatly and is not only a playmate for Mary Ann but is becoming useful to me, especially as an Interpreter to the Bootchuanas, she understands English and speaks Dutch well, so that I hope she will reward me for the trouble I have had, which has not been a little, her disposition requires more severity than I wish to exercise, but like all other natives she cannot bear indulgence. It was some time before I gave credit to this assertion, but *experience has taught me*" (my italics).[141]

Mrs Hodgson had several different visions of blackness, but they all drew sustenance from being degrees away from damned rather than from a possibility of achieving equality with Europeans. Her double-damned classification drew its impetus, like so much else of her thinking, from an intense religiosity. Religion pervades any account of her because it insinuated itself into her language, and presented her with a cartographical view of the world in which heaven and hell were literal destinations, albeit on different planes. Her vocabulary was steeped in religious metaphor, not the least being a tendency to think of hell as blackness. Under these circumstances, despite her best intentions and her British training in abhorrence of the slave trade, she could not help but view people who were literally black and spoke a different language as steeped in infamy and sin.

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[140] MAH, p.138.
[141] A567 7 May 1825.

Elizabeth Rolland

Elizabeth Rolland was the wife of Paris Missionary Society missionary, Samuel Rolland. Before Elizabeth Rolland's marriage she was Miss Lyndall, teacher at the first infant school established by the Philips at the Cape. She was recruited by Dr John Philip in London in 1830, and came to the Cape with the Philips in 1830. She first taught at an Infant School for slave children, and then at a school for white children. In 1833 she went on a visit to Bethelsdorp for her health, where she received a proposal from Rolland, who she had originally met on their trip to the Cape. The Rollands were married in January 1834, after which they proceeded to the mission station at Mothitho, near Kuruma , with other members of the PEMS. In 1835 they moved east to Bethulie, and shortly after founded the new station of Beersheba. They remained on the station until 1857, when they had to leave as a result of local conflict (see above). The Rollands had four children, who were born at Mothitho and Beersheba.

Elizabeth Rolland's writing is in a different category to that of Anne Hodgson and Helen Ross because most of her writing which is available to us - The Recollections of Elizabeth Rolland (edited by Karel Schoeman) - were written much later in life. In addition, though, several of her letters are still available and were written in an earlier period of her life. These are to be found in the Historical Papers Department at the University of the Witwatersrand. In the Fairbairn Papers there are two letters written by her to Eliza Fairbairn, and in the Findlay Family Papers there are a selection of letters written to her

niece, Catherine Schreiner.[142] The combination of these together with her recollections allows us to focus on different aspects of her and her subconscious.

One of the most obvious features of Elizabeth Rolland's writing is the very bitter tone in which she described her experiences. She was not happy at Beersheba. "Rather dreary and unpromising did our position appear among these heathen people...Unprotected by any government, without any adequate means of defence, we were surrounded on all sides by savage beasts and still more savage men".[143] This is not an isolated reference to their situation at Beersheba. At a later date she wrote that "Suffering and privations were our daily lot".[144]

Mrs Rolland's impression of being surrounded on all sides by heathens may not have been entirely accurate. Mrs Rolland made reference at another point to the amiability of the Batlaroys (a Tswana group settled around the mission) compared to other "heathens".[145] Nor were the Rollands the only Europeans at Beersheba, which Mrs Rolland neglects to mention. Samuel Rolland was assisted by the Rev. F. Daumas from 1836, and in 1838 a Miss Clarisse Delatte was sent by the PEMS to teach at Beersheba. The two married in 1839, and moved to another mission station in 1840. They were replaced by other European assistants.[146] In addition, the Rollands were only seven kilometres away from Bethulie, another mission station.

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[142] Catherine Schreiner was the daughter of Elizabeth's half-sister Rebecca, and the missionary Gottlieb Schreiner. One of her sisters was Olive Schreiner. Catherine married John Findlay, son of Cape Town tobacconist George Findlay.
[143] RER, p.68.
[144] RER, p.82.
[145] RER, p.74.
[146] RER, p.87.

Mrs Rolland made further references to hardships the Rolland endured, and she also had a tendency to repeat certain events in her recollections which gives the impression that they occurred more than once. A locust plague which destroyed their crops was mentioned twice, no reference being made to their being the same event though from her sequencing of events it is clear they were the same. While the Rollands undoubtedly did suffer hardship it does seem as if Elizabeth Rolland was exaggerating the case. Her Recollections portray the impression of a life of hardship, which Mrs Rolland attributed to her material circumstances. However, it seems as if she was not being truthful to herself - and her readers - on this count, and an alternative explanation for her unhappiness needs to be found.

Mrs Rolland was trained as a teacher in the infant school system in Britain, and it was because of this that Dr Philip approached her to come to the Cape to teach. Between 1831 and 1833 she taught in Cape Town, and in 1833 she went on a visit to Bethelsdorp for her health. It was here that she married Samuel Rolland. She writes of the turmoil she suffered in accepting Rolland - she first rejected him but on being convinced that it was her Christian duty to marry him she accepted. She was 30 in 1833 and had already refused at least one offer of marriage - "such a change had for many years been banished from my mind; affections suited to it seemed to be annihilated in my being."[147] It is apparent from her writing that she was very ambivalent about the marriage when it was first suggested. When she reflects on the course of her marriage she is more direct. The following passage is an extract from her description of her time at Bethelsdorp, "this season of peaceful seclusion", and reflecting back on her decision to marry.

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[147] RER, p.60.

> The Novelist is wise when he closes his story with a marriage. The picture of life is often fair till that event: then comes the reality, the dull routine, the morbid melancholy tints of matrimony. But I am telling a true story and must proceed, however stale, flat and unprofitable the winding up may prove...Our marriage took place at Bethelsdorp, 2nd January 1834. In after years it was when, under the pressure of cruel disappointment, I discovered that my marriage was a mistake; but at the time it took place I freely offered up for the service of God my opinions, my tastes, and above all, hardest sacrifice of all, my nationality. According to the maxims of the world, our union could not be called happy; scarcely could two characters be more opposite than my husband's and my own.[148]

This passage is very poignant. Elizabeth Lyndall's religious conviction led her into marriage, a state for which she appeared to have little opinion at the time. However, her objection was not only to marriage but to her partner, for whom she had to offer up her "opinions", "tastes" and "nationality" to enter into "the morbid melancholy tints of matrimony". According to annotations by her daughter on the manuscript, Mrs Rolland wrote these lines aged about 70, just prior to her husband's death. Forty years had obviously given Mrs Rolland plenty of fodder for thought. Elsewhere in her recollections she tended to lapse into less censorious descriptions of her relation with her husband, but always with the proviso that they were working to the good of God, as if the means justified the ends. Her ambivalence about marriage also surfaces in her letters in comments about other people: "...our two assistants were united for better for worse on the 8th of April...and will I trust be for the good of the Station".

Mrs Rolland's unhappiness over her marriage was so intense it pervaded her subconscious and, I think, emerged as a real distress about her physical situation. Marriage, however, was not the only cause of her unhappiness. The bitterness and frustration she felt as a result of it was paralleled in another area. In a letter to Eliza Fairbairn in 1839 she wrote

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[148] RER, pp.59-60.

"I have a Bible Class once a week for the [women] which I try to make as maternal as I can...*I often regret my ignorance* of the way in which Material Societies are managed." The following year she wrote again "Another object near my heart just now is the rousing of the Mothers to a better training and care of their children - but which from *unskilfulness in myself* and a degree of apathy in them I am here often discouraged" (my italics).[149]

Mrs Rolland seems to have felt extremely unsuited to the task of motherhood. She made the above comments directly about her lack of skill, while elsewhere she referred to the 'numerous ever recurring cares such possessions [children] bring'.[150] She felt guilty about describing her children in this manner and qualified her statement with the comment that "yet the thought that this is the will of God concerning us will reconcile us to the mere drudgery of life and make us willing to be vessels of wood or of earth or anything; Seeking yet to have our spirits purged and raised above all petty things & so fitted for higher better service by and bye".

As with her marriage, Mrs Rolland was bowing to a higher will in having children (considerations of contraception aside). Mrs Rolland loved her children, but she did not like the drudgery they entailed and she was uncertain and felt untrained to bring them up properly. This is quite evident in the rest of the letter already quoted: "My children of course require every day more of my time and attention, and I assure you it requires a little resolution on the part of a Missionary to be determined to give them their due - with so

[149] A663, both quotes, italics mine.
[150] A663.

many & often urgent claims to entice us from this duty - yet I continue to be regular at least and hope to do better."[151]

Mrs Rolland's anxiety on subject of her maternal talents, and her rejection of her children's claims (her "duty") in the face of other "urgent claims" is cast into relief by her evident delight and skill in teaching. Mrs Rolland appeared to resent the time spent looking after her children because it prevented her from spending time in the area in which she was trained, and comfortable. Elizabeth Lyndall began teaching at age 15. She was forced to give up her first teaching post, and later her post in Cape Town, due to ill-health. There is no indication that she wished to give up teaching - for which she had formal training - of her own accord. In her Recollections she described her teaching in Cape Town as part of a "scene of labour and enjoyment" because "the infant school system became known and was appreciated". At Bethelsdorp she had "occupations quite congenial".[152] When she arrived at Beersheba she soon had an infant school up and running. Her enthusiasm for her task was related in the language she used to describe the first class - 'delight', 'wonderful', 'healthy' and 'joy-exciting'. When she had to hand over the Infant School to Mrs Maeder she used what time she had to teach the mothers Bible classes already mentioned. She felt enthusiasm for the classes but doubted her efficacy and proficiency in the subject matter to be taught.

Mrs Rolland's talents were diverted from what she knew at Beersheba, and her time was spent in an unhappy marriage and a task - raising children - uncongenial to her. Her

[151] A663.
[152] Both RER. pp.58-59.

frustration emerged in the way she represented her family as living in a wild and savage land. She felt trapped in a role for which she felt unsuited - marriage and motherhood - and transferred this vision onto a description of the landscape around her. The chronology of Mrs Rolland's writing is important in this respect. The few letters we have of hers express, not so much a dissatisfaction with her marriage and her children, but rather frustration at her inability to carry out her tasks. It is a pity there is no record of Eliza Fairbairn's side of their correspondence, because Eliza was obviously experiencing similar feelings about marriage and motherhood.

In he letters, Mrs Rolland has not yet identified the cause of her frustration - though she does perceive these frustrations as being particular to women. Forty years later, in her Recollections she is quite clear on the causes of her unhappiness (and perhaps felt her age justified her saying such things). These she attributed to a marriage in which she felt she was required to lose her own identity (see also the passage quoted above). In following God's will (and here too is the only comment that seems to touch on her belief) she could be true "by destroying self, and all that had hitherto constituted my life. I was to be henceforth mentally and physically *alone*".[153] She was referring to the marriage which was to be her entry into the missionary world, children and the inability to practise her career.

Mrs Rolland's comments about her unhappiness in her marriage do not continue throughout her Recollections. It appears as if, after writing the above comments on her marriage, her daughter Elise came across them and remonstrated with her mother for so

[153] RER, p.61.

criticising her father. Elise has annotated the Recollections at this point with an explanation for these comments, and with the news that her mother has changed her opinion about Rolland.[154]

Of all the women I have discussed Elizabeth Rolland made the most unequivocal statement against marriage and all it entailed (though with the benefit of hindsight). She condemned the institution which she felt required her to give up her character and her career. Her comments - which castigate both marriage and her husband - seem to stem from a perception of the differences between men and women, and the sort of behaviour expected of them.

Concerns about her marriage were not the only theme in Mrs Rolland's recollections. She also concentrated upon the work she and her husband were doing on the mission, speculating upon the effect they were having on the native population. From her writing, it is apparent that she was a true disciple of Dr Philip (whom she referred to as a moral martyr) in her liberal outlook. In her recollections she gives an account of the arrival of the Dutch, their acquisition of land from the Khoi and Bushmen, and an account of the history of the land up until her present (c.1870).[155] Her writing in general shows a remarkable understanding of inter-group relations, between Europeans and Africans, and between Africans and Africans. This awareness is present through-out her writing, perhaps not surprising since the recollections reflect her opinion at one particular period of time. Mrs Rolland tended to distinguish between those Africans who attached themselves

[154] RER, pp.60-61.
[155] RER especially pp.63-67.

mission, or were on friendly terms with the missionaries, and those who were not. The former were described in very benign, paternalistic terms. She made references to "well-disposed natives", "poor, simple people", and Batlaroys who were "more amiable than other heathens".[156] This form of description was not uncommon. The latter were most often described as heathens, such as the Coranna who were "cunning and cruel".[157]

The following description was typical of Mrs Rolland's writing.

> The few inhabitants of this secluded spot were a [Morolong] chief, whom I shall call Mild, and about a dozen followers, with our own servants, who belonged to the tribe of the Bahurutsi. The chief was an intelligent man, and his disposition answered exactly to the name I had given him, being of a remarkably quiet and even disposition. His wife, a tall, handsome women, was less amiable than her lord, but in after years she proved an estimable being. [They had a family of good-looking and clever children, like all Baralongs more affectionate and emotional than the Basutos, and between them and ourselves a warm attachment sprang up which lasted all our lives.][158]

This description is remarkable for what it says about European relations with Africans, at least from the perspective of the Europeans. Neither Anne Hodgson nor Helen Ross wrote in such terms, and for both I have described a growing racism in their thinking. However, it is interesting to speculate that much later in life their thinking may again have changed with regard to their perception of Africans. Mrs Rolland's letters (albeit only two of them) reflect a paternalistic attitude towards some Africans, which does not appear to have changed much forty years later.

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[156] RER p.62,74 and A663.
[157] RER, p.68.
[158] RER, p.67.

CONCLUSION

The missionary wives and their families had a very different experience of South African life to the other women I discuss. There were similarities in lifestyle - the domestic division of labour was the same in a town house or on a mission station. However, the isolation of the stations meant that goods, building materials, food and medical assistance among others, were always in short supply. The privation and hardship these women suffered should not be underestimated (as I emphasised for Mrs Ross) in its contribution to how they began to think of their situations. While they were at Pirie, the Rosses had to evacuate the mission station three times as a result of the 6th, 7th and 8th Frontier Wars. After the 7th Frontier War the Rosses were left with one cow, a chopping knife and five volumes of books.[159] These factors affected what they thought and how they perceived South Africa and its indigenous inhabitants.

Mrs Ross, Mrs Hodgson and Mrs Rolland responded to the South African landscape and situation in different, though ultimately similar ways. Mrs Ross's initial unhappiness and loneliness were later tempered by a confidence in her surroundings, so much so that her perceptions of race were altered. Any initial empathy she may have had with Xhosa women was replaced by an attitude in which she ceased to see them as individuals and began to see them more as representatives of an undifferentiated whole. There is no sense that she perceived differences between European men and women and its concomitant devaluing of female status as a reason for allying herself with black women - against white

[159] MS7793. The importance of literature culture in middle class lives is shown by the Rosses' priorities in trying to save goods as they were fleeing Pirie.

men. Furthermore there is no sense that her status as a woman made her more sensitive to the inequalities that existed between black and white. In this regard her actions and perceptions fed into growing perceptions among settlers on the Eastern Frontier of Africans as racially inferior. However, her perceptions do differ from those of the settler body because of her unswerving belief in God and the redemption possibilities of Christianity. This is seen particularly in the understanding of race, and what it meant to be black, that she passed on to her children.

Mrs Hodgson's consciousness followed a similar pattern, but her understanding of racial inferiority was even more intrinsically moulded through er understanding of religion, Christianity and access to God. Again there is no sense that she was able to conceive of Africans as other than inferior. Mrs Rolland was very caught up in her frustrations with marriage, her inability to work and her self-perceived inability to function as a proper mother. As a highly educated women, and one influenced by the thinking of Dr Philip, she had a view towards the end of her life of Africans as an heterogeneous people requiring different sorts of description.

In her discussion of women travel writers in the later nineteenth century, Sara Mills has referred to a textual unease which is the result of their participation in the conflicting discourses of imperialism and femininity - the former encouraging their participation on the colonial project (sic) and the latter leading them to reject a participation because of their perceived differences with the men who orchestrated those projects.[160] Mills suggests that women wrote travel texts differently to men - focusing on particular

[160] Mills, S. Discourses of Difference, pp.1-3.

descriptions of people rather than generic descriptions - as a result of their unease with the hegemonic voice of imperialist discourses.[161] Mill's approach to understanding women's travel writing is very innovative, but I am not sure that it is possible to identify such unified discourses as she has done.

In a recent thesis entitled Writing the South African Landscape, Carli Coetzee has also challenged the notion that women involved in colonial situations write differently to men. She writes that we need to be more aware of the changing personal identities of any dominant group - members of these groups can write from a diversity of positions.[162] In doing so she suggests limits to the utility of models which attempt t elaborate rigid, unified discourses.[163] This work ties in with the work on missionary intent and motivation by people like the Comaroffs and Elizabeth Elbourne (albeit from different directions) which I referred to briefly earlier.[164]

In both debates - the role of women in colonialism and the role of missionaries in colonialism - some of the research has tended to create the impression that all missionaries and all women approached their participation in events in South Africa from the same position - and that they were doggedly determined to be agents of colonialism while they were doing so. However, as Coetzee and Elbourne have indicated in their work, both missionaries and women came from widely differing positions. Moreover - and quite

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[161] Ibid, p.3.
[162] Coetzee, C. 'Writing the South African Landscape' (Ph.D Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993) p.2.
[163] Ibid, p.3.
[164] The Comaroff's book has come in for much criticism - including Elizabeth Elbourne's paper cited in this chapter, as well as a book feature in the South African Historical Journal 31 (Nov. 1994) pp.273-309, with reviews by Clifton Crais, Leon de Kock, Doug Stuart, and Johannes du Bruyn. I shall reserve my criticism until I have seen the remaining three volumes, which I understand will cover the gaps pointed out by most of the Comaroff's reviewers.

crucially - with extremely low conversion figures on the missions among blacks other than the Khoisan[165] - it would not have mattered what the missionaries thought if there was no one to receive their thinking. If anyone was deluded by promises of the benefits of conversion it was the missionaries themselves. And so, as I discuss more in my conclusion, perhaps the question should not be about women's or missionaries' complicity in colonialism, but rather from whence comes the paradigm that attributes such influence to missionaries in this particular period of South African history.

If there was any similarity in the way missionary wives wrote and thought in this period, it was the similarity that they were all Christians. All were intent on spreading the civili ng and Christianising message of the gospel, but their approaches were quite different. A major conclusion in this thesis is that the importance of religion in its evangelical variety and in evangelical circles has been undertheorised in the history of the nineteenth century Colony.[166] Andre du Toit's work on the "Myth of the Chosen People" is a cogent reminder of the power of religion and religious discourses in interpreting the Afrikaans past.[167] We need similar studies to unravel the importance of their religion to British evangelicals in South Africa.

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[165] Fast, H. 'African Perceptions', p.26 for some figures. Elizabeth Elbourne's thesis is also useful for a more intricate discussion of conversion, yet her material relates to the Khoisan stations in the Eastern Cape ("'To Colonize the Mind"').

[166] Though this may be changing - I have not yet seen the volume on missions that has been edited by Robert Ross and Henry Bredenkamp, nor have I had access to Andrew Bank's doctoral thesis recently completed.

[167] Du Toit, A. 'No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology', American Historical Review 88 (1983) pp.920-952. If Du Toit's research is anything to go by, then religion was probably more important to the missionaries than to the first wave of Trekkers.

CONCLUSIONS

I have called this thesis "Letters Home" because, although the British women whom I discussed had very different experiences, they were connected by the practice of writing. The writing and reception of letters, and the sorts of things written about, form a thread which connects their experiences of the Cape. Beyond this, however, it is difficult to generalise about the experiences of British women at the Cape without reducing the very different characters in this thesis to sameness. What follows therefore, are not so much general conclusions as comments which try to piece together experience.

In Cape Town, middle class women could inhabit different personas. While they could be characterised on the basis of their husbands' and fathers' occupations, these differences on occasion meant less to them than to their men folk. When evangelical women met together their concerns were for their families or for their philanthropic activities. When they wrote to their friends these concerns, more than any other, dominated their writing. Under these conditions political and economic differences within the middle class were of little concern to them. As a result they used criteria other than their husbands' and fathers' occupations and interests for judging themselves and other people.

This statement needs to be qualified. This judgement only occurred in private and is only reflected in personal writing. I do not think it possible to over-emphasise the importance of letter writing in their own homes to these women. They were writing histories of themselves in which their various identities were revealed to their correspondents. While men like John Fairbairn were using the public space of newspapers both to create a literate

middle class and to represent that literate culture to the world, British women's letters were flying around the colony and back to Britain, creating for their audience a Cape that was just like Britain, yet different. Women were creators of cultural artefacts in the way that men were in public. This activity was legitimised because they wrote in the privacy of their own homes and, in the main, on domestic subjects. It was not an activity which challenged male control of public space. However, the world created in these letters had almost as wide a reception as the public world created by men. Reading practices meant that letters were often read by more than the person.

In addition, while the content of the letters was responsible for the creation of ideas about the Cape Colony, the form - the very letters themselves - served a dual function of binding women into networks in which women were figures of authority and dignity. They controlled what was written in their letters - their self-representations were presented to their readers in a version not mediated through their male relatives. In their own letters, they were not the wife of Dr John Philip and the wife of John Fairbairn. They were Jane Philip and Eliza Fairbairn. The things they wrote about had weight and authority to their friends and family. Their advice was sought and they in turn sought advice. These letters therefore need to be considered both for what they symbolised and created through their utilisation of non-male controlled space, and also for their content and what they say about individual woman's perceptions and experiences.

Despite this potential, women only had a separate voice from their men folk in private. In public they were always (bar very few exceptions) adjuncts of their men folk and as such would have expressed views in line with the public views of their male relatives. This

argument is a paradoxical one as so much feminist writing has shown; no matter how much authority and integrity women may have in private, they are still occupants of a sphere that is separate and inferior from that of men - or so twentieth century judgement tells us. Women may have been empowered in the private worlds of their homes, but it was a limited empowerment. Not all the women I discuss may have been conscious of being oppressed as women or conscious of this separation of spheres, but enough did to make it valid to try to gauge women's oppression at this point. Several of the women whom I discussed were clearly dissatisfied with their lot, such as Eliza Fairbairn and Mary Maclear. The private world, while empowering for some women was not for others.

I have not, in this thesis, considered the possibility of gender neutral spaces, in public or within people's homes. There is an excellent discussion of the latter in Family Fortunes, in which Davidoff and Hall emphasise the equality between men and women in their own homes.[1] Although I have not done that much research into the use of interior space except in chapter two, I imagine this was the case at the Cape. However, middle class men were away working most of the time. There would have been long periods when women were in total control of their domestic space. It is for this reason that I suggest that domestic space was theirs to control. I would also suggest that issues of space control break down on the mission stations in the early years. The first houses the missionaries occupied were wagons and huts which had to double as churches and school rooms. This subversion of the normal order may explain a great deal about the missionaries' preoccupation with building orderly mission stations with square houses for their converts, and walls around their own houses.

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[1] Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, pp.380-387.

The alternative criterion which my sample of women used for adjudging social status was morality - and a morality influenced by evangelism. According to Mrs Philip's formulation, those people who were 'useful', and 'useful' in a practical fashion, were higher up the social hierarchy than people who were not. This usefulness, however, was also tied to the condition of being a Christian. The best people were therefore the most useful and the most Christian people. The pupils of the LBS school were praised not for their learning but for their good behaviour and Christian principles. They were considered less than the members of the LBS but only because they were often ill-mannered and non-Chri· ian. This at least was the view of the LBS and, whatever their conscious or unconscious motives they believed in this system of classification.

Not all the women in my sample were free from considerations about middle-class status. Some of them may have been secure in their female networks and within their families yet a certain amount of their time was required to be spent in public. Even Mrs Philip worried about what to wear when she visited Government House. The Findlays, and to a lesser degree Mrs Maclear, were preoccupied with social ritual. For them, outside the ambit of religion and the opportunities for employment that it offered, social status was important. Both the Maclears and the Findlays mixed 'higher' than they might have expected to in Britain and as Mrs Maclear's writing shows, social status required certain standards of living. The sheer cost and social tension implicit in this sort of socialising was the cause of much anxiety. As the Findlays letters show, this anxiety and the desire to keep up prompted husbands and bachelors - potential and actual keepers of families - into fraud

and speculation in order to accommodate social demands. This world was very different to the one inhabited by the evangelicals, though the two did coincide.

In what I have discussed so far, the social categories that determined how women perceived themselves and their worlds have been gender and class - sometimes alternately and very much according to location. Race was not a category that greatly concerned British middle class women in Cape Town, inasmuch as it was never a social category that was likely to infringe on their lives in a way which would challenge the social norms already established. Here I refer to the implicit coincidence in Cape society between whiteness and m' .dle-classness. Where British middle class women had contact with other non-Europeans, they were all members of the Cape underclass. They did not attempt to move into the world inhabited by middle class Capetonians. British women already had a category of inferiority in which to place non-Europeans; they were all of a lower class. When they do start to conceptualise blackness as its own particular inferiority, it is in response to events like the frontier war of 1834.

There was a slightly greater discussion of events involving Africans in the letters of the evangelical women, but even there conceptions of race were still quite simple. In none of the Cape Town letters was there evidence of anything like the racist ideology that would develop later, as Andrew Bank has shown in the two papers I have mentioned in this thesis.

The settler wives whose writing I have discussed tended to be more from the lower middle class than the women in Cape Town. They lacked the financial resources necessary to keep

them from working and there appears to have been a greater proportion of middle class working women to men in the same category in Grahamstown than in Cape Town. These considerations are important given that both of the settler wives whom I discussed worked. Their work was important to both of them, but for both it conflicted with their understanding of gender roles. Mary Anne Webb moved from being a supplementary to sole breadwinner for her family yet her letters are filled with all sorts of justification for this. For Hannah Dennison work was a necessary evil if she wanted to earn the money to move back to her family, the centre of her life.

Clifton Crais has written of a h rdening of attitude towards the Xhosa which occurred in Grahamstown by the mid 1830s, which he attributes to the development of racial capitalism.[2] Mary Anne Webb's letters cover the period in which Crais sees this ideology gain settler acknowledgement and acceptance. Any changes in Mrs Webb's perception of Africans should therefore follow Crais' model - and they do, yet with differences. Typical of most of the settlers, the Webbs left their allotment because of the difficulty in farming and moved to Grahamstown. In Grahamstown Webb became a transport rider and Mary Anne a teacher - typical strategies for semi-destitute settlers. From here on the Webbs' experiences are their own, but I think it is possible to suggest that these might be typical of the settler body. Mary Anne Webb's writing showed a growing awareness of racial categories, and a perception entailing racial inferiority for the Xhosa and Khoi. In Crais' argument there is an element of hindsight in the identification of a dominant ideology introduced by the settler elite. Mary Anne Webb's experiences point to the need to examine the experiences of individual settlers in tracing the development of racist attitudes

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[2] Crais, C. The Making of the Colonial Order, introduction and chapter seven.

on the eastern frontier. Resentment and fear against a very real enemy must have formed a large component of settler attitudes towards the Xhosa in the first decade after 1820. This was then skilfully shaped into an ideology of inferiority by an elite settler and economic interest group.

The missionary wives and their families had a very different experience of South African life to the other women I discuss. There were similarities in lifestyle - the rigid domestic division of labour was the same in a town house or on a mission station (though division of space may initially have been different). However, the isolation of the stations meant that goods, building materials, food and me ical assistance amongst other factors, were always in short supply. All the missionary families experienced privation of some kind and their experiences should be understood in this context.

Mrs Ross, Mrs Hodgson and Mrs Rolland responded to the South African landscape and situation in different, though ultimately similar ways. Mrs Ross's initial unhappiness and loneliness were later tempered by a confidence in her surroundings, so much so that her perceptions of the Xhosa - and of race - were altered. Her situation - the despair she felt in the early years on the stations - point to the futility of attempting to assign such women a status as colonial agents. This may have changed after 1856 and the Cattle Killing which brought large numbers of Xhosa onto the missions. In the period I study it was not the case.

Mrs Hodgson's perceptions also responded to the experience of being in Africa. From having fairly liberal views she moved to perceiving most of the Tswana and Khoi she

encountered as sunk in iniquity, so that sometimes she despaired of the possibility of converting them. Her change in perception, however, seems to have been caused less by a growing racism than by Tswana reluctance to convert. She eventually came to espouse racist views, but these were moulded through her experiences and her perception of non-Christians as damned. By and large her identity was so shaped by her quest for spiritual salvation that the fact of the Hodgsons being in Africa receives very little attention in her letters.

Mrs Rolland's writing is some of the most self-reflective of the women I study, because I have been able to juxtapose her letters with her recollection, written forty years later. Her letters present one view of herself, but in her Recollections she wrote in a very different voice. She was conscious of how her character and identity were being shaped by the sorts of things she experienced, though only after she had experienced them. Her age perhaps allowed her to say things about marriage and the devaluing of women's identities that she perceived as one of its results. There are only hints of this in her letters. I think her example reveals just how aware of the power of writing and the importance of self-presentation women were. She also had a fairly liberal and unchanging attitude towards blacks. Her opinion of them at the end of her life was much the same as when she first arrived at Beersheba, and, albeit patronising, she had a genuine regard for the people she got to know.

In the course of this thesis I mentioned the debate around missionary activity and its relation to the extension of British rule in the Cape Colony. Some of this debate has

appeared in the work of the Comaroffs and Elizabeth Elbourne.[3] In the introduction to this thesis I also discussed Sara Mills' work on women travel writers and the construction of feminine discourses based on the unease between discourses of femininity and imperialism.[4] These works taken together point to another question - that of white women's involvement in the extension of British colonial rule at the Cape. Were British women collaborators (to use the jargon of this mode of enquiry) in the colonialist endeavour?

I am not sure that this is the question we ought to be asking. On the one hand it recreates pre-feminist modes of historical enquiry which viewed women as passive, non-thinking objects rather than thinking subjects in their own right. On the other, the very colonial history that asks such questions is also challenging the concept of homogenous colonial discourses. That they ask such a question in the face of their own critique is a result of their lack of gender theorising. As we know, the actions of British women and their husbands, fathers and brothers at the Cape had different inspirations and were often motivated by concerns which had very little, at the time, to do with extending British interests at the Cape. The women I discuss related to the South African situation first and foremost as individuals. They formulated their own understandings of the situations they experienced. Although affected at some level by contemporary opinions on race, they accepted or rejected them according to their own experiences and not vice versa.

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[3] Comaroff, J. and J. Of Revelation and Revolution. Elbourne, E. '"To Colonize the Mind"' and also her unpublished paper, 'Colonialism, conversion and cultural change'

[4] Mills, S. Discourses of Difference, introduction.

We need alternative models to try to understand women's experiences in the Cape Colony, and if we must look for a totalising discourse in their writing then we need to look to religion. A commitment to Christianity and religious values was one of the few common factors among the women I have discussed. The suggestion of an evangelical discourse is antithetical to a colonialist discourse, because under the former all rules and symbols were defined and gauged according to the authority given by God. The notion of a religious discourse can only operate on a very broad level, because not all the women I discussed worshipped the same God. Perhaps then this discourse can only be identified on the basis of a convergence of aims - to extend and promote Christianity. This might or might not coincide with the intentions of the British state in the Cape Colony, in which case the missionaries would be pro- or anti-imperialist. Most importantly, as I wrote in chapter four, the missionaries had relatively few converts among the Tswana and Xhosa before the middle of the century. Their influence on broader African society would have been quite diffuse and mediated through the relatively small numbers of people in direct contact with the missionaries. The message rather than the missionary would have received more coverage.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the religious ideology of the missionaries was not entirely congruent with the middle class hegemony of the Cape. As such it still had the potential to allow its adherents to contravene middle class ethics if they felt these contravened their own codes of morality. This holds for women in Cape Town as well as missionary wives. On the eastern frontier, where the women I have discussed were less committed to religion, and for non-evangelical women in Cape Town, other codes of behaviour held sway. Depending on circumstances, women could be called upon to

behave either as middle class women or Christian women, and in these instances would conform to the identity under either ideology. I would therefore like to suggest that not only did women create their subjectivity in terms of their status as women, as middle class women and as white women, but they also constructed their subjectivity in terms of their religious beliefs - as religious women.

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Supreme Court Archives:
CSC 2/3/1/1-2/3/1/152 Records of Civil Cases in the Circuit Court, Albany District
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MOOC Series 6 and 7 (Death Notices and Wills)
Colonial Office:
CO Series 3 and 4 (Colonial Memoranda c.1825-1845)
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A1415 Philip Family Letters
A2208 Mary Eaton

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Warren, D. 'Merchants, commissioners and municipal wardmasters: municipal politics in Cape Town, 1840-1854.' M.A. Thesis. University of Cape Town, 1986

APPENDIX ONE

NOTES ON UNPUBLISHED SOURCES OF WOMEN'S WRITING, INCLUDING SOURCES NOT USED IN THIS THESIS

Government Archives, Cape Town

A515 Maclear-Mann Collection

A1415 Philip Family Letters (1807-1847): This collection duplicates BC742 in the University of Cape Town Archive. It also contains the correspondence from John Philip to his fiancé, Jane Ross.

A2208 Mary Eaton (1846-1854): "For Mary Eaton from her sincere Friend Catherine Bell". An index of births, marriages and deaths listing the names of all people known to her.

ZL 1/4/1 Archives of the London Missionary Society

(1815-1823): Mrs Hamilton. The correspondence between Mrs Hamilton, her husband the missionary, Robert Moffat, John Philip and the LMS Directors in Britain is contained in these archives. Mrs Hamilton was unhappy in her situation and petitioned to return to Britain. She did so in 1823, abandoning her husband.

(1823-1846): Mrs Philip's correspondence with the LMS Directors in London

South African Library, Cape Town

MSB 412 Rutherfoord Collection

University of Cape Town Archives, Cape Town

BC742 Philip Collection (1820-1850): This collection also contains letters between Mrs Philip and Alison Philip, and William Enowy Philip and his fiancé, Alison Blair.

Cory Historical Library, Grahamstown

MS5640-5641 and MS 14246 Elizabeth Atherstone (1806-1824): These manuscripts include a diary written by Elizabeth Atherstone in Britain before arriving at the Cape, and two letters to her brother written from Cape Town.

MS5789 Elizabeth Willis (1809-): "Account of my life", written at age 82 in Hobart, Tasmania. Elizabeth came to the Cape with her family in 1820. They were among the more well-to-do settlers and built themselves a manor house in the Eastern Cape. The account is not very long.

MS7596 Anne Shepstone (1806-1871): Part I is a diary written intermittently between 1842 and 1856, and on Wesleyan missions stations in British Kaffraria. Her husband was a missionary. Part II are letters written by her sister Dorothy in Britain, mostly undated and which discuss the Christian faith.

MS6090-6312 Una Long Papers

MS6313 Martha Jane Kirk (nee Webber) (1823-1906): This is an auto-biographical account written much later in life. The Webbers arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1826, and were not successful settlers. I have used some of this in my thesis. A version of this is in Guy Butler's When Boys Were Men.

MS6617-6643 Keeton Family Papers (1820-1850): This collection contains one letter by Hannah Keeton, a settler wife. It also contains other Keeton family letters, including those written by Susanna Parry in Britain.

MS7613-8339 Ross Family Papers
MS2613-3696 Ross Family Papers

Historical Papers Department, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

A23 Sarah Le Mesurier (1839-1840): Mrs Le Mesurier was married to a captain of the Bombay Infantry, and kept a diary.

A29 D'Urban Family Scrapbook (1831-1840): This is a fascinating book. It was kept by Lady Benjamin D'Urban and her daughter. It contains poetry, sketches and pictures by well-known people such as Charles Bell, the Surveyor-General and artist. It also contains a 'map of matrimony' which is a very enlightening comment on nineteenth century elite attitudes towards marriage.

A79 Moodie Family Papers (1819-1857): These are letters written by a well-known settler family. Several are between women relatives while still in Scotland, and on the possibilities of emigration to the Cape. Three are written by Mrs Donald Moodie in the 1850's from a farm near Graaff-Reinet.

A85 Philip Papers
A567 Symons Collection
A663 Fairbairn Family Papers

A1199 Findlay Family Papers (1808-): This also contains letters between members of the Schreiner family, including Catherine and Olive.

Note: This list is not all-inclusive, but it lists what I consider to be some of the most significant sources of women's writing for this period (c. 1820-1850).

Principal Sources

Mrs Philip's Letters

Location	JP	Date	To	Address
Wits A85	3	13 June 1829		
UCT BC742/E	51	9 May 1845	Alice	Hankey
UCT BC742/E	53	25 July 1845	Alice	Hankey
UCT BC742/E	54	21 August 1845	Alice	Hankey
UCT BC742/E	55	5 December 1845	Alice	PE
Wits A85	56	29 June 1846	Alice	Hankey/PE
Wits A85	34	14 September 1842	Durant	
Wits A85	36	8 December 1842	Durant	
Wits A85	37	14 March 1843	Durant	
Wits A85	23	5 December 1838	Eliza	
Wits A85	25	28 December 1838	Eliza Fairbairn	
Cory Ms6164	22	1 November 1838	Eliza Fairbairn & Wilberforce	
Cory Ms6165	18	Nov or Dec 1838	Eliza Fairbairn/ Fairbairn jnrs	
Wits A85	1		Jane Fairbairn	
CA A515	29	3 July 1841	MM	Obs
UCT BC742/E	12	11 July 1833	Mrs Reed	London
Wits A85	2	19 May 1829	Wills	
Wits A85	4	13 July 1829	Wills	Woolwich
Wits A85	5	9 December 1829	Wills	
Wits A85	6	16 March 1830	Wills	
Wits A85	7	2 July 1830	Wills	
Wits A85	8	30 June 1831	Wills	
Wits A85	9	10 September 1831	Wills	
Wits A85	10	26 January 1832	Wills	
Wits A85	11	1833	Wills	
Wits A85	13	28 March 1834	Wills	
Wits A85	14	7? October 1834	Wills	
Wits A85	15	18 February 1835	Wills	
Wits A85	16	27 August 1835	Wills	
Wits A85	17	1 April 1837	Wills	
Wits A85	19	17 February 1838	Wills	
Wits A85	20	31 May 1838	Wills	
Wits A85	21	12 June 1838	Wills	
Wits A85	24	11 December 1838	Wills	
Wits A85	26	9 July 1839	Wills	
Wits A85	27	4 May 1840	Wills	
UCT BC742/E	28	3 February 1841	Wills	
Wits A85	30	23 September 1841	Wills	
Wits A85	32	16 May 1842	Wills	
Wits A85	33	18 June 1842	Wills	
Wits A85	35	8 December 1842	Wills	
Wits A85	38	24 April 1843	Wills	
Wits A85	39	31 July 1843	Wills	
Wits A85	40	30 October 1843	Wills	
Wits A85	42	9 January 1844	Wills	
Wits A85	44	29 March 1844	Wills	
Wits A85	46	24 June 1844	Wills	
Wits A85	48	28 October 1844	Wills	
Wits A85	49	19 November 1844	Wills	
Wits A85	52	12 June 1845	Wills	
UCT BC742/E	41	10 November 1843	Wm	Hankey
UCT BC742/E	43	26 January 1844	Wm	Hankey

UCT BC742/E	45	3 May 1844	Wm	Hankey
UCT BC742/E	47	16 August 1844	Wm	Hankey
UCT BC742/E	50	20 February 1845	Wm	Hankey
UCT BC742/E	31	19 November 1841	Wm and Alice	Hankey

The Findlay Letters (Wits A1199)

Number	Writer	Date
Findlay1	Margaret	20 March 1833
Findlay2	Margaret	22 May 1833
Findlay3	Anne	11 November 1833
Findlay4	Anne	12 November 1833
Findlay5	Margaret	31 December 1833
Findlay6	Margaret	28 January 1834
Findlay7	Margaret	3 July 1834
Findlay8	Margaret	20 October 1834
Findlay9	Anne	18 January 1835
Findlay10	Anne	10 September 1836
Findlay11	Margaret	11 June 1837
Findlay12	Anne	10 January 1838

Mrs Maclear's Letters (CA A515)

No	Date	Writer	Place	Addressee	Place
1	18340202	MM	Obs	Father	Britain
2	18340406	MM	Obs	Henry	Britain
3	18340823	MM	Obs	MBH	Feld
4	183411	MBH	Feld	MM	Obs
5	18350304	MM	Obs	Father	Britain
6	18351128	MBH	Feld	MM	Obs
7	18351224	MBH	Feld	MM	Obs
8	183503	MBH	Feld	MM	Obs
9	18360318	MBH	Feld	MM	Obs
10	n/a	MBH	Feld	MM	Obs
11	18360401	MM	Obs	Sir	
12	183803	MM	Obs	MBH	Feld
13	183705?	MM	Obs	MBH	Feld
14	18380331	MM	Groenekloof	Anne	Britain
15	18381004	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
16	18381123	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
17	18381124	TM	Obs	MBH	Britain
18	18391113	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
19	18400330	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
20	18401129	CM	Obs	TM	Colony
21	18410703	JPhilip	Church Square	MM	Obs
22	18420328	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
23	18421129	CM	Obs	TM	Colony
24	18430414	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
25	18440112	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
26	18440328	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
27	18450429	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
28	18450519	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
29	18460525	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
30	18460924	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
31	18461102	GM	Obs	TM	Colony
32	18470407	MaryM	Obs	TM	Colony
33	18470503	MaryM	Obs	TM	Colony
34	18470516	GM	Obs	TM	Colony
35	184708	MM	Obs	Mont	CT
36	184812	MM	Obs	Mont	CT
37	18490205	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
38	18490723	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
39	18491004	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
40	18501118	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
41	18510430	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
42	185203	JPMaclr	HMS Castor	TM	Obs
43	18520410	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
44	18521203	MM	Obs	MBH	Britain
45	18600601	ASmythe	London	MM	Obs

Abbreviations:

MM, TM, GM, CM — Mary Thomas, Georgina and Caroline Maclear
MaryM and JPMaclr — Mary Maclear Jnr and Jamie Maclear
MBH, Sir — Lady Margaret Herschel and Sir John Herschel
Mont — Mrs Montagu
Father, Henry and Anne were Mrs Maclear's family in Britain
Obs and Feld — Observatory and Feldhausen, Wynberg

Mrs Ross's Letters (Cory Library)

MS No	Date	From	Addressee	Place
8237-8	21 May 1823	Gosport	Mr and Mrs Blair (parents)	Glasgow
8239	6 October 1823	Caledon	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
8235	15 August 1824	Chumie		Glasgow
8246	3 December 1824	Incehra	John Blair	Glasgow
8241	27 May 1825	Incehra	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
8236	28 December 1825	Incehra	Hector Blair (brother)	Glasgow
7783	24 April 1826	Incehra	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
8244	27 May 1826	Lovedale	M. Brown (sister)	Glasgow
7784	25 December 1826	Lovedale	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7785	5 May 1827	Lovedale	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
8247	21 July 1827	Lovedale	Mrs Ross (mother-in-law)	Glasgow
7786	17 September 1827		Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7787	11 March 1828	Lovedale	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7802	24 September 1829	Lovedale	M.Ross (sister-in-law)	Glasgow
7788	22 December 1829	Lovedale	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7789	17 April 1830	Lovedale	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7790	12 September 1831		Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7791	20 September 1831	Imqwakwebe	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7792	26 April 1832	Pirie	Mr and Mrs Blair	Glasgow
7807	2 August 1832	Pirie	Mrs Blackwood	Glasgow
7794	1 September 1834	Pirie	Mr Blair	Glasgow
7793	24 August 1836	Pirie	Mr Blair	Glasgow
7795	26 March 1840	Pirie	Mr Blair	Glasgow
7798	14 May 1840	Pirie	Bryce Blair (brother)	Glasgow
7799	15 March 1841	Pirie	Hector Blair ? (brother)	Glasgow
7800	12 May 1843	Pirie	Hector Blair ?	Glasgow
7796	18 May 1844	Pirie	Mr Blair	Glasgow
7803	27 June 1844	Pirie	sister	Glasgow
7806	2 June 1845	Pirie	daughter	
7808	8 November 1945	Pirie	Mrs Blackwood	Glasgow
7801	18 December 1846	Uitenhage	Bryce Ross (son)	Lovedale Sem
7797	1847		Mr Blair	Glasgow
7804	1848		Richard Ross (son)	Lovedale Sem
7805	27 November 1848	Pirie	Bryce Ross (son)	Lovedale Sem

Note: There are more of Mrs Ross's letters in the Cory Library. They are in the process of being edited for publication in the Grahamstown Series, together with Mrs Ross's husband's letters.

APPENDIX TWO

RESULTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE CAPE TOWN STREET DIRECTORIES

Women Householders Analysed by Marital Status

	1820 Non-working	Working	1830 Non-working	Working	1840 Non-working	Working
Single	17	138	32	107	64	55
Married	0	2	10	9	9	16
Widowed	106	85	162	45	186	54
TOTAL	123	225	204	161	260	125

Women Householders Analysed by Race[1]

	1820	1830	1840
Black	66	46	n/a
White	159	115	n/a
TOTAL	225	161	n/a

Men Householders

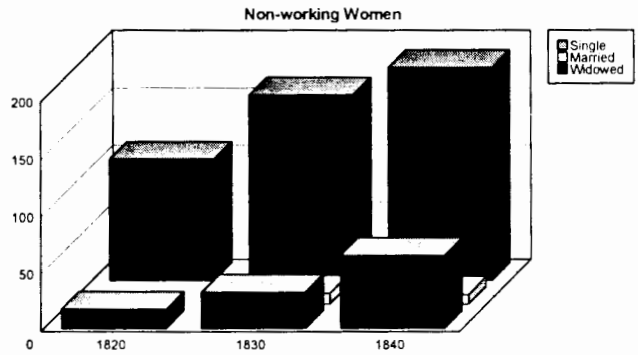
	1820	1830	1840
Men	1208	1472	1579

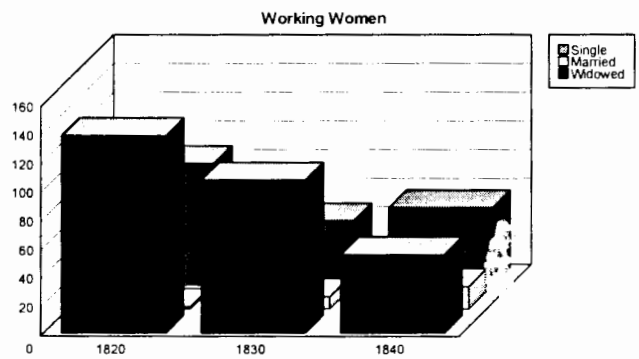
Numbers of Occupations Open to Men and Women

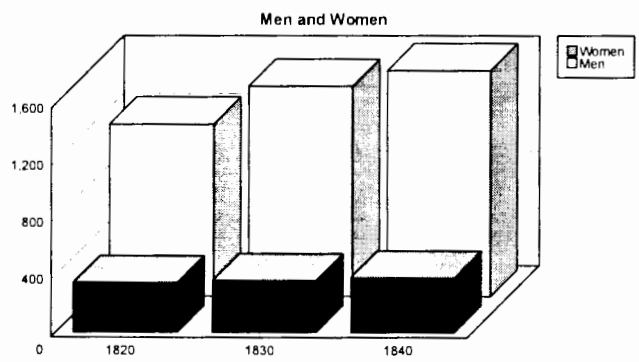
	1820	1830	1840
Women	25	31	23
Men	141	209	165
No. of Employers	n/a	25	57

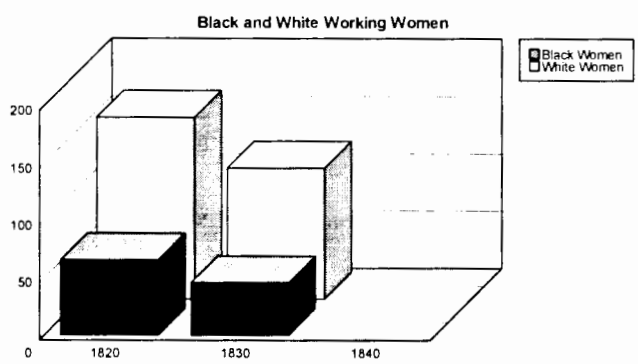
[1] It must be remembered that I analysed for race according to name, and so I have only been able to say that women who went by the name of, for instance, "Celia van der Kaap" were black.

Sex and Race Breakdowns Among Working and Non-working Householders in Cape Town









The Most Common Occupations Among Women, 1820-1840

	Boarding	Grocer	Haber-dashery	Laundry	Midwife	Retail	Sewing
Single	3			65	4	19	36
Married	0			0	0	0	0
Widow	18			11	2	28	12
Black	0			34	1	9	15
White	21			42	6	38	33
TOTAL	21			76	7	47	48

	Boarding	Grocer	Haber-dashery	Laundry	Midwife	Retail	Sewing
Single	2			54	2	7	26
Married	1			1	0	0	1
Widow	9			3	2	15	3
Black	n/a			29	n/a	4	11
White	n/a			29	n/a	18	19
TOTAL				58	4	22	30

	Boarding	Grocer	Haber-dashery	Laundry	Midwife	Retail	Sewing
Single	1	1	4	17	1		20
Married	0	0	3	0	2		0
Widow	8	18	8	3	4		1
Black	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1		n/a
White	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6		n/a
TOTAL	9	19	15	20	7		21

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN CAPE TOWN

Before I began to explore the experiences of English women at the Cape, I was interested in looking more generally at the position of women in Cape Town. This information should form a background to any understanding of gender politics at work in Cape Town during this period, as well as of the circumstances in which women of all classes and races might find themselves. The women in my thesis inhabited domestic worlds which were very separate from the public face of the city. They were not economically active. It is interesting to see which women were economically active, and how, and what, if anything, this can say about gender in Cape Town in this period.

My study of women's activities in Cape Town in the first decades of the nineteenth century is based on an analysis of street directories for Cape Town during this period, which listed the addresses, occupations and names of householders in volumes published

yearly.[2] Using the directories for the years 1820, 1830 and 1840 I have been able to extract information relating to gender ratios among householders, the numbers of women householders who worked, the sorts occupations open to women, and comparisons of these figures with similar figures for men householders in Cape Town. These information from these directories, however, only represents a small proportion of Cape Town's population for each year studied.

In 1820 Cape Town was home to something between 17 000 and 19 000 people, a number which was to increase gradually to about 24 000 in the 1850's.[3] During this period, available figures also point to an increase in the ratios of blacks to whites. In 1839 52% of Cape Town's population was white, in 1842 57% were black.[4] At the same time the number of women living in Cape Town also seems to have increased - from 41.9% of the population in 1817 to 46.4% in 1827.[5]

In 1820 only 1556 people were listed in the street directory. This represents not even 10% of Cape Town's population at this point, and this proportion remains fairly steady until the 1850's. However, inasmuch as the householders listed were representative of the adult segment of Cape Town's population, certain patterns are discernible. Firstly, the number of working women householders was declining steadily from 182[illegible] to 1840. This was against both an increasing number of non-working women as well as an increasing number of working men, as the graphs demonstrate. The rate of increase in the latter figures is roughly comparable to the rate of population increase overall, while the number of working women is in indirect proportion. In addition, if we remember that the proportion of women to men in Cape Town was increasing, then the number of working women was decreasing even faster than the number of working men was increasing. These figures may not mean much in themselves, but gain significance when comparing this pattern to the pattern of working women in Grahamstown.

In 1820 at least 66 black women were listed as householders, compared to very few in 1840. While this figure is not necessarily reliable as my criterion for assessing race was based on name, it is supported by the occupation profile changes over this 20 year period. In 1820 the street directory listed at least 76 laundresses and 48 seamstresses - of whom at least 34 and 15 respectively were black. In 1840 there are only 20 laundresses and 21 seamstresses listed. As the following passage from Mrs Fanny Parkes (who visited Cape Town in the 1840's) makes evident, laundresses were principally black: "I roamed the other day up the Mountain ... Hundreds of women and some few men were all employed in washing clothes by beating them upon the stones in the stream...How many of the groups would have formed an admirable picture despite the ugliness of these Malays and Hottentots".[6] The decline in numbers of black women householders can either be

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[2] I am very grateful to Leonie Twentyman-Jones in the University of Cape Town Library for arranging for me to have access to disc copies of the street directories.

[3] Bank, A. The Decline of Urban Slavery, p.9. About 11 000 of these appear to have been above the ages of sixteen (Ludlow, H. The Work of the London Missionary Society, p.68)

[4] Warren, D. Merchants, Commissioners and Wardmasters, p.29.

[5] Bank, A. The Decline,.p.233.

[6] Quoted in McPherson, E.L. Women Letter Writers and Diarists of South Africa (Cape Town: Monarch Press, 1918).

explained by changes in names after emancipation, or a declining number of black women being able to afford houses. I think it is the latter.

The number of possible occupations open to women rose between 1820 and 1830, but dropped again after 1830 so that fewer occupations were open to women after 1840 than before 1820. Over the same period the number of occupations open to men increased, while men were also increasingly able to enter someone else's employment. Women in whatever capacity they worked were always self-employed. In 1820 the major concentrations of women were to be found in the service sector - women were boarding house keepers, laundresses, retailers and seamstresses. The same holds true for 1830 while in 1840 one more occupation could be added to the list of most common. Grocer seems to have replaced the appellation "retail shop" by 1840 - but for women only. Men are still referred to as owning retail shops. Of course what these figures do not indicate is that the major avenue of work for women was domestic - for both white and black women. According to Andrew Bank's analysis of the occupations of the slave population of Cape Town at this point, the largest single occupation was that of house "maid".[7] Economic activity, therefore, for women during this period was dominated by domestic related work - cleaning, washing, sewing.

What these figures seem to indicate is a hardening of possibility for women du- ıg the first half of the nineteenth century. After 1840 fewer women were householders and were increasingly being represented in a much narrower range of (mainly service-oriented) occupations than before. At the same time opportunities for men were growing as more occupations opened up to men and as more companies and institutions began to employ greater numbers of men. As might be expected, black women seem to have experienced the greatest diminution in possibilities over this period - with substantially fewer keeping houses than had been possible while slavery was still legal at the Cape. Although there are no figures available for the numbers of women working in domestic service in Cape Town during this period, it is possible that the fall-off in working women in the street directories can be explained by women moving into domestic service (which was generally live-in). All these developments serve to explain some of the figures describing women's work in Cape Town.

[7] Bank, A. The Decline, p.237. The second largest number in one occupation is 2499 which is not much different (for labourers) but the next highest figure is only 657, and they decline thereafter.

RESULTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF GRAHAMSTOWN STREET DIRECTORIES

In Grahamstown, like Cape Town, street directories were also published. These listed householders by names, addresses and occupations. The first directory was only published in 1842, and the next only in 1853. My analysis of employment opportunities for women is based on these street directories.[8] Both street directories have been analysed by Patricia Scott in her thesis on Grahamstown, but her analysis was according to class.

Women's Occupations in Grahamstown in 1842

	Working Women	Non-working Women	Totals
Unknown	9	1	10
Single	9	9	18
Married	17	15	32
Widowed	11	0	11
Total	46	25	71

A total of 553 householders were listed in the 1842 street directory (at which point Grahamstown had a population of approximately 5000).[9] At 71, women form just under 13% of listed householders in Grahamstown. This percentage is much greater than the comparative percentage for women householders in Cape Town at this point. In Cape Town, by 1840, the majority of women householders did not work while in Grahamstown more women householders worked than did not. Married women were in the majority among both non-working and working women. Also very different to Cape Town, only two black women were principal home occupiers, and they were both laundresses.

According to the list of occupations by household, women worked as bonnet makers, dress makers, hotel keepers, laundresses, school teachers, seamstresses and shop keepers.[10] However, from other sources we know of the presence of woman milliners, music teachers and farmers.[11] It is apparent therefore, that there were very different sorts of opportunities open to women householders and different constraints working on women than was the case in Cape Town for the same period. Mary Anne Webb was husbandless because her husband died - that she had to work is understandable. Hannah Dennison however chose to be separated from her husband. The records of women householders seem to indicate a space for this sort of option in Grahamstown, and one that was not readily available in Cape Town. By 1853, however, the situation in Grahamstown seems to be more in line with that in Cape Town for the same decade.

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[8] I have used the copy of the street directory given in the appendix to Scott's thesis (An Approach, Vol 2, pp.19-29).

[9] MacLennan, B. A Proper Degree, p.230.

[10] Scott, An Approach Vol 2, pp.19-29.

[11] Principally volumes of the Grahamstown Journal.

Women's Occupations in Grahamstown in 1853

	Working Women	Non-working Women	Totals
Unknown	0	0	0
Single	6	0	6
Married	21	13	34
Widowed	11	22	33
	38	35	73

The 1853 directory has 789 entries, 73 of which were women. Women therefore comprise less than 10 % of householders in Grahamstown at this point, a significant difference from almost ten years before. I can only speculate about the reasons for this decrease in the number of women householders over this decade. If, as I postulate for 1842, there was more space (whatever the reasons) for women to work, in 1853 there was less space. The women who worked in 1853 were mostly different to those who were working in 1842. Only nine entries show the same women working in 1842 and 1853.

The 1842 figures can be explained by if married women and their husbands were breadwinners (the directories distinguished between married women and widows). This could be the result, either of a need for married women to work or a desire on the part of married women to work - women could either have been supplementing family incomes, or acting as sole breadwinners. In either case, the opportunities for women to work would have needed to be in place before women could work. I therefore attempted to find some support for my idea that Grahamstown, during the first two decades after the arrival of the settlers was an environment in which opportunities for women were more abundant than was, for instance, the case in Cape Town. In the Grahamstown Journal (which published its first edition at the end of December 1831) for 1832 and 1833 women were regular, though intermittent and in very small numbers, advertisers.[12] For the same period 10 years later, the number of women advertising their services was very insignificant compared the volume of advertising (most of which was dominated by advertisements for sheep). In addition, for the 1832-33 period, most of the women advertisers were married and several were in business with, or in business premises adjourning, their husbands. What the 1832-22 advertisements mostly indicate was a proliferation of new businesses - schools for young ladies and milliners or dressmakers.[13] These are professions which would have been carried out by women of the middle and lower middle classes. I have attempted to incorporate discussion of these figures into my thesis where appropriate.

[12] I examined editions of the Grahamstown Journal from the end of 1831 to the end of 1833, and from the end of 1841 to the end of 1843. The 1842 Street Directory, which was compiled in 1841, would represent the period before the second batch of journals I examined.

[13] In his Roll of the British Settlers, E. Morse-Jones mentions a number of women teachers, many of whom worked out of their husbands premises, or worked with their husbands (pp.83, 90, 92, 93, 96, 104, 106,126, 127, 134, 141, 156, 163).