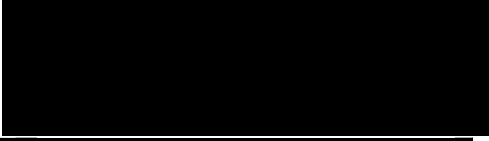


**Imperial Informants in a Settler World: Writing Empire
to the British Aborigines' Protection Society from
Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, 1870-
1890**

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“I, Darren Reid, confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.”



Abstract

This thesis explores the entangled relationship between settler colonialism and imperial humanitarianism in the late nineteenth-century British Empire through the practice of becoming informants for the Aborigines' Protection Society. Using letters written by settlers, Indigenous peoples, and missionaries living in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa between 1870-1890, it argues that the connections forged between colonial subjects and the Society reveal continuities of imperial subjecthood within self-governing colonies as well as contingencies of settler colonialism on the limitations of imperial networks. Informants came from a wide variety of backgrounds and had different motivations. Colonists became informants to participate in British House of Commons debates and publish letters in the British press. Missionaries became informants to undermine pro-settler logics of mission society capitalism. Indigenous peoples became informants to challenge settler government disinformation campaigns. Yet running through all these different perspectives was a shared desire to claim political rights as imperial citizens, to subvert settler discourses that opposed imperial authority, and to challenge imperial disavowal of responsibility for Indigenous-settler relations. Consequently, these informants moved between a variety of imperial networks to resist the development of settler sovereignty and construct an alternative version of subjecthood that blended self-determination with imperial oversight, all through the discourses of British humanitarianism, honour, and justice. While some experienced more success in their epistolary endeavours than others, the Aborigines' Protection Society was ultimately incapable of fulfilling informant visions of imperial subjecthood. This thesis therefore suggests that the entrenchment of settler sovereignty and nationalisms in the early twentieth century was not a direct continuation of mid nineteenth-century campaigns for

self-government, but was contingent on the failure of imperial networks to provide workable alternatives in the late nineteenth century.

Impact statement

This dissertation impacts academic and public audiences in different ways, and I have engaged in a range of mobilization methods to achieve my potential impact. There are three primary areas of academic impact. First, my thesis bridges a theoretical divide between two schools of history – the British World school and settler colonial studies – and demonstrates how combining them can address significant limitations that each possess individually. Second, my methodology offers a new way to study imperial networks by approaching multiple networks as overlapping and interconnected, rather than focusing on singularly networks in artificial isolation. Third, my analysis of understudied letters to the Aborigines' Protection Society contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that imperial connection and citizenship were central to settler societies in more ways and for a longer period than previously believed. These three impacts have been and will continue to be mobilized through a combination of conference presentations and scholarly publications. I have already presented my research at conferences including Britain and the World, Distant Communications, and the Canadian Historical Association's Annual Meeting, while I will submit a revised version of this dissertation to the Manchester University Press based on the suggestions of my examination committee.

Beyond my scholarly contributions, my research impacts public audiences in three additional ways. First, the archival letters at the heart of my dissertation are important documents in on-going land claims relating to the many Indigenous land issues under discussion. Second, my nuanced exploration of multi-directional responsibility for settler colonial violence is an important context for modern decolonization and reconciliation discussions, in which deadlock often ensues between those blaming foreign imperialists and those blaming local settlers. Third, my findings about how and why nineteenth-century Indigenous rights activism failed offers

important lessons to improve modern Indigenous rights activism, which seldom looks to its own past for guidance. I have mobilized my research to realize these impacts in various ways. I have made my archival documents widely accessible by hosting transcripts and photographs at <https://aps.darrenreid.ca/>, where I have also written easy-to-read blog posts about my research and uploaded videos of my conference presentations. Finally, I have created a video game at <https://darrenreid.itch.io/ab-uno-sanguine> which translates some of my publicly relevant findings to audiences who prefer ludic over textual and video formats.

Acknowledgements

I could not have written this dissertation without standing on the shoulders of some very important giants. First and foremost, none of this would have been possible if not for the unconditional support of Eliane, Miki, and Iago, who put their lives on hold during a global pandemic to follow me across the ocean to pursue this research. Next, this dissertation would look entirely different, and worse for it, if not for the infinitely constructive comments and advice of my supervisor, Margot Finn, who always sent me insightful comments faster than any academic I have ever known. Finally, some credit for this research must go to James Worth, whose stimulating conversations and bottomless cups of coffee kept me going in those moments when writing was the last thing I wanted to do.

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Abbreviations

APS – Aborigines’ Protection Society

CCCS – Colonial and Continental Church Society

CMS – Church Missionary Society

DMC – Diocesan Missions Committee (Perth)

PRA – Parliamentary Registration Act (Cape Colony)

SANNC – South African Native National Congress

SPCK – Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge

SPG – Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

UGT – Uses and Gratifications Theory

WMMS – Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society

1. Introduction

To inhabitants of the British settler colonies (Indigenous, settler, and otherwise) of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa in the late nineteenth century, the Aborigines' Protection Society (APS) was an ever-present aspect of public life.¹ Readers of settler newspapers were regularly exposed to reprinted correspondence between the APS and government officials, such as an 1876 exchange with the Canadian Minister of the Interior over land rights printed in the *Globe* (Toronto, Canada) or an 1879 exchange with the Secretary of State for the Colonies over forced labour practices printed in the *Cape Argus* (Cape Town, South Africa).² Newspaper readers were also exposed to polemics celebrating and castigating the work of the APS, from an 1866 editorial in the *New Zealand Herald* (Auckland, New Zealand) denouncing the APS for stirring up Indigenous resistance, to an 1887 letter to the editor in the *Argus* (Melbourne, Australia) applauding the APS's criticism of atrocities in Morocco.³ The prevalence of the APS in settler newspapers led the *Hawke's Bay Times* (Hawke's Bay, New Zealand) to assume that "there are few of our readers who, at some period or other, have not heard of the 'Aborigines Protection Society;' and most people are aware that this society has constituted itself the shield of the natives."⁴ Knowledge of the APS passed through missionary and Indigenous periodicals as well, from an 1865 exchange between Māori leaders and the APS appearing in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* to John Tengo Jabavu's insistence in 1886 that

¹ I use the term "inhabitants" in place of "subjects" at many points throughout this dissertation to recognize that many sovereign Indigenous nations did not consider themselves subjects of a colonial or imperial state.

² "The Oka Indians," *The Globe*, 7 January 1876; Leader, *Cape Argus*, 27 December 1879.

³ "The Aborigines' Protection Society Again.," *New Zealand Herald*, 11 July 1866; "Gross Outrage by Fijian Chiefs," *The Argus*, 10 February 1887.

⁴ "The Aborigines Protection Society and the Maoris," *Hawke's Bay Times*, 10 July 1865.

Black South Africans are “diligent readers of the literature of the Aborigines’ Protection Society” appearing in *Imvo Zabantsundu* (King William’s Town, South Africa).⁵

The prevalence of references to the APS in newspapers throughout the late nineteenth century and across all settler colonies indicates a significant and persisting relationship between the APS and colonial inhabitants. This was not a passive relationship based only upon reading articles in newspapers, but was actively created and sustained through regular correspondence. Colonial inhabitants wrote thousands of letters to the secretary of the APS, which from 1855-1888 was Frederick Chesson (1833-1888).⁶ This dissertation uses the surviving 6,773 letters to assess the relationship between imperial subjects and the APS during the liminal decades between direct imperial administration and settler self-government in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa.⁷

⁵ “New Zealand Affairs,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, March 1865, Crowther Mission Studies Library (CMSL); “East Griqualand and Pondoland vs. the Cape Government,” *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 8 September 1886.

⁶ Historians including Zoë Laidlaw and James Heartfield suggest that Thomas Hodgkin remained Secretary until his death in 1866, but from 1850 onwards Hodgkin was only an honorary secretary. Chesson is first listed in annual reports as secretary in 1855. See James Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society: Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836-1909* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 28-29; Zoë Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity: Thomas Hodgkin and British Colonial Activism 1830–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 64.

⁷ I have published elsewhere on the use of this archive for gaining insight into British imperialism and settler colonialism. Aside from the case study of John Tengo Jabavu that appears in Chapter 4, which is a significantly expanded version of a section from a previous publication, this dissertation is entirely original and does not overlap with my existing outputs. See: Darren Reid, “‘Compound Dispossession’ in Southern Ontario: Converging Trajectories of Colonial Dispossession and Inter-Indigenous Conflict, 1886–1900,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 57, no. 1 (2023): 81–113, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs-2022-0022>; Darren Reid, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society as an Anticolonial Network: Rethinking the APS ‘from the Bottom up’ through Letters Written by Black South Africans, 1883–87,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 22, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1353/ech.2021.0028>; Darren Reid, “Shadrach Boyce Mama and the ‘Kaffir Depot’: Navigating Imperial Networks to Agitate against the Forced Removal of Xhosa Women and Children from Cape Town, May–December 1879,” *South African Historical Journal* 72, no. 4 (2020): 561–78,



Figure 1: Frederick Chesson, secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society from 1855-1888. "Frederick William Chesson," photograph, undated, Portraits of American Abolitionists collection, photograph number 81.137, Massachusetts Historical Society.

The settler colonies looked very different between the APS's creation in 1837 and its merger with the Anti-Slavery Society in 1909. Historians of the settler colonies divide this period into an early era of imperial colonialism (pre-1850) and a later era of settler colonialism (post-1850), the two eras differentiated in myriad ways: temporary versus permanent occupation, settlers as minority versus majority of population, exploitation versus elimination of Indigenous

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2020.1827018>; Darren Reid, "The Aborigines' Protection Society as an Imperial Knowledge Network: The Writing and Representation of Black South African Letters to the APS, 1879-1888" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 2020).

lands and people, and more.⁸ As will be elaborated on below, the field of settler colonial studies theorizes imperial and settler colonialisms as fundamentally different power structures, with Lisa Ford using common law court decisions to argue that “perfect settler sovereignty” had replaced imperial sovereignty in some colonies by the 1840s.⁹ However, by looking at how colonial inhabitants in the decades after this transition continued to act in relation to the wider empire through their letters to the APS, my thesis argues that there was far more continuity between the early imperial and later settler periods than existing historical narratives suggest.

I approach these letters through the lens of imperial networks and contextualize them within two historiographical schools, the British World school and settler colonial studies, arguing that the moments and reasons why people wrote to the APS reveal an envisioned alternative to the settler colonial empire that eventually took shape around them. I demonstrate that the act of writing to the APS accompanied and supplemented parallel acts of imperial networking such as petitioning the British government, contributing letters to British newspapers, and corresponding with missionary societies, and that these assemblages of networking activities constituted attempts to articulate hybridized versions of imperial and colonial identities. All of these attempts failed, but their failures were never inevitable. Rather, they failed because of choices made in Britain by politicians, newspaper editors, and missionary societies. I suggest that such choices became contingent factors for the settler world that took shape in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for it was only when the Colonial Office refused colonial petitions, when British newspaper editors rejected colonial submissions,

⁸ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3–9.

⁹ Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1–2.

and when missionary societies renounced humanitarian activism that imperial citizenship became obviously untenable and subjectivity shifted by necessity to the new settler states.

The empire as written within letters to the APS may not be immediately recognizable to many imperial historians. The settlers surveyed in Chapters Two and Three invited rather than opposed imperial intervention in their affairs. The Indigenous petitioners surveyed in Chapter Four were not rebuffed by a powerless imperial government, but taken seriously as imperial subjects whose grievances could have been ameliorated if only their credibility could have been established. The missionaries surveyed in Chapter Five fought not against settler hostility, but alongside settlers against their own mission societies. Such an empire was ephemeral: claims to imperial citizenship failed to make up for settler feelings of disfranchisement; letters to metropolitan newspapers failed to interrupt local censorship regimes; Indigenous petitioners failed to convince the imperial government of the legitimacy of their claims; and missionaries abandoned or were ejected from mission societies that allied with settler colonialism. All of these failures produced the settler colonial empire that historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have come to know. The correspondents examined in this dissertation believed that a different empire was possible and leveraged the multiplicity of available imperial networks to attempt bringing their envisioned empire to fruition. Such efforts are not visible from the perspective of disaggregated imperial networks, where isolated petitions, newspapers, and letters are suggestive of the volume of imperial connectivity but do not capture the zeal with which people in the colonies tried to combine those networks in pursuance of their imperial visions. It is only through an appreciation of the multiplicity and entanglement of imperial networking activities, as is demonstrated in the following chapters, that a nuanced view of lived experiences of imperial subjecthood can be gleaned.

The Aborigines' Protection Society

A reciprocal relationship with colonial inhabitants was built into the Aborigines' Protection Society from its very inception. The origins of the APS lie in the British Parliamentary Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements) of 1835-37 and, by extension, in the British anti-slavery movement. From the 1760s to the 1830s, British politics were embroiled in a sustained albeit ideologically divided campaign against slavery, resulting in partial victories such as the criminalization of the British slave trade in 1807 and the passage of the Act to abolish slavery in most British colonies in 1833.¹⁰ MP Thomas Fowell Buxton had played a central role in pushing the abolition bill through parliament and would become the principle public figure associated with the APS, although he was in many ways a figurehead representing the exhaustive labours of others, including his daughter Pricilla and cousin Anna Gurney.¹¹ During the anti-slavery campaigns, the Buxton family had been directed by the missionary John Philip (then working in South Africa) to injustices faced, not only by slaves, but also by many Indigenous peoples throughout the empire, and the family sought to capitalize on the heightened humanitarian atmosphere of post-abolition British politics to push for greater protections for Indigenous peoples. On 14 July 1835, Buxton passed a motion in the House of Commons for the appointment of a committee to inquire into “the treatment of the Aboriginal

¹⁰ These were partial victories since un-free labor continued throughout the century in various forms, including forced apprenticeship, convict labour, and illegal slavery. For an overview of the British anti-slavery campaigns, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 357-368.

¹¹ Zoë Laidlaw, “‘Aunt Anna’s Report’: The Buxton Women and the Aborigines Select Committee, 1835-37,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32, no. 2 (2004): 1-28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530410001700381>.

inhabitants in the British colonies.”¹² For the next two years, the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aborigines took evidence from forty-six colonial witnesses including missionaries, colonial administrators, settlers, and Indigenous peoples, and published its extensive *Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)* in early 1837.¹³ In the course of collecting evidence, the Buxton family had set up an informal sub-committee to organize and interview the network of witnesses, headed by Thomas Hodgkin. Hodgkin’s sub-committee went on to become the Aborigines’ Protection Society, which was officially established with Hodgkin as its secretary in 1837.

In structure, the APS revolved primarily around its secretary as well as an executive committee of around fifteen London-based businessmen, politicians, and philanthropists. Beyond the executive, it is impossible to know the exact size of the APS in the late nineteenth century since its minute books have not survived, and Chesson discontinued his predecessors’ practice of publishing financial accounts in his annual reports. However, reports from the 1860s list between 200-400 active subscribers each year, and the number during the years of heightened imperial interest in the 1870s-1880s was certainly higher. Charles Swaisland suggests that these members were primarily from the middle and lower spectrum of the middle class, and financial accounts from the 1860s support this view, indicating an average annual donation of around 17 shillings per member.¹⁴ The executive committee met regularly throughout the year to decide the APS’s stance towards imperial developments, while member interaction was limited to annual

¹² British House of Commons, “Treatment Of Aborigines In British Settlements,” HC Deb 14, July 1835, vol 29, cc549-53, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1835/jul/14/treatment-of-aborigines-in-british>.

¹³ Laidlaw, “‘Aunt Anna’s Report’,” 4-5.

¹⁴ Charles Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society and British Southern and West Africa” (Thesis DPhil--University of Oxford, 1968), 18. 17 shillings in 1865 was roughly equivalent to £90 in 2022.

meetings, special breakfasts, and reading the Society's quarterly *Aborigines' Friend or Colonial Intelligencer* periodical.

The APS's early connection to the colonial missionary John Philip, as well as its function during the Select Committee on Aborigines in gathering and disseminating information from colonial informants, established a continuing reciprocal relationship between the APS and colonial inhabitants and set its agenda for the next century. The APS had assigned itself three core mandates that reflected this agenda:

1. To collect information on the "character, habits and wants of uncivilized tribes" by "being favoured with communications from well-informed gentlemen resident in all the various localities to which the Society directs its attention."¹⁵
2. "To communicate in cheap publications, those details which may excite the interest of all classes, and thus insure the extension of correct opinions."¹⁶
3. To secure policy changes via "the interference of Parliament" to "regulate, as far as law can do so, all the acts of the Colonial Government and of the colonists which influence the progress of the coloured races."¹⁷

Raising awareness through the *Aborigines' Friend* and lobbying imperial and colonial governments were the APS's main activities and both depended on information sent by colonial informants, thereby establishing the metropolitan side of the reciprocal relationship: the APS was nothing without its informants. But what was the colonial side of this relationship? Why did

¹⁵ Aborigines' Protection Society, *The First Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society, Presented at the Meeting in Exeter Hall, May 6th, 1838* (London: W. Ball, Aldine Chambers, 1838), 12.

¹⁶ APS, *The First Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society*, 12.

¹⁷ APS, *The First Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society*, 25.

colonial inhabitants decide to become informants, and what do their informing activities reveal about the lived experiences of imperial subjecthood?

There are two schools of thought within the historiography of the APS regarding colonial informants. The first school, represented particularly by Charles Swaisland, James Heartfield, and Zoë Laidlaw,¹⁸ focuses on the impact of colonial information on the metropole and gives little attention to the experiences of informants themselves. Charles Swaisland, concluding that the APS failed to either improve imperial policy or change public opinion, argues that their main significance was “providing a second channel of communication from British subjects abroad to the Colonial Office.”¹⁹ Himself a retired agent of the Colonial Office and believing that lack of intelligence was an obstacle to the Colonial Office’s desire to govern justly, Swaisland perceives the APS’s largest impact on the empire as its role in providing the Colonial Office with “information by which manifest injustice could be discovered and righted.”²⁰ But while Swaisland attaches great significance to colonial information, he thinks little of those informants who supplied it. He gives the most attention to letters from missionaries, seeing their contributions as strategically anonymous forms of activism “when their direct protest in political matters – as distinct from moral questions such as liquor – might have harmed their work in the

¹⁸ Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society and British Southern and West Africa”; Charles Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society, 1837–1909,” *Slavery & Abolition* 21, no. 2 (2000): 265–80, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01440390008575315>; Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*; Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*; Zoë Laidlaw, “Indigenous Interlocutors: Networks of Imperial Protest and Humanitarianism in Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *Indigenous Networks: Mobility, Connections and Exchange*, ed. Jane Carey and Jane Lydon (New York: Routledge, 2014), 114–39; Zoë Laidlaw, “Heathens, Slaves and Aborigines: Thomas Hodgkin’s Critique of Missions and Anti-Slavery,” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 64 (2007): 133–61, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbm034>.

¹⁹ Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society and British Southern and West Africa,” 399.

²⁰ Swaisland, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society,” iv.

field.”²¹ But he treats letters from settlers as expressions of frustration with little tangible function: “much of what the settlers wrote and said was mere verbal violence, indicative of deep-rooted sentiment it is true, but in itself a safety valve, a form of wish-fulfilment.”²² And Swaisland ignores letters from Indigenous peoples, believing that the APS, with small exceptions, “had virtually no direct contact with them.”²³ Swaisland, therefore, presents a distorted view of where the APS got its information, ignoring the contributions and aspirations of the settlers and Indigenous peoples who, as this dissertation demonstrates, provided the APS with the bulk of their information in the late nineteenth century.

This framework established in Swaisland’s 1968 dissertation set a precedent that has been followed by many others, most significantly and problematically in James Heartfield’s *The Aborigines’ Protection Society* (2011). Heartfield’s work remains the only comprehensive published work on the APS spanning its entire geographic and temporal scope (an impressive feat in itself), and yet it is based solely on published periodical records without a single reference to the APS’s correspondence collections. For example, consider his coverage of debates over the Natal Native Administration Act of 1875 (which is discussed in-depth in Chapter Two). Heartfield uses articles from *The Aborigines Friend* to depict the issue as a contest between humanitarians in Britain who wanted to protect Africans and settlers in Natal who resented metropolitan interference in their affairs.²⁴ This was certainly how many in the APS saw it, but as will be shown in Chapter Two, this was nothing like how the Natal settlers who wrote to the

²¹ Swaisland, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society,” i.

²² Swaisland, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society,” 201.

²³ Swaisland, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society,” 196.

²⁴ Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*, 238-239.

APS felt, most of whom *asked for metropolitan interference*.²⁵ As such, Heartfield reproduces Swaisland's emphasis on the information that the APS published *about* the colonies rather than on how and why colonial correspondents represented themselves in unpublished letters.²⁶

Swaisland's metropole-centric interpretation of the APS's correspondence network also continues in the most recent work on the subject, Zoë Laidlaw's *Protecting the Empire's Humanity* (2021). Laidlaw adopts Swaisland's emphasis on the importance of the APS as a conduit of colonial information, but whereas Swaisland is confident in the APS's ability to sift good information from bad and that only "occasionally" was the APS "misled into supporting cases and causes easily discredited,"²⁷ Laidlaw insists that the information gap between metropole and colony left the APS "hamstrung" and "opportunistically exploited" by interested parties.²⁸ To Laidlaw, it was the lack of colonial information more than anything else that prevented the APS from having a significant impact on imperial policy. Even when information was forthcoming, "the information it did collect was often highly partial, inaccurate, out-of-date, or obscured by a welter of contextual detail."²⁹ Like Swaisland, Laidlaw identifies the APS's connection to its colonial informants as a key aspect of its historical significance. And, again following Swaisland, Laidlaw locates that significance in the impact of colonial information on the APS rather than in the relevance of becoming informants to colonial life, identifying

²⁵ For example, see: John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 18 December 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/69, Bodleian Libraries (BodL).

²⁶ The richest source of information on an informant's motives and experiences is typically the pre- and post-script messages within informant letters, indicating informally why they were writing or what they wanted the APS to do with their letter. These marginalia were not published in APS periodical records, and so even if a letter was published it lacked the crucial data from the margins.

²⁷ Swaisland, "The Aborigines Protection Society and British Southern and West Africa," ii.

²⁸ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire's Humanity*, 229–30.

²⁹ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire's Humanity*, 307–8.

“understandings of activism in Britain itself” as her primary focus and admitting that her approach is metrocentric by design.³⁰ Laidlaw does claim to attend to why some Indigenous correspondents wrote to the APS, but in practice she gives no indication of what Indigenous peoples wanted from the APS and instead focuses on what the APS did on their behalf, largely assuming the two were the same: the society “provided institutional authority, an organizational base and a publishing platform, from which to lobby the imperial government.”³¹ The question is left unanswered: is this really what Indigenous informants wanted? As for other correspondents, primarily missionaries and Sir George Grey, Laidlaw does not consider their motives for becoming informants.

The second historiographical school, primarily represented by Rachel Whitehead and Brian Willan, places much more attention on the impact of APS activity in the colonies. However, while the second school does touch upon some of the reasons why colonial inhabitants would engage with the APS, it is limited by sparse and unrepresentative case studies that fail to identify broader trends. For example, Rachel Whitehead focuses on the APS’s campaign for African land rights in Rhodesia in the early twentieth century (by that time the APS had merged with the Anti-Slavery Society). Comparing African, missionary, and settler support (or lack thereof) for the APS, Whitehead argues that Africans withheld support due to past disillusionment with metropolitan organizations,³² that missionaries turned to the APS out of desperation because they had failed to make any impact after years of protests and petitions through other channels,³³ and that settlers turned to the APS because they desired independence

³⁰ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*, 9.

³¹ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*, 260.

³² Rachel Whitehead, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society and the Safeguarding of African Interests in Rhodesia, 1889-1930” (Thesis DPhil--University of Oxford, 1975), 175.

³³ Whitehead, “The Aborigines’ Protection Society,” 191–94.

from South African Company rule and hoped that the APS could testify to their capacity to govern humanely.³⁴ Whitehead's attention to informant motives gives some insight into how people living in the colonies perceived the APS: as a pressure-group that could provide leverage in colonial politics. But her limited focus on one political issue (Rhodesian land rights) prevents her analysis from illuminating the more structural relevance of the APS to colonial life. For instance, Whitehead argues that settler engagement with the APS was a short-term "incongruous alliance" between two ideologically opposed parties who, through a historical accident, found their interests were momentarily aligned.³⁵ This may have been the case at this particular time and place, but across the entire empire and over the nineteenth century all sorts of Indigenous peoples, settlers, and missionaries decided to become informants for a whole host of reasons, suggesting that this "incongruous alliance" was really a manifestation of a deeper structural relationship.

Brian Willan, writing shortly after Whitehead, similarly asks why representatives of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) approached the APS for assistance in petitioning against South Africa's Native Lands Act of 1913. He shows that the SANNC sought the APS's aid to present their petition to the British parliament and to fund the publication of Sol Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* (1916).³⁶ This aligns with Whitehead's finding that Rhodesian settlers approached the APS for assistance in petitioning the British government in their campaign for independence from the British South African Company, with slight differences in who the informants were (White settlers in Rhodesia and Black Africans in South

³⁴ Whitehead, "The Aborigines' Protection Society," 230.

³⁵ Whitehead, "The Aborigines' Protection Society," 230.

³⁶ Brian Willan, "The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society and the South African Natives' Land Act of 1913," *The Journal of African History* 20, no. 1 (1979): 84–93, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002185370001673X>.

Africa) and what the informants wanted (political legitimacy in Rhodesia and funding in South Africa). Yet Willan also follows Whitehead's model of focusing on one specific time and place, this time on South Africa from 1913-1916, and so like Whitehead argues that the decision to become an APS informant was specific to that single context without commenting on the broader trend of becoming informants in many different contexts. Thus, whereas the metropole-oriented tradition of the Swaisland-Heartfield-Laidlaw school places great emphasis on transnational linkages as evidence of the global impact of colonial information on metropolitan humanitarianism, the more colony-oriented tradition of the Whitehead-Willan school places more emphasis on the particularity of local engagements with the APS. Without a transnational lens, Whitehead and Willan are precluded from considering the implications of shared local experiences across the British Empire on the development of a transnational settler colonial culture.

Rather than building upon the most recent APS scholarship by Heartfield and Laidlaw, which largely follow Swaisland's focus on the impact of colonial information on the metropole, this dissertation can be considered a substantial expansion of Whitehead's and Willan's alternative focus on informants themselves. I borrow from Swaisland-Heartfield-Laidlaw a transnational perspective and adapt it to the colonial lens developed by Whitehead-Willan, and so in some ways combine both traditions. But the scope of this dissertation is also different from both traditions. There is a significant temporal gap between Laidlaw's focus on the early nineteenth century ending with Thomas Hodgkin's death in 1866 and Whitehead's and Willan's focus on the 1910s-1920s. Swaisland and Heartfield are the only scholars to consider the period 1870-1890, but both of them followed the metropole-oriented tradition, and so this dissertation is the first colonial-oriented study of this period. And besides Heartfield, Laidlaw is the only

scholar to consider settler colonies outside of Africa. Thus, by framing my analysis around Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, this thesis is the first of the colony-oriented studies to consider all four settler colonies in a single frame.

By emphasizing the importance of colonial informants to the operation of the APS, this dissertation also questions the metropolitan bias within histories of imperial humanitarianism more broadly. For the most part, metropole-centric narratives have focused on missionaries carrying humanitarian ideas from England to the peripheries of the empire. Michael Barnett's genre-defining *Empire of Humanity* sums this up with the bold claim that missionary societies "represented the only sustained humanitarian activity during the period of European expansion and colonialism."³⁷ Observing the over-representation of missionaries in histories of imperial humanitarianism, Alan Lester and Fae Dussart attempted to correct the historiography by exploring the prevalence of humanitarian narratives within government circles.³⁸ However, while Lester and Dussart successfully moved the humanitarian discussion beyond metropolitan-based missionary societies, their study remains entirely focused on imperial government officials rather than local settler governments, so they failed to move past the metropole itself. And although there are a handful of national histories exploring local manifestations of philanthropic discourses in individual settler colonies,³⁹ these localized trends have yet to be incorporated into

³⁷ Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 64.

³⁸ Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance: Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

³⁹ For examples, see: Celia Haig-Brown and David A. Nock, eds., *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal Relations in Colonial Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006); Henry Reynolds, *This Whispering in Our Hearts Revisited* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2018); Joanna Cruickshank and Patricia Grimