

## “LET THE QUEEN NOT TAKE [ME] BY THE HAND”: CETSHWAYO KAMPANDE AND IMPERIAL PATRONAGE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOUTH AFRICA

*Abstract:* This is a history of how different groups of people came to know each other, whether in person or through representations, and of what happened when, in the midst of getting to know each other, relations of authority and power shifted. This is also an effort to understand how the British cultural imagination informed policy on the eve of the scramble for Africa. Using events and experiences in the life of Cetshwayo kaMpande this paper explores how the Zulu king attempted to navigate these changing contexts, first in Zululand and then in exile. In so doing, it argues for the strong role of the metropole during and after the Anglo-Zulu War in perpetuating ideas about authentic Zulu custom, which were hardly commensurate with the lived experiences resulting from colonial contact. Cetshwayo’s visit to England in 1882 revealed a clash between his assimilative approach, as he sought a place for himself in the order of empire, and British preoccupations with documenting difference. This clash exposed one route through which new articulations of racism, culture, and tradition could become incorporated in the workings of empire.

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This is a history of how different groups of people came to know each other, both in person and through representations, and a history of what happened when, in the midst of getting to know each other, relations of authority shifted dramatically. Cetshwayo kaMpande was born in the mid-1820s and became the Zulu king in 1873.<sup>1</sup> His reign lasted for just over five years before the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu War and the eventual defeat of the Zulu forces left him in exile in Cape Town. From exile Cetshwayo, who had been a patron to blacks and whites alike in Zululand, sought to become a client of the Queen in order to be restored to his kingdom. To that end, he visited London in 1882 to plead his case. His efforts were successful, but conditions had changed so drastically by the time that Cetshwayo returned to Zululand in 1883—both because of internal politics and because of the conditions placed on his restoration—that he never, in any meaningful sense regained authority. He died in 1884 while under the protection of a British resident.

This is also an effort to understand how the British cultural imagination informed policy on the eve of the scramble for Africa. The Anglo-Zulu War made Cetshwayo (and the Zulus more broadly) hugely popular in Britain, generating a range of expressions of interest from theatrical re-enactments to political debates. As a result, this paper argues for the strong role of the metropole, during and after the Anglo-Zulu War, in formulating ideas of authentic Zulu identity, which were hardly commensurate, unsurprisingly, with the lived experiences resulting from colonial contact. Indeed, Cetshwayo’s visit to England in 1882 revealed a clash between his assimilative approach, as he sought a place for himself in the order of empire, and British preoccupations with documenting difference. This clash exposed one route through which new articulations of racism, culture, and tradition could become incorporated in the workings of empire.

Events in the mid-nineteenth century produced a significant amount of pessimism about Britain's imperial endeavors. A combination of crises in India and Jamaica as well as growing

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<sup>1</sup> Cetshwayo's name has also been spelled as Cetewayo, Cetywayo, and Ketewayo, just to list a few. Although Cetshwayo is now generally agreed upon as the correct spelling, I have kept the different spellings used when quoting from historical sources.

awareness about the unintended consequences of colonization raised serious questions about Britain's ability to transform imperial subjects for the better. Responses to such concerns emanating from Britain included both a stated commitment to protecting the traditions of Asian and African peoples as well as hardening notions of racial difference. Within Britain, these perceived failures also led to sharpened critiques of imperialism that linked Britain's aggressive policy to the interests of the officer class. Neither these new reservations nor protests led to any meaningful policy of isolationism. Instead, as events in southern Africa would show, they often provided a rationale for greater intervention.

In May 1857 the Indian Rebellion, sparked from soldiers' grievances and kindled by the waning fortunes of the members of the Indian aristocracy, spread from Meerut to Delhi and then beyond. The British East India Company struggled to keep the situation under control while awaiting support from British military forces stretched thin due to engagements in Persia and Crimea. People in Britain read in newspapers and heard in church of barbaric Indian rebels harming not only white, male administrators but also white women and children. As Company officials and then colonial administrators attempted to make sense of the violence, they questioned long-held ideas about their own ability to know and understand their subjects. Hindus were perhaps not so docile; feelings of loyalty and gratitude were perhaps more rare. Moreover, perhaps under the Company change had come too fast and unsettled too many customs necessary for the proper functioning of Indian society.<sup>2</sup>

If some of the reforms enacted in the aftermath of the rebellion were suggestive of efforts to rationalize the bureaucracy and military, the social consequences among colonial administrators in India only bred a new commitment to segregation and material markers of difference. Indian soldiers received new "traditional" uniforms, while British women in India stopped wearing saris and began to order their china from home.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the policies of the Raj underscored a renewed commitment to respect for India's past. In the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, Her Majesty promised due regard to "the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India." Lord Lytton, who arrived as Viceroy in India in 1876, used his short tenure to promote these endeavors. Lytton was convinced that he needed only to win the support of key leaders to control the inert Indian masses. To that end, he engaged in a project of using spectacle and state sanction to buttress the authority of certain leaders, and he couched their authority in terms of tradition. As would be the case in the aftermath of the Anglo-Zulu War, some of the leaders Lytton designated had little claim to authority and were rewarded for loyalty, if not heritage. Other administrators preferred to work with the literate, British-educated Indians rising through the colonial bureaucracy—the very class whom Lytton intentionally excluded. Lytton's tactics, nevertheless, reflected broader trends within the empire as administrators attempted to harness the authority of leadership deemed traditional for the sake of progress.<sup>4</sup>

Events in Jamaica less than a decade later summoned another set of imperial specters,

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<sup>2</sup> E.I Brodtkin, "The Struggle for Succession: Rebels and Loyalists in the Indian Mutiny of 1857" *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1972): 277-290 ; Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century" in *Gender and Empire*, Ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 72-74.

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India" in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 165-210.

many relating to the proper maintenance of social and intellectual boundaries between whites and blacks. After the Baptist Missionary Society's Edward Underhill complained of conditions among Jamaica's poor to the Colonial Office in England, so-called "Underhill Societies" formed in order to encourage protest against harsh land and labor laws. These meetings brought together a coalition of people with grievances, including Paul Bogle, a black Baptist church deacon. In October of 1865, Bogle led hundreds of black men and women in protest to Morant Bay, where they were met by militia forces that opened fire. In response, the protestors rioted and then fled to the countryside where they attacked planters. The government troops responded brutally and indiscriminately against Bogle, his followers, and people who had been only tangentially involved in fostering protest. As a result of the Morant Bay Rebellion, the Jamaican legislature disbanded, and Jamaica became a Crown Colony again in 1866.

If outrage bred consensus during the Indian Rebellion, Morant Bay provided far more fodder for the making political and ideological distinctions in England. True, the Morant Bay Rebellion raised anxieties about missionary interference in the colonial administration, the consequences of miscegenation, and the threat posed by blacks who had had religious instruction but were no longer under the authority of white church leaders. But a strong and vocal segment of the British public found fault in the response of Edward Eyre, the colonial administrator who allowed for the swift and violent punishment of those believed to have contributed to the rebellion. As politicians, activists, and intellectuals drew lines in the sand, at stake were the fundamental rights of subjects—no matter how backward—not the claims of those who rebelled. Not only did the debate about Eyre occlude the real grievances of many Jamaicans in the decades after the end of slavery, but Eyre's opponents also premised their arguments on the idea that British governance was, at its core, magnanimous and just. In other words, this position was neither mutually exclusive from hardening notions of racial difference nor from the often related pessimism about the capacities of African and Asian imperial subjects.<sup>5</sup>

Events in the settler colonies generally provoked less visceral responses in the metropole, but they, too, exposed problems with ideas of a civilizing mission. Over the course of the nineteenth century, tensions in New Zealand and South Africa regularly boiled over, as disputes about property (whether of land or stock) escalated into brutal settler wars. These wars left reasons to doubt the supposedly solvent properties of liberal economics as well as the potentially good influence of settlers. Indeed, these conflicts were often so violent and devastating that members of parliament in Britain openly speculated about the inevitability of the extinction of subject races. To the dismay of humanitarian organizations such as the Aborigines' Protection Society (APS), the main problems that these colonies posed for Britain were not moral or ethical but economic because of the millions of pounds pouring out of British coffers to help finance the settler wars. Greater responsibility for governance—not measures to protect the rights and interests of the Xhosa or Maori—provided the easiest way to solve this problem. Britain granted New Zealand the powers of self-government in all domestic matters other than native affairs in 1854; rights to govern native affairs followed in the next decade. The Cape Colony attained

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<sup>5</sup> Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Oxford, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 57-65.

responsible government in 1872.<sup>6</sup>

By the 1870s, growing reservations about the capacities of the world's people to adapt in the ways that many Britons had hoped did not translate into any meaningful policy of isolationism; instead, the decade produced a slew of foreign relations crises stretching from southern Africa to southern Asia and the Mediterranean. In the aftermath of the Reform Act of 1867, which doubled the number of adult men who could vote, protest linking anti-officer class sentiments with the series of “little wars” and a “spirit of imperialism” grew sharper and louder. Such protest found expression in populist newspapers such as *Reynolds's*, which issued searing editorials about the cost of imperialism in lives and money all for the gain, so the editorials posited, of a few elite families.<sup>7</sup> Although seldom entirely commensurate with the kinds of critiques leveled by humanitarian organizations such as the APS, the anti-officer class protest often focused attention on the same parts of the world where the APS advocated change.

In part as a response to this situation, the Liberals promised in the run up to the 1880 election that they would endeavor to untangle some of the complicated webs in which British interests were enmeshed. But, for the very reason that there was no one, coherent imperial project, there was no one solution for disengagement. Isolationism, again, proved elusive. New imperial crises emerged, and old problems festered. By 1882, England was at war with Egypt. And, although Gladstone's administration attempted to move the problems they had inherited in southern Africa to a manageable arm's length away, his policies served only to postpone greater involvement. Under his administration, the British abandoned governance of the Transvaal in 1881 and attempted to avoid further entanglement in Zulu affairs through Cetshwayo's restoration and the partition proposed in 1883. By 1887 the British would annex Zululand, and, by 1899, the British were at war again with the Boers. Gladstone's proposed solutions ultimately did very little to account for the historical realities of the situation in southern Africa.

Although the Zulu kingdom maintained its economic mode of production through the end of the Anglo-Zulu War, the arrival of white neighbors—whether Boer or Britain—altered the political terrain of the kingdom long before the Zulu lost their independence. For the very reason that traders, missionaries, and colonial administrators often saw the monarch's favor as crucial to the success of their individual endeavors, the Zulu kings had a place at the center of early lobbying efforts for a host of economic and social causes. But even as whites sought the king's patronage, they also established new poles of authority and brought with them new markers of prestige and status. This situation produced exchanges, sometimes peaceful and sometimes violent, of objects, people, land, and ideas. From these complicated negotiations emerged, on the one hand, a kind of symbolic politics—often the result of a lack of transparency and full understanding—but, on the other, a kind of burgeoning frontier cosmopolitanism forged through ideological and material exchange. Cetshwayo was, as a result, born into a world characterized

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<sup>6</sup> Michael J. Turner, “‘Raising up Dark Englishmen’: Thomas Perronet Thompson, Colonies, Race, and the Indian Mutiny” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6:1 (2005): 17-19. And, for historical overviews of these disputes, see Price, *Making Empire* and Annie Coombes, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> For more on Reynolds's Newspapers role in both voicing popular sentiment and shaping popular opinion, see Anne Humphreys, “G.W.M. Reynolds: Popular Literature and Popular Politics” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 16:3/4 (1983): 79-89.

by a degree of integration and assimilation, all the more so because his status as a great man of the kingdom (and then its king) allowed him to provide for white clients who offered a range of services. The outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu War exposed the limits of this integration as well as the disruption of many of the networks that allowed for it.

In 1824, the establishment of a settlement at the Bay of Natal initiated relations between English traders and the Zulu kings. The earliest traders offered a range of presents and services to King Shaka in return for permission to live by the bay and to acquire the goods they sought directly from him. In the process, they effectively entered into patron-client relations, offering tribute for Shaka's favor and influence. The fact that a growing number of Africans displeased with Zulu authority moved to the vicinity of the settlement planted the seeds of conflict. Shaka's death in 1828 at the hands of his brothers precluded these tensions from boiling over under his reign. But, during Dingane's kingship, traders continued to make overtures to the king and they also continued to attract African clients. For the very reason that Dingane was concerned about the growing control that traders wielded over people, he cut off relations with the traders of the settlement in 1835. After traders retaliated by leading African troops against the Zulu kingdom, Dingane razed the settlement at the port.<sup>8</sup>

Allen Gardiner, the first English missionary at the settlement, arrived just as Dingane was cutting off relations with the traders. He learned early on about the disastrous consequences of losing the king's favor. In the upheaval that followed, Gardiner managed to steer clear of the souring relations between Dingane and the traders, and he was, for a time, the only white man allowed into Dingane's territory. Gardiner's ability to avoid the traders' fate also spoke to the differing—and occasionally competing—interests motivating missionaries and traders; these interests precluded early alliances between them, which also served to maintain the utility of the Zulu king's patronage.<sup>9</sup>

The arrival of Boers from the Cape Colony in 1837 further complicated matters, by placing a new premium on the importance land and by inviting, unintentionally, a stronger British presence in the region. Although the traders at Port Natal had not pushed much beyond the coast, the pastoralist Boers needed space for their herds. Land, as a result, became both a source of disputes and an invaluable bargaining chip within the succession politics of the Zulu kingdom. In 1839, Mpande wrested the kingship from Dingane by exchanging land in return for support from the Boers. Thus the Boers founded the Republic of Natalia between the Thukela and the Mzinkulu rivers. The British army followed on the heels of the Boers, making the old case for the need to protect sea routes to the east as a justification for annexation. Although this caused many of the Boers to seek greener pastures further north, some stayed in a futile effort to defend the territory. When the British annexed the Republic in 1844, Natalia became known as the Colony of Natal. Its residents included some Boers who had stayed behind, many Africans who had opted out of patron-client relations north of the Thukela, and English-speaking traders. The white settlers who slowly began to trickle into the colony in the 1840s usually intended to farm, but the low overhead required to peddle goods from a wagon had sway; their efforts meant

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers and Colonists," in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1919*, ed. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989) 118-122.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-125.

that trade routes soon crisscrossed Natal and Zululand. Into this situation came Theophilus Shepstone as the Natal's diplomatic agent.<sup>10</sup>

Shepstone, who cut his teeth in the colonial administration as an interpreter during the bloody frontier wars in the Cape, was primarily responsible for managing relations with Africans in Natal. By extension, then, he also had to be mindful of settler demands for land and labor. For decades, Shepstone negotiated this role without any major crises, in large part because of his ability to control the exchange of information between Africans and settlers in Natal. Even though Shepstone's success affirmed his reputation as someone with an uncanny knowledge of African life and custom, misunderstandings in relations between Natal and Zululand occasionally underscored the limits of his knowledge. Indeed, in the relations between Natal and Zululand, a symbolic politics, full of unstated intentions, speculation, and missteps, developed. Cetshwayo's ascendancy to the throne, in particular, was marked by instances of this kind of politics.

Cetshwayo had no easy task in securing the title of heir apparent: he was not the son of his father's favorite wife, he had powerful brothers, and he had to manage the public relations crises posed by his Natal neighbors. These neighbors, with a debatable degree of intention, threatened his claim to the throne even after he defeated his most powerful rival in the civil war of 1856. More specifically, Bishop Colenso sheltered Mkungu, another of Mpande's sons, which leavened the idea that it was Mkungu whom Natal officials such as Shepstone sanctioned to be the next king. This idea was alive and well as Shepstone and Colenso traipsed about Zululand on an expedition in 1859; many Zulus even believed that this might be a mission to challenge Cetshwayo. This left most Zulu notables, as Norman Etherington has noted, "with a mixture of scorn and suspicion."<sup>11</sup> Luckily for Cetshwayo, the situation seemed to resolve itself when in 1861, because of a miscommunication, Shepstone ventured again into Zululand to announce Natal's support for Cetshwayo as the heir apparent.<sup>12</sup> Mpande's death in 1872 produced another moment of this symbolic politics, this time initiated by Cetshwayo himself. Four months after Mpande died, Zulu messengers arrived asking Shepstone to preside over a coronation ceremony that would recognize Cetshwayo as the new king. Because Cetshwayo had, in fact, already been installed by the Zulu chiefs and big men, this invitation likely had more to do with the contentious internal politics of the Zulu kingdom than with any real desire to acknowledge Shepstone's ritual or stately authority.<sup>13</sup> Through eliciting Shepstone's participation, Cetshwayo could make a case for having the support of Natal as he sought to consolidate his authority. Shepstone, in turn, used the coronation as an opportunity to read a set of recommendations that

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<sup>10</sup> For more on Shepstone's career, aims, and methods, see Etherington, "Anglo-Zulu Relations," 13-47; Etherington, "The 'Shepstone System' in the Colony of Natal" in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times*; and Thomas McClendon, "The Man Who Would Be Inkosi: Civilising Missions in Shepstone's Early Career," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30:2 (2004): 339-358). These accounts tend to focus on Shepstone's role in the origins of a system of indirect rule in southern Africa. Jeff Guy's account of Shepstone in *The View Across the River* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001) sits largely outside outside of these preoccupations. See, in particular, chapter 3, "The House of Sonzica." Although it is clear that Shepstone supported many schemes to attempt to harness African authority and custom and often, to an extent, acted the part of an African chief himself, it is much less clear that Shepstone was as committed to "tradition" as a longer term solution for managing relations with Africans.

<sup>11</sup> Etherington, *Anglo-Zulu Relations*, 17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Etherington, 26-29. For another version of the coronation story, see Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 72-102. Hamilton's account is largely congruous with Etherington's, with the exception of the fact that she takes Shepstone's imitation of Shaka far more seriously.

he suggested would make the Zulu a more just nation. He was also able to include the account in his personal mythology of the high esteem in which many Africans viewed him.<sup>14</sup> Immediately after the coronation, all parties seemed to go home relatively happy—or at least unscathed. When in 1878, Shepstone’s proclamation at the coronation became words for which Cetshwayo was held accountable, the potential dangers of a lack of full transparency became suddenly more apparent.

Despite misunderstandings, it is clear that each side worked hard to make sense of the other. For the Zulus, some of these ways of making sense may well be outside of epistemologies that can be reconstructed in the space of this paper. That said, there seemed to be ways of knowing, learning, and marking that provide space for speculation. Perhaps an obvious example was the practice of giving Zulu names to various white neighbors. Some of these names were simply Zulu-ized versions of English proper nouns.<sup>15</sup> Other names, such as Somtsewu (“Father of Whiteness”) for Shepstone and Sobantu (“Father of the People”) for Colenso, carried a message about the context of these men’s positions within Zulu politics and life. More general addresses, too, played an important role in the rules of polite exchange in elite politics. These addresses often used a language of family to negotiate political relationships. Cetshwayo could—and did—regularly refer to Shepstone simply as “father” out of politeness and respect since Shepstone had been a contemporary Mpande. Shepstone, likewise, often referred to Cetshwayo as his son. With these words—and relationships—came, however, obligations, as Cetshwayo’s advisors reminded Shepstone when he ruled against the Zulus in a boundary dispute with the Boers. At this meeting in 1877, Cetshwayo’s prime minister asked, “Is it so, then, Somtsewu, that after two men have been friends, and then one of them dies and leaves his son fatherless, the one who lives on ought to be harsh to the son of the deceased?”<sup>16</sup>

Informing such exchanges was a growing body of knowledge, shared in public and private, not just about colonial politics but about the broader world and the place of the Zulu kingdom in it. As early as Dingane’s time, missionaries had shown Africans pictures of England in order to offer evidence of its wonders, usually adding that a magical book, the Bible, was responsible for the fantastic things that the pictures revealed.<sup>17</sup> And, even events such as the coronation ceremony provided opportunities for Zulus to learn more about what the English—or at least Shepstone—expected of them.<sup>18</sup> The Zulu kings also regularly sought out advisors who could offer some insight into the often strange, sometimes downright silly and sometimes downright dangerous maneuverings of white neighbors. Unlike his father, Mpande, who aligned

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<sup>14</sup> Like most myths, this one, too, had some core of truth to it. Moreover, it is clear from the moments when Shepstone’s relationships with Africans fell apart, as in the ruling on the border case between the Boers and the Zulus, that Shepstone took assaults on his reputation in a way that reflected a level of sincerity in his beliefs.

<sup>15</sup> Of course, the absence of a name with another Zulu meaning might be a statement of significance in and of itself.

<sup>16</sup> As quoted in Guy, *Destruction*, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Norman Etherington, “Outward and Visible Signs of Conversion in Nineteenth-Century KwaZulu-Natal” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32:4 (2002): 423-424.

<sup>18</sup> At the Coronation Ceremony, Shepstone had suggested the following:

1. That indiscriminate shedding of blood should cease in the land.
2. That no Zulu shall be condemned without open trial and the public examination of witnesses for and against, and that he shall have a right to appeal to the King.
3. That no Zulu’s life shall be taken without the previous knowledge and consent of the king, after such trial has taken place, and the right of appeal has been allowed to be exercised.
4. That for minor crimes the loss of property, all or a portion, shall be substituted for punishment of death.

himself closely with several missionaries, Cetshwayo became a patron to traders.<sup>19</sup> Nor was Cetshwayo the only one who established such relationships. By the time Cetshwayo ascended to the throne, there were other big men who had white traders living as clients nearby. Still others simply made a point of hailing down traders who came with wagons. The glasses of rum offered for free by the traders encouraged sales and loose tongues as Africans asked not only for news but also for interpretations of events.<sup>20</sup>

The most important trader with whom Cetshwayo associated was John Dunn. Dunn grew up in Natal working for hunting parties, which took him back and forth across the Tugela and gave him the opportunity to learn Zulu. Through friendships with chiefs, Dunn began to acquire wives, patrons, and cattle. He also became an advisor to Cetshwayo's brother Mbuyazi. After Cetshwayo's victory in 1856, Cetshwayo offered to provide for Dunn in exchange for his allegiance. Dunn's utility as someone who got things done for Cetshwayo, however ruthlessly, was undeniable. Moreover, Dunn had access to the one luxury item that Cetshwayo's other traders did not: guns. These services aside, Dunn also served as a cultural intermediary, writing letters, explaining ideas, and offering opinions and advice. As long as his interests and Cetshwayo's were aligned, he took this job quite seriously and enjoyed, in return, Cetshwayo's generous provision. In fact, as late as 1877, Dunn had written to the Aborigines' Protection Society, in an effort to stave off what seemed like—and was—impending war with the British. Writing as "an Englishman by birth," Dunn assured the APS that "nothing but the grossest act of encroachment and oppression [would] cause the Zulu to take up arms against the English race."<sup>21</sup> When the war came, however, Dunn fought on the side of the British.<sup>22</sup>

The decades leading up to the war were not easy ones in Natal. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley coupled with economic depression in the mid-1860s raised new questions about land and labor. With the help of Natal's newspapers, settlers developed a consolidated voice in opposition to many of Shepstone's policies. The affair with the Hlubi chief Langalibalele, too, drew eyes to Natal, exposing the administration in less than favorable light. In 1873, Langalibalele attempted to flee rather than register his guns with the Natal administration. The confrontation that resulted offered another example of disproportionate punishment and retaliation at the hands of colonial militias. Within this context, Theophilus Shepstone's grip began to slip from the reins of the Natal administration, and he lost the control he had once had over information.

The efforts of Bishop John William Colenso's family were crucial to the supply of new information and new voices from Natal and Zululand. Recruited in 1853 to be the first Bishop of Natal, John Colenso and his family established a homestead just outside of Pietermaritzburg. The Colensos not only remained connected to London's middle-class liberal circles and humanitarian lobbies, but, the family's disillusionment with settler politics and Natal's colonial administrators

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<sup>19</sup> For more on Mpande's relationship with missionaries, see Etherington, "Anglo-Zulu Relations," 16 – 21.

<sup>20</sup> The journal of the trader Cornelius Vijn, which was edited by Bishop Colenso for the purpose of supporting Cetshwayo, includes descriptions of these kinds of encounters. Cornelius Vijn, *Cetshwayo's Dutchman: Being the Private Journal of a White Trader in Zululand During the British Invasion*, ed. Rev. J.W. Colenso (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1880), 9-11, 18.

<sup>21</sup> As quoted in Ballard, 264.

<sup>22</sup> There is some evidence, however, that Dunn continued to send messages to Cetshwayo even after the outbreak of war, including advice about how to confront the British and promises to gather the king's cattle that had been taken in raids.



after 1873 led them to seek out alternative sources of information. In most cases, these sources were African. As Jeff Guy has argued, their knowledge of Zulu, network of African informants, and printing press produced unparalleled access to African perspectives on the events in Natal and Zululand. Their accounts were mediated, to be sure, by particular worldviews, and, at times, Africans expressed frustrations with their passion and a resultant lack of political judgment. But perhaps the number of Africans who sought out the Bishop—and later his daughters—served as the best gauge for of his utility within their own strategies of protest and engagement with imperial authorities.<sup>23</sup> Try as they might, however, the Colensos were simply no match for the approaching tide.

The events leading up to the Anglo-Zulu have been so well chronicled that they need not be repeated in depth here. A few points about the war and its aftermath are, however, worth reiterating for the sake of the argument of this paper. Sir Henry Bartle Frere arrived in South Africa in 1877 with instructions from the Colonial Office to bring about the confederation of the various colonies south of the Limpopo in order to secure a steady supply of labor and access to wealth further north. The same year, Shepstone went to Pretoria and annexed the Transvaal with the same goal in mind. Influenced by Shepstone, Bartle Frere decided that a strong Zulu kingdom was a hindrance to the aims of confederation because the kingdom limited the potential for profit and harbored masses of young men constantly pushing to “wash their spears” because of the required military service. As a result, he issued an ultimatum in December 1878, the terms of which he knew that Cetshwayo could not meet, and gave Cetshwayo one month to meet its terms or face invasion. Due to the slow pace of communication between South Africa and London, this amount of time also allowed Bartle Frere to initiate military action before authorities in London could tell him to stop. In the interim, Bartle Frere built a moral case for the war by arguing that Cetshwayo was a brutal tyrant who ruthlessly oppressed his people. Only by deposing the king, Bartle Frere posited, could the people of Zululand be liberated.<sup>24</sup>

The invasion of Zululand began in January 1879. Cetshwayo was determined from the start to wage a defensive war and to refrain from crossing the Thukela into Natal. Although the king had a great deal of trouble controlling his troops, this seemed to be one condition that most by which most soldiers abided—with the exception of those who defected. He was also determined to make various overtures in the name of peace. Although rumors of war sent most missionaries and traders into Natal, Cetshwayo found other sources for information and translation. Cornelius Vijn, a white trader who got stuck on the Zulu side of the border after the outbreak of war, provided one source.<sup>25</sup> A prisoner of war caught and brought to Cetshwayo was another. (This prisoner also reported seeing Cetshwayo with a stack of newspapers read to him by a Zulu interpreter in the hope of learning more about British intentions.)<sup>26</sup>

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23 See Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1983); Jeff Guy, “Class, Imperialism, and Literary Criticism: William Ngidi, John Colenso, and Matthew Arnold” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23:2 (1997): 219-241; and Jeff Guy, *The View Across the River: Harriette Colenso and the Zulu Struggle Against Imperialism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001).

24 Frere’s case against Cetshwayo was recorded in a number of British Parliamentary Papers, including C.2220, C.2222, C.2252, and C.2260.

25 Vijn, 39-43.

26 “Portraits of Sir Garnet Wolseley and Cetewayo, the Zulu King” *The Illustrated Police News*, 21 June 1879. This article includes an account from a prisoner of war named “Grandier.”

The Zulu forces enjoyed early victories, most notably at Isandlwana. This poor performance shocked Britons at home reading about their “African troubles.” Such success came with a significant cost in public perception of the war; prior to Isandlwana, the war had been, for many, just another example of how the empire entangled Britons in the affairs of settlers and other races. The embarrassment of defeat at the hands of Africans fighting with spears rallied the British around the cause of defeating the enemy. The promise of more troops from the empire quickly made it clear that the Zulus could prolong the war but that they would not win.

British success at the battle of Ulundi on July 4, 1879 brought a nominal end to the war, even as skirmishes continued and the king remained on the lam. Cetshwayo took shelter at the kraals of various supporters and in hideouts while British forces pursued him. The king managed to avoid until late August. Cetshwayo left from Durban by boat in September 1879 to live in exile in Cape Town, thinking that he would never see Zululand again. By this point, Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley, a disgraced Bartle Frere's replacement, stood at the helm. His instructions from the Colonial Office were clear: British authorities at home wanted a resolution that would protect the colonists of the Transvaal and Natal but that would prevent the British government from annexing the Zulu kingdom. Bearing all of this in mind, Wolseley proposed a settlement that would divide Zululand into thirteen districts ruled by appointed chiefs who answered to a British resident. The thirteen chiefs all signed a "Deed of Chieftainship" in September 1879 and swore their allegiance to the Queen, allowing her to "deal as she may think fit with the Zulu Chiefs and people, and with the Zulu country." In so doing, they agreed to an array of terms premised on the notion that the imperial authorities were not only taking the steps necessary to prevent more conflict and promote progress, but were also restoring the "good and ancient customs" that the Zulu people had "known and followed in the days preceding the establishment of the military system by Tshaka."<sup>27</sup>

The Anglo-Zulu War and its aftermath produced in Britain a dramatic surge in interest in these people known as the Zulu. This interest found expression in a variety of forums that appealed to people across lines of class and provided outlets for a combination of leisurely and intellectual pursuits. Although London was certainly the origin and recipient of many of these expressions, print culture as well as a network of entertainment venues and lecture circuits played an important role in spreading information far beyond the capital. For the very reason that Sir Bartle Frere's rationale for war hinged on Cetshwayo, representations of the king assumed an especially important place within this burgeoning British cultural imagination. The British not only clamored to learn about the king's looks and how he lived, but they also honored him with a range of tributes—some odder than others, from pets named “Cetshwayo” to poems and statues of his likeness made of sugar. As the British learned more about the Zulu, different representations of Cetshwayo continued to be central to debates about a future policy in Zululand. Most contributors to these debates had more in common, however, than their impassioned attacks on each other might suggest. Almost all agreed that Cetshwayo was a savage, if some argued that he was an especially noble one. More important in these debates

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<sup>27</sup> Charles Ballard has included an example of the Deeds of Chieftainship in the appendix his biography of John Dunn. See Charles Ballard, *The White Chief in Zululand* (Craighall: AD Donker, 1985), 264.

were questions about what his savagery might mean for the future of British relations with the Zulu people.

Within one month of Cetshwayo's capture, there was a troupe of Zulus staging exhibitions first at the Royal Aquarium in London and then at various locales in Scotland. Known as "Farini's Zulus," their promoters billed them as "The only GENUINE ZULUS in England, and the only ones who have ever left their country."<sup>28</sup> After early speculation that they were not, in fact, "genuine Zulus" a letter supposedly from Theophilus Shepstone was printed in newspapers along with advertisements for the troupe, assuring the public that they would get to see the real deal<sup>29</sup>. With their authenticity verified, their popularity soared. During the 1879 Christmas holidays alone, at least 13,000 people saw them in London. Reviewers marveled over the great similarity between their songs of war and love, their astounding marksmanship when throwing spears, and their ability to "lose themselves" in the art of acting in ways that civilized actors simply could not.<sup>30</sup> Disputes with Mr. Farini over labor contracts meant that this group became even better known for showing up in the Westminster Police Court than for their riveting performances. After they disbanded, newspapers consoled readers with the news that a troupe of Zulu women, known as "Cetywayo's Daughters," might soon replace them.<sup>31</sup>

In the absence of live representations, Britons could rely on objects and images in both two and three dimensions. A macabre, satirical essay appearing in *Funny Folks* in August 1879 suggested that if Cetshwayo were ever caught, he could be stuffed and placed in Madame Tussaud's Museum. This essay proved prescient to an extent: by November 1879, Cetshwayo's likeness along with depictions of his wives and scenes from Rorke's Drift were among the items on display at the gallery in London.<sup>32</sup> A review promised that visitors would see "Cetywayo and his wives, his face full of the happiest and most defiant self-reliance, the wives also smiling pleasantly, as the manners of good society in Zululand prescribe." These scenes were among the most popular of those exhibited at Madame Tussaud's in 1879 and 1880.<sup>33</sup> For those who could not travel to London, art galleries around Britain devoted temporary show space to collections of Zulu weapons as well as drawings and paintings depicting Zulu life and custom.<sup>34</sup> The traveling exhibit "Poole and Young's New Dioramic Excursions," for example, promised a collection of paintings stretching two miles in length depicting scenes from around the empire but with special attention given to the Zulus.<sup>35</sup> Still other representations originated from the particular specialties of British regions and cities. York, known for its elaborate confectionary creations, featured an exhibit with a sculpture of Cetshwayo made entirely out of sugar.<sup>36</sup>

It was through newspapers and magazines, however, that even more people could begin to get an idea of what Zulu life and notables looked like. Through caricatures in *Punch* and

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<sup>28</sup> "Advertisements and Notices," *The Morning Post*, 20 October 1879. The historical accuracy of such a claim is worth questioning. As early as 1853, advertisements in British papers announced exhibits of troupes of Zulus who would offer in "an extensive and unexampled manner this wild and interesting tribe of savages, in their domestic habits, their nuptial ceremonies, the charm song, finding the witch, hunting tramp, preparation for war, and territorial conflicts." This troupe also, upon visiting Queen Victoria, saluted her with "Bayede."

<sup>29</sup> "Royal Aquarium," *The Morning Post*, 18 October 1879.

<sup>30</sup> "Christmas Amusements," *The Times*, 27 December 1879.

<sup>31</sup> "The Friendless Zulu," *The Era*, 12 September 1880.

<sup>32</sup> "Catching Cetywayo," *Funny Folks*, 20 September 1879.

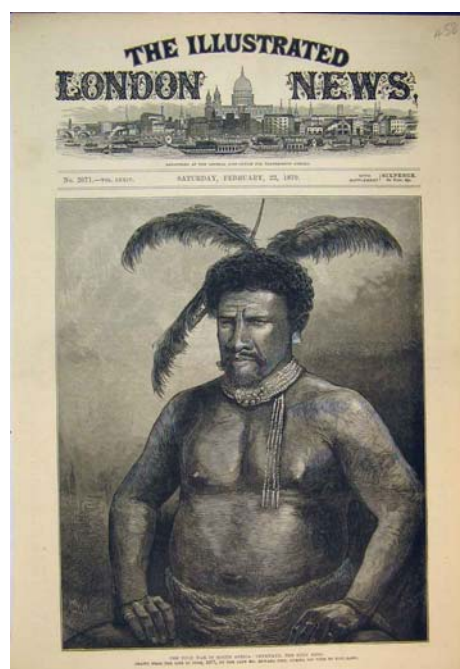
<sup>33</sup> "Christmas Amusements."

<sup>34</sup> 'Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition at Stockton', *The Daily Gazette*, 8 April 1879.

<sup>35</sup> 'Advertisements and Notices', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 14 April 1879.

<sup>36</sup> "The Yorkshire Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition," *The York Herald*, 31 May 1879.

depictions aspiring to realism in publications such as the *London Illustrated Weekly*, Britons saw a range of images supposedly depicting the Zulu king before ones actually resembling him were printed.



**Changing Representations of Cetshwayo: From *The Illustrated Police News*, 1 June 1879 (top left); from the *London Illustrated News*, 22 February 1879 (top right); and *The Graphic*, 1 January 1880 (below)**



"CETSHWAYO CIVILIZED"—THE EX-ZULU KING IN THE CASTLE, CAPE TOWN

Newspapers cultivated more than the visual imaginary. From the so-called penny dreadfuls to the populist *Reynolds's Newspaper* to the *London Times*, newspapers carried—albeit in differing proportions—some mix of reports from telegraph services, summaries of Blue Books, special correspondence, rumors, and opinion pieces relating to affairs in Zululand and Natal. Because of the practice of running items from other papers, news about Zulu affairs first printed in papers in London soon became news in the rest of England, as well as Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Newspapers also provided space for people to express their opinions and understanding of events. Letters to the editor, too, were picked up and re-printed. Two London-based papers, the *Times* and the *Daily News*, offered the most space for letters to the editor on their pages. During and after the war, letters representing a variety of interests in Natal and

Zululand appeared in these sources, only to be featured again elsewhere, whether verbatim or in summary. In this way, the perspectives of parties such as F.W. Chesson of the APS, often sharing information from the Colensos, and John Dunn, claiming to represent all of the chiefs of the settlement, reached a wider audience.<sup>37</sup>

It is more difficult to know what to make of the range of Zulu-inspired pennames, puzzle answers, poems contributed by readers, and award-winning animals appearing in the pages of British newspapers. (Cetshwayo served as the namesake for not only a prizewinning sheep and dachshund, but also an especially successful racehorse.) Such fragments of evidence do little to reveal how people felt about events in southern Africa, but they do speak to a level of saturation among the readership. Indeed, they suggest that for the readership of many newspapers, Cetshwayo—as much as the Zulu more broadly—had become a household name.<sup>38</sup>

Public speaking engagements provided another forum to rehash the facts of the war and offer perspectives on Zulu life and affairs. The 1879 Social Science Congress, for example, featured a speech by F.W. Chesson in which he asked, “Is it a legal or moral duty for a civilised nation to observe towards an incivilised race laws and principles which that race ignores or persistently neglects?” As he answered in the affirmative, arguing that supposedly uncivilized people still deserved civilized treatment, Chesson drew extensively from the experience of the Anglo-Zulu War and the wrongs committed against Cetshwayo.<sup>39</sup> The year after the Social Science Congress, the former bishop of Zululand took to the road in England and Wales, not only to raise money for a new mission in northern Africa but also to preach about the trials of Zulu Christians as a result of Cetshwayo's persecution. One can only imagine that his were among many sermons preached on the subject of the war and the Zulu people.<sup>40</sup>

Interest in the Zulu also gave rise to a niche market in the publishing industry. Some fantastical accounts and some efforts at thick, unbiased description were released. Manuscripts mixing different ratios of analysis with opinion and polemic were more typical. Between 1879 and 1884, at least seven books were published by different British presses for the purpose of either detailing the war, offering advice about the future course of action Britain should take, or some combination of both. From Bishopstowe alone came two volumes, with the Bishop's *Cetywayo's Dutchman* (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1880) and his daughter Frances's *History of the Zulu War* (Chapman and Hall, 1880). Each of these accounts reflected a commitment to integrate a consultation of Blue Books with other sources in order to expose the problems with the arguments made against Cetshwayo. Lady Florence Dixie's *In the Land of Misfortunes* (Bentley and Son, 1882) combined elements of travel writing with favorable accounts of Cetshwayo and highly disparaging opinions of the Transvaal Boers who had, while she was visiting South Africa, been granted their independence from Britain. Of course, people who did

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<sup>37</sup> Chesson wrote more than fifty letters to the editor about Zulu affairs between 1875 and 1885. See, for example, F.W. Chesson, “The Missionaries in Zululand,” *The Times*, 11 March 1879; F.W. Chesson, “Bishop Colenso and the Zulu War,” *Daily News*, 2 June 1879; F.W. Chesson, “Cetywayo's Messengers,” *The Times*, 24 June 1879. For an example of one of Dunn's letters, see J.R. Dunn, “John Dunn and Bishop Colenso,” *The Morning Post* 2 1882 April.

<sup>38</sup> “The Kennel,” *Bell's Life and in London and Sporting Chronicle* 22 January 1881; “Rural Topics and Events,” *The Australasian* 19 August 1882.

<sup>39</sup> Summaries of Chesson's speech as well as comments on it are available through “The Social Sciences Congress,” *Daily News* 3 October 1879.

<sup>40</sup> “The Zulus as Christians,” *Western Mail* 22 November 1880.

not consider themselves among Cetshwayo's friends also used books to make their points. Missionary Thomas Wilkinson printed and annotated his deceased wife's journal and published it as *A Lady's Life in Zululand* (J.T. Hayes, 1882). Although his wife had little especially negative to say about Cetshwayo, her husband's annotations capitalized on any tangential reference in order to expound upon his evils. He offered detailed accounts of the horrors of being smelled out and eaten up as well as the persecution of African Christians. Captain W.R. Ludlow, writing on the basis of his military experience in South Africa, shared many of Wilkinson's opinions. His *Zululand and Cetewayo* (Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1882) described Cetshwayo as "a bloodthirsty, crafty old king whom [the Zulu] blindly obey" while John Dunn was practically "an English country squire."<sup>41</sup> Striking something of a middle ground, H. Rider Haggard's *Cetywayo and His White Neighbors* (Trubner and Co., 1882) attempted to shift the focus away from the king's character to make the case that Zululand was better off without him, noting "There are interests involved in the question [Cetshwayo's] reinstatement which are, I think, more important than Cetywayo's personal proportions of mind or body" before arguing that a protectorate should have been established in Zululand.<sup>42</sup>

As different parties made sense of the Anglo-Zulu War, some terms were simply not open to debate. No one argued, for example, that Cetshwayo should be allowed to return to Zululand without some form of British supervision—absolute sovereignty was off the table. Cetshwayo was, after all, still of a savage race and in need of direction. The terms of debate tended to focus instead on the extent to which his savagery would preclude his ability to safeguard British interests as well as the interests of his people. His most passionate detractors maintained that Bartle Frere's initial rationale for war held true. His supporters, on the other hand, drew upon notions of English justice and more benevolent characterizations of the relationship between Cetshwayo and his people in order to plead for his restoration.

Many of Cetshwayo's supporters argued, as people had during the Morant Bay Rebellion and the debates about abolition before, that the Anglo-Zulu War shook the very foundation of notions of English justice. In order to reaffirm these foundations, amends should be made. A.P. Chesson, for example, wrote that if Cetshwayo were to be restored, the imperial government would be performing "an act of justice—probably unprecedented of the kind" for "a man deeply wronged, deserving restitution."<sup>43</sup> Other commentators furthered that the Colonial Office could afford to be magnanimous in rectifying the situation for the very reason that Cetshwayo had learned his lesson. He would always be a "firm friend" to the British since he was a "savage warrior not likely to hold malice against a power he always knew to be superior."<sup>44</sup>

In making a case for his restoration, Cetshwayo's admirers expressed his relationship with his people a bit more ambiguously as they sought to answer charges of tyranny. Among his admirers, he was at once transcendent, a *primus inter pares* among savages, but he was also subject to the ways and customs of his people. Lady Florence Dixie was not the only one who read into Cetshwayo's face, stature, and demeanor, signs of a kind of universal nobility, irrespective to some extent of divisions of race and education. In a maudlin account of her

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<sup>41</sup> W.R. Ludlow, *Zululand and Cetewayo* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1882), 104, 58-62.

<sup>42</sup> H. Rider Haggard, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbors* (London: Trubner and Co., 1882),

<sup>43</sup> A.P. Chesson, "The Restoration of Cetywayo," *The Aborigines' Friend* 1 October 1882.

<sup>44</sup> "The Restoration of Cetewayo," *Western Mail* 17 August 1882.

interview with the ex-King, Lady Florence Dixie perceived his inherent nobility in his ability to maintain hope despite having been so grievously wronged. She noted that his hope "depicts a courage that rises to bear misfortune, with nothing to make the pain less hard." "And," she added, "It shows that Cetshwayo, who has been represented as a cruel bloodthirsty despot and tyrant, possesses that which many white men, with civilisation and education around them entirely lack, and which they may well envy--i.e. a nobility of soul, dignity, and courage in misfortune, which makes him in all he says, 'every inch a king'." <sup>45</sup> This very nobility made him an appropriate leader of his people, one who would command respect and authority. This position was not entirely commensurate with the idea that it was pressure from his people that actually required him to allow practices that civilized society might deem abhorrent. As Cornelius Vijn noted in his journal, Cetshwayo had "to enforce from time to time the laws of his country but that "in fact," he added, "it was not the King who killed in most cases, but the jealousy or superstition of their own people."<sup>46</sup>

Supporters of these different views could agree, however, that the leadership under Wolseley's settlement was much less fit to be in charge. Dixie wrote with scorn, John Dunn, "this white chieftain, who is supposed to set them [the Zulu] a good example, lives surrounded by a large harem, setting at defiance of the white man's law, which we pretend we are desirous of the black should follow." Vijn described Zibhebhu, another chief given new authority by the settlement, as cruel and unjust in contrast to Cetshwayo.<sup>47</sup> Other critiques raised the point that Cetshwayo would do inevitably do a better job because several of the new chiefs "were not even Zulu."<sup>48</sup>

Those who participated in these debates also often exposed themselves to some of the very terms of its analysis. That is, as they argued for one side or another, their contributions raised questions about the effects of their class, gender, and race on their perspective. Lady Florence Dixie's role in Cetshwayo's defense were suggestive of these trends, exposing not only the anxieties produced as women pursued work and causes outside of the home, but also the complicated politics at play as white women in Britain sought people for whom they could speak. Born in 1855, Dixie was just twenty-six when she ventured to South Africa. She had already published two books, a comedy and an account of a hunting expedition in Patagonia. She arrived in South Africa as a special correspondent for the *Daily News*, and her experiences made her decide to write another book. Dedicated to fellow adventurer Charles Darwin, *In the Land of Misfortunes* combined descriptions of travel with politics. Dixie wasted no space with subtlety when it came to the major policy issues of the day in South Africa: she believed that Cetshwayo should be restored but that the Boers did not deserve self-governance in the Transvaal. She continued her correspondence with Cetshwayo even after she returned to England, and joined those voicing their opinions of the situation in letters to the editor and at dinner parties. Her ardor led to characterizations of her as eccentric at best and interfering at worst. H. Rider Haggard, for example, remarked of her role, "Heaven help the members of the Shepstone family when they fall into the hands of the gentler but more enthusiastic sex.... Ladies should remember that there

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<sup>45</sup> Florence Dixie, *In the Land of Misfortune* (London: Bentley and Son, 1882), 417-420.

<sup>46</sup> Vijn, 81.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> "A Settlement for Zululand," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 5 October 1879.

are other people in the world to be considered beside Cetshwayo.”<sup>49</sup> A public debacle involving statements from Cetshwayo doctored by Dixie confirmed the suspicions of those harboring less generous feelings. As a result, she lost credibility and, more importantly, Cetshwayo lost his trusted interpreter because of the information exposed as a result of the whole affair.<sup>50</sup> If Dixie experienced, perhaps rightfully, more public rebuke than many other British women interested in similar causes, her impulses were akin to those of countless other women who argued that they could bring about a more ethical empire.<sup>51</sup>

The experiences of white commentators with significant experience in Natal and Zululand – that is, Shepstone, the Colensos, and Dunn – offered different statements about the resilience of whiteness and masculinity in the face of encounters with Africans. Shepstone, who was involved the least publicly in debates about Cetshwayo, also emerged the least scathed. He had built a career, after all, based on his ability not only to know the native mind, but also to cordon that mind off and to control this intimate knowledge while ostensibly being unaffected socially. For Colenso, on the other hand, his decisions to make various public stances in defense of Africans, to cross his white friends and the colonists of Natal had largely limited his company to his family and the Africans whose causes he hoped to champion. The result was that settlers and conservatives labeled him meddlesome, soft, and sentimental—not unlike Lady Florence Dixie. On the basis of filial affection, commentators lumped the Colenso children, too, under such descriptors. As one reviewer of Frances's *History of the Zulu War* wrote, “While fighting with fierce energy for his own side, [Bishop Colenso] has almost invariably refused to admit that there was anything to be said on the other. In this respect, Miss Colenso reproduces him exactly.”<sup>52</sup> Similarly, a letter to the editor noted that one “need look no further than Bishop Colenso” to understand why his son would advocate for Cetshwayo.<sup>53</sup> John Dunn raised another set of questions altogether. Not unlike the Boers, Dunn’s lifestyle raised suspicions about the protections whiteness could afford. One editorialist in the *Times* wrote, nevertheless, “Defective as the rule of John Dunn may be, it is, at any rate, that of a man who knows what civilization is and cannot sink to the level of untutored barbarism.”<sup>54</sup> If for many commentators blackness could keep Cetshwayo a savage, then whiteness, too, could keep John Dunn a civilized man.

Despite bouts of depression and overwhelming despair, Cetshwayo did not sit idly by as these debates were taking place. Counseled by Bishop Colenso, who maintained faith in the virtues of people in England (if not English settlers), Cetshwayo set his sights on visiting London to plead his case in person in the hope of being restored. To that end, he wrote letters to colonial officials, received visitors in the hope of making allies, and re-established communication with people in Natal and Zululand. He crafted a strategy for engagement based on his ability to adapt and assimilate to British demands, and he made an argument for a position among their ranks.

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<sup>49</sup> H. Rider Haggard, “Cetywayo and His White Neighbors.”

<sup>50</sup> This reputation for embellishment was hard to shake. When, for example, she reported being brutally mugged in 1885, some observers asked if she was just embellishing facts to make another political point.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

<sup>52</sup> “History of the Zulu War,” *The Examiner* 17 April 1880.

<sup>53</sup> “The Release of Cetewayo,” *The Morning Post* 10 November 1881.

<sup>54</sup> “The Proposed Visit of King Cetywayo,” *The Times* (London), 8 April, 1882.



This strategy extended from his words to his clothes and his expectations. When Cetshwayo was finally allowed to go to England in 1882, he was undoubtedly subject to certain racist assumptions, some of which he successfully defied. But it was precisely these racist assumptions that, within the British cultural imagination, helped make him a potential friend and client fit to be restored and to restore peace in Zululand. In Cetshwayo's visit to England, we see, then, the clash of his own strategy for engagement, based on a burgeoning sense of gentlemanly cosmopolitanism, with British perceptions of authentic African leadership. T

From the moment of Cetshwayo's capture, his experiences in exile served as a new phase in his education about British authority, intentions, and culture. This was in part because the British authorities who captured him had things that they wanted to teach him—lessons planned because of the embarrassment of Isandlawana and the pride that they believed had encouraged Cetshwayo to fight such a superior power in the first place. Foreshadowing Cetshwayo's tour of the royal arsenal in England three years later, colonial officials made a point to take him aboard a warship, the H.M.S. *Boadicea*, so he could see the kind of technological might that Britain could muster. After describing Cetshwayo's "terrible shock" at the sight, the editor of the *Penny Illustrated* added with regret: "Such a visit a year ago might have saved England millions of money."<sup>55</sup> Other lessons arose simply from the process of experiencing new places. As Cetshwayo traveled from Durban to the Cape, he experienced his first boat ride—a prospect that raised more fear than excitement for Cetshwayo even though the ship's crew attempted to reconstruct a hut for him and his wives on the deck of the boat. And, as restrictions on his movement decreased after his arrival in Cape Town, Cetshwayo also had the opportunity to see the local sites and experience local colonial culture. Not only did he go on carriage rides, but he also took excursions to the ballet, pantomimes, and magic shows.<sup>56</sup> These events must have been but small consolation for someone desperate to return to his homeland, but they also provided some common ground for acculturation.

Cetshwayo's main interests from exile lay in attempting to make new allies and to influence opinion. In Cape Town, Cetshwayo had access to different people and new media for sharing his perspective. An article in *Macmillan's Magazine*, published in 1880, offered one of the most complete accounts of the war as told on the basis of—if not entirely from—Cetshwayo's perspective.<sup>57</sup> The narrative included a history of the Zulu people since the time of Shaka as well as answers to all of the charges leveled by Cetshwayo's detractors. Moreover, news, which had been so hard to come by in Zululand, suddenly became more available, and he worked this information into his interpretation of events, comparing his troubles to those in other parts of the empire. Cetshwayo also received a number of visitors, some who called simply out of curiosity and others who, such as Lady Florence Dixie, came to sort out the current state of affairs with the intention of informing people back in Britain. Most of Cetshwayo's efforts, however, took the form of private communication, or letters and telegraphs, sent to politicians in the Cape and England as well as members of the English royal family. Cetshwayo's interpreter

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<sup>55</sup> "Cetywayo in Captivity," *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 18 October 1879.

<sup>56</sup> "Cetewayo and the English Conjurer," *The Era* 23 November 1879. "Cetewayo at the Pantomime," *The Era* 18 February 1882.

<sup>57</sup> "Cetywayo's Story of the Zulu Nation and the War," *Macmillan's Magazine*, February 1880: 273-295. Cetshwayo's first handler at the Cape translated and edited the narrative, making it from the third-person perspective.

appointed in early 1881, R.C.A. Samuelson, was a crucial partner in these efforts. Before considering the content of the letters, then, it is worth considering the nature of the relationship between the Zulu king and Samuelson.

The son of missionaries, Samuelson grew up in Zululand where his family benefited from Cetshwayo's kindness. When Samuelson became an interpreter for Cetshwayo, he was already inclined to like the Zulu king; in exile the two developed a close working relationship and friendship. Indeed, in Samuelson, Cetshwayo was able to find another important cultural intermediary, someone who could read, write, and fill in cultural knowledge gaps. Because of the nature of this relationship, Cetshwayo relied on Samuelson for correspondence both within and outside of the official strictures established for state prisoners.<sup>58</sup> Samuelson played an especially important role in speeding up communication between Cetshwayo and Bishopstowe, which meant, in turn, communication between Cetshwayo and his loyal supporters in Zululand. With help from Samuelson's pen, Cetshwayo expressed indignation and despair; he made promises and accusations. Above all, though, he made a case for himself as a worthy friend to the British and a loyal client to the Queen.

In Zululand Cetshwayo had often made references to the Queen in efforts to curry the favor of British authorities, but the letters and interviews while in exile reflect a more intense focus on his position as a member of the Queen's family and his expectation of the protections that this status should afford him. To make his case, Cetshwayo first reworked a bit of history, pointing to moments in the past when his allegiance to the English was, in fact, ambiguous in order to declare that his friendship with the Queen and her people had started long before this moment of desperation. He suggested that his father, Mpande, had been a friend to the British since his coronation (even though Mpande had chosen the Boers to install him) and that, at Cetshwayo's own coronation ceremony he had reaffirmed this commitment. He retrospectively explained his logic, "I thought it fit, on my father's death, that you the English nation should be present and witness the settlement of the Zulu country under my rule, seeing that this house, King, and country of this land are not without the outside of the English nation, but within the English nation."<sup>59</sup> He also highlighted the coronation as the moment when Zululand had become crown land, noting that he would in the future do as England wished because the land "belonged already to England."<sup>60</sup>

Cetshwayo also used language of amity and kin, in order to establish a personal relationship with the Queen. In a letter from July of 1881, Cetshwayo highlighted a framework of friendship, guiding his interactions with the British government, asking, "Is it not good for the Queen to have friendly and loyal rulers?"<sup>61</sup> In October of the same year, he wrote, "Have I no place among the English people? To whom does my family belong? My family is your family."<sup>62</sup> He also attempted to establish a relationship with the Queen in the telegrams he sent her asking

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<sup>58</sup> For correspondence with British officials, Jeff Guy has noted that, if Cetshwayo undoubtedly determined much of the content of letters, Samuelson played an important role in establishing a sense of voice for Cetshwayo. This sense of voice reflected the limits of Samuelson's education and dovetailed nicely with popular perceptions of how a Zulu king would speak and write. Guy, *Destruction*, 127-128.

<sup>59</sup> Article reprinted in *A Zulu King Speaks*, eds. C. de B. Webb and J.B. Wright (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1978), 18-19.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Cetshwayo kaMpande, "Cetshwayo's Letter to the Governor of the Cape," in *A Zulu King Speaks*, 41.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

for his pardon in which he referred to her as his mother, remarking that he was staying in prison "awaiting the Queen's pleasure and [would] willingly and cheerfully go wherever his Mother directs."<sup>63</sup> While certainly language of humility, this was, at the same time, language of likeness. Cetshwayo was not, after all, claiming to be her servant. And, by positioning himself as the Queen's son, Cetshwayo attempted to assert a place for himself--if not the highest one--in the order of British governance.

As Cetshwayo pleaded for restoration, he likely realized that he would, in fact, need support from the British if he were to return to his kingdom, especially since the Colonial Office would likely put conditions upon his return that he could not effect alone. Cetshwayo's evidence presented before the Cape Commission on Native Laws and Custom in 1881 spoke to the basis of his political authority and the limits of his ability to effect meaningful change without broader consensus from the other big men of the kingdom.<sup>64</sup> Again and again, he attempted to explain to the commission that, as king, he alone could not simply decree that the practice of exchanging bridewealth or accusing people of witchcraft should stop.<sup>65</sup> Suggesting a different kind of political morality at play in the kingdom, he argued that certain practices such as bridewealth were good for the very reason that there was—and had been for so long—a widely held consensus on their utility.<sup>66</sup> He also insinuated that in the instances when he had tried to push for changes as requested by the British, these changes had weakened people's resolve to follow and obey him.<sup>67</sup> Were he to return and be required to dismantle the military system, he would need powerful friends. And, who, after all, was more powerful than the British?

Cetshwayo asked for support multiple times and in no uncertain terms. He wrote in a telegram to the Queen, "You are a great sovereign of the English nation, and I used to be the King of the Zulus. I am now in good hands, and who will be able to molest me in the future, when I am put back to my country by your kindness?" Later he reiterated this, saying, "I will always look to you to arrange matters for me if anyone molest me" and promising, "Yes, my kingdom will be united and stand so long as England helps me to prop it up."<sup>68</sup> And, finally, in his communication with Lord Kimberley specifically, he tried to emphasize the extent to which he would need help from the British. Notes taken by Lord Kimberley's secretary paraphrased Cetshwayo's wishes: "Let the Queen not take him merely by the hand. If you take a man merely by the hand, he may slip from you. Let Lord Kimberley rather grasp him by the arm, and let the Queen take him by the waist, for then they will hold him fast."<sup>69</sup> Part of the great tragedy of Cetshwayo's story lay in the fact that the decision to restore him depended a great deal on a wager by the colonial administration that he was the least likely option to need holding fast.

Affairs only worsened in Zululand while the ex-king was in exile, and, as a result, the possibility of visiting London became more realistic for Cetshwayo. Civil war broke out between parties still loyal to Cetshwayo and his son and heir, Dinuzulu, and parties that were not. These antagonisms encouraged dramatic displays of loyalty to the former king, including a deputation

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<sup>63</sup> "Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Zululand," 117.

<sup>64</sup> For a full transcript of his testimony, see *A Zulu King Speaks*, 65-102.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>68</sup> As recorded in "Cetywayo," *The Times* (London) 25 August 1882.

<sup>69</sup> As quoted in Guy, *Destruction*, 153.

of some two-hundred Zulus to Natal in May of 1880 to confront the Secretary of Native Affairs and request the king's return. Despite the secretary's refusal to meet with them, such actions added fuel to the fire of those who claimed that the Zulu people supported their king. Unfortunately, they also led to further bloodshed as those who had benefited from the settlement sought retribution. In September 1881, the dismal situation led to a tentative statement of support for a visit to England by the ex-king. The last significant barrier to a visit was the Governor of Natal, Henry Bulwer, who was suspicious of Colenso, those expressing loyalty to the king, and, by extension, Cetshwayo. He asked for postponements and drug his feet in making recommendations to the imperial authorities for the very reason that he knew that such a trip would likely also lead to a statement of support for Cetshwayo's restoration. In June of 1882, Kimberley called Bulwer's bluff, making him agree to the visit. Kimberley also decided, that barring the strongest dissension from Bulwer, Cetshwayo learn of his restoration in England.

On 12 July 1882, Cetshwayo left Cape Town for England in the company of an entourage of political advisors and interpreters. A fine wardrobe, including a "morning costume of an English gentleman" and the "undress uniform of a general" were packed in chests labeled "Ex-King Cetywayo, Passenger to London."<sup>70</sup> He also brought an array of gifts to bestow upon visitors. For the Queen, he had a basket. For the Princes George and Albert, who had visited Cetshwayo in exile in South Africa when he was less prepared to receive them, the ex-king had two sticks, which were likely made of a kind of wood reserved for Zulu royals.<sup>71</sup>

If there was a constant in Cetshwayo's journey from the Cape to London, it was the presence of crowds. There was a crowd to see Cetshwayo off in Cape Town, and there was a crowd when the his ship restocked at Madeira; there were crowds at the dock in Portsmouth, outside of his temporary home in London, and at all of the public sites he visited. As an editorial in the *London Illustrated Police* news affirmed, the same kinds of crowds had flocked to see "every foreigner, whether the Czar, the Shah, or Garibaldi."<sup>72</sup> This was an era when difference and nobility went a long way in the making of celebrity. With these crowds, however, came close scrutiny and critical evaluations. Nearly everything Cetshwayo did was recorded, analyzed, printed, and then re-printed in newspapers around Britain.

The newspaper coverage of Cetshwayo's visit underscored a preoccupation with enumerating difference and reminding readers of the king's true nature despite appearances or feigned behavior. To that end, articles informed readers that Cetshwayo's boots were too big, his suits cut poorly, his manners imperfect. A representative article, described Cetshwayo's appearance in his morning costume as "bulky," noted that he when he "yawned in public, he didn't shade his mouth," informed readers that he ate nearly thirteen pounds of meat a day, and concluded that he had a "somewhat intellectual-looking face."<sup>73</sup> The images included in newspapers, too, found various ways of reminding readers of the great cultural and racial differences that Cetshwayo simply could not hide.

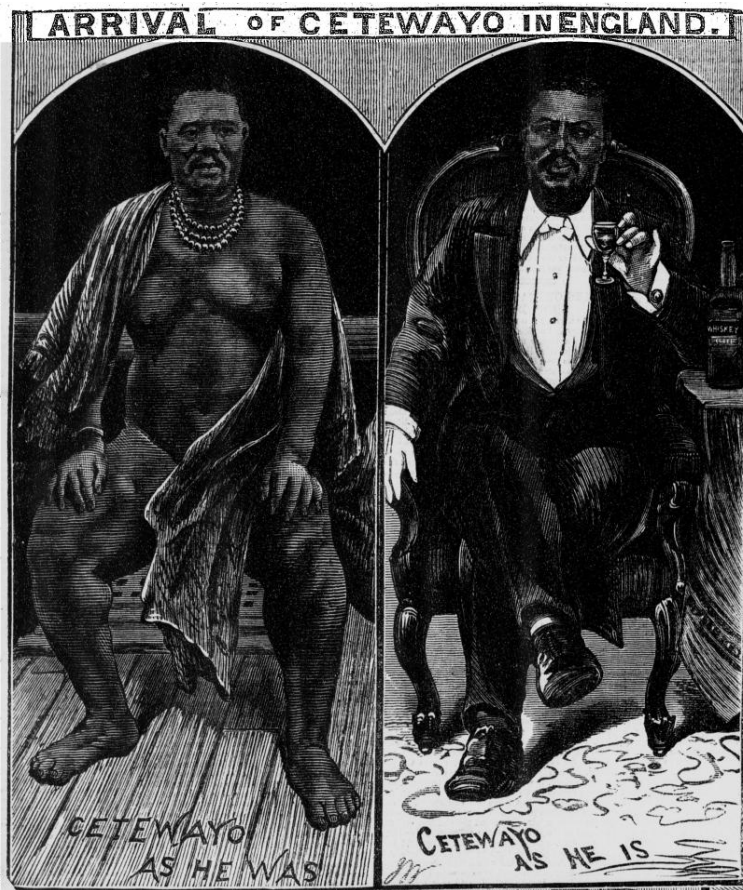
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<sup>70</sup> These were descriptions included in articles in *The Times* (London) 4 August 1882, 24 August 1882.

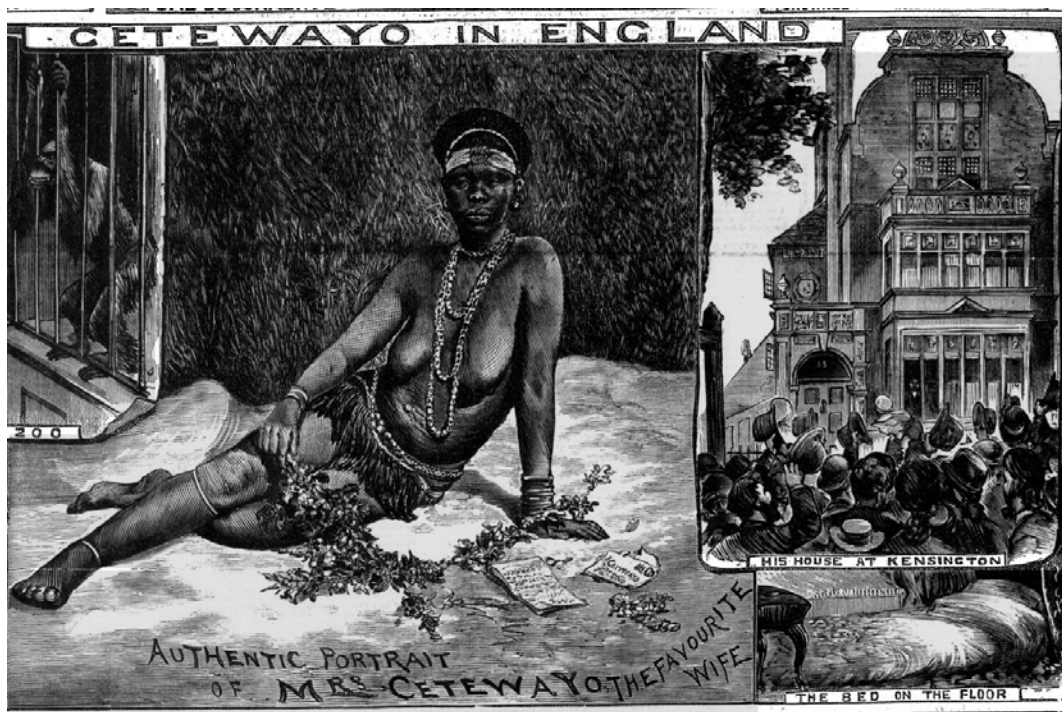
<sup>71</sup> Binns, 189.

<sup>72</sup> "Cetywayo," *London Illustrated Police News* 19 August 1882.

<sup>73</sup> "Cetewayo's Arrival," *The Bury and Norwich* 8 August 1882.

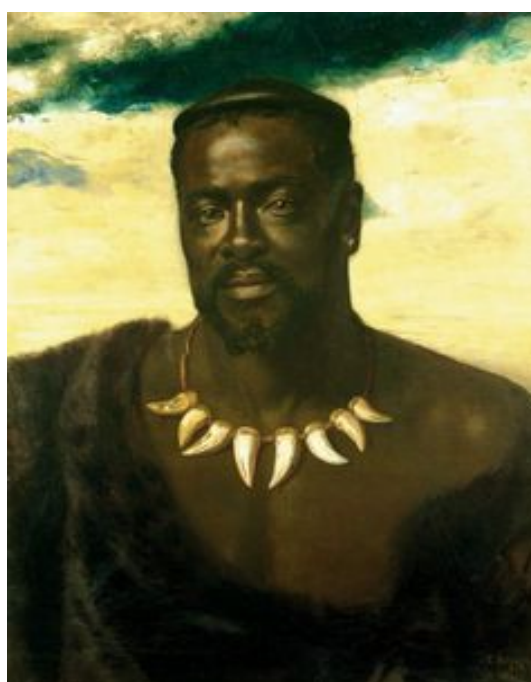


Images appearing while Cetshwayo was in England: *The Illustrated Police News*, 12 August 1880 (above); *The Illustrated Police News*, 19 August 1880.



If the newspapers picked at his self-representation, in other instances, there were outright rejections of his presented image for the supposed sake of authenticity. This was expressed perhaps most forcefully expressed in the portrait of Cetshwayo painted by the Queen's favorite portrait artist, Karl Sohn. Cetshwayo sat for the portrait in a three-piece suit wearing white

gloves and carrying an elegant walking stick, his headring the only material marker of his heritage.<sup>74</sup> In Sohn's final product appeared a bare-chested Cetshwayo, with a bear-skin shawl draped across one shoulder and a necklace of claws around his neck.



**Images of Cetshwayo as he likely was dressed when he sat for his portrait (left) and of Cetshwayo as the Queen's portrait artists portrayed him (right).**

Much as his clothes might mask his true nature, many commentators also worried that his demeanor could hide his true feelings of awe about the sights of London. An editorial in the *Times* sought to reassure readers that, despite appearances, he would be impressed, explaining that "schooled as a royal savage is to dissemble astonishment at the strange sights, those which Cetywayo is about to encounter in the dead weeks of the year can yet not fail to stir the surface of his impassive demeanour." "If there be any cause for apprehension," the editorial counseled, "it is that the conflict between the desire to preserve an aspect of haughty indifference and the turmoil of surprise beneath may create an excessive strain."<sup>75</sup> Concerns that Cetshwayo was not sufficiently impressed manifested again and again, whether because the events that he witnessed in Parliament were especially uneventful or because many of England's elites were out of town in August.<sup>76</sup> Finally, just days before Cetshwayo left, came the assurance that London was, in fact, impressive to him. In an interview "he confessed that he had been feigning indifference, and that in reality he had been filled with wonderment from the first moment that he touched English shores."<sup>77</sup>

Some personal accounts of encounters with Cetshwayo were more forgiving. Granville Gower, a member of the House of Lords who entertained the king at Hyde Park, included an amused entry in his journal, noting that Cetshwayo had seen a statue of Achilles and asked

<sup>74</sup> For a description of Cetshwayo's dress on the day he sat for the portrait, see "A Portrait of the King," *The Standard* 23 August 1882.

<sup>75</sup> "To-day Cetywayo is expected in England," *The Times* (London) 1 August 1882.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, "Cetywayo's Position," *The Dundee Courier and Argus* 7 August 1882; "Notes on Parliament," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 13 August 1882; "Cetywayo as Ceasar," *Ipswich Journal* 19 August 1882.

<sup>77</sup> "Departure of Cetywayo from Plymouth," *The Times* (London) 4 September 1882.

whose figure was represented in marble. Upon learning that it was Achilles, but that the statue had been commissioned to honor the Duke of Wellington, Cetshwayo apparently turned to his companions and said, “You see it was not so very long ago that they fought as we do, without clothes!”<sup>78</sup> The Queen’s evaluation of Cetshwayo began in fairly positive terms, “He is tall, immensely broad, and stout, with a good humoured countenance and an intelligent face.” “Unfortunately,” she added, “he appeared in hideous, black frock coat and trousers.”<sup>79</sup> Lord Kimberley’s take was even less benevolent. In his diary, he issued a string of non sequiturs, mixing unfavorable opinions and condescending surprise with rumors and gossip. He said of the whole group, “They are very clean, take a bath every morning: & I observed have none of the usual negro odour. I am told they do no damage to the house.” Of Cetshwayo specifically he added, “Many wives have told upon him, & he is now quite impotent” He added, “I observed that in true negro fashion C. had always put on his hands a pair of new kid gloves which he flourished about. His hands and feet are large and coarse.”<sup>80</sup>

The coarseness of Cetshwayo’s hands and feet mattered little in Kimberley’s calculation of his utility in Zululand, and on 15 August 1882, the same day that Kimberley recorded the observations above in his journal, he informed Cetshwayo that the government was inclined to let him return to Zululand on the basis of certain conditions. It was not until Cetshwayo returned to South Africa that he learned, officially, who else would have chiefly authority in Zululand and how much of his kingdom would be restored. He learned from Bulwer that his long-time enemy Zibhebhu would receive a large, northern portion of the territory and that an almost equally spacious region would be cordoned off for Africans living under minor chiefs or no chief at all. Because he had not learned of the specifics from British officials on his visit, he immediately developed a strategy of protest and sent word to London of how the colonial administrators were cheating him of his land. And as soon as he landed on the beach in Durban—and in the company of Shepstone, no less, who was now responsible for re-installing the king—he sent messengers to rally his supporters to attend the re-installation in order to voice their concerns about the new partition of Zululand.

Help from Britain did not come, and, Cetshwayo, concerned that he would need greater support in the event of a battle with rival chiefs and feeling betrayed by the friends he believed he had made while abroad, began intentionally violating the terms of the new partition as he recruited supporters from the chief-free zone. In the ensuing months, the violence heightened between Cetshwayo's camp and Zibhebhu's. As Zibhebhu established himself in the north, he decided to mount a war, contesting Cetshwayo's title as king because he was confident that Bulwer would approve of a new sovereign in Zululand. In the fighting that ensued, Cetshwayo was wounded by enemies and retreated to Eshowe, where he hoped to find shelter on the homestead of the newly instated British resident, Melmoth Osborne. Cetshwayo died there of a heart attack in February 1884 six months later. His death launched a new succession battle between Zibhebhu and Dinizulu. The British, out of useful allies to crown—or re-crown—and

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<sup>78</sup> As recounted in Binns, 189.

<sup>79</sup> As quoted in Bridget Theron, “King Cetshwayo in Victorian England: A Cameo of Imperial Interaction” *South African Historical Journal* 56 (2006): 84

<sup>80</sup> John Wodehouse, Earl of Kimberley, *The Journal of John Wodehouse, First Earl of Kimberley for 1862-1902*, ed. A. Hawkins and J. Powell, 331.

convinced that only greater intervention could finally quell the violence, formally annexed Zululand in 1887.

CONCLUSION – TBD

Some teasers: Indirect rule? Invention of Tradition (again)? A Zulu Cosmopolitanism? A new imperial history for Africanists?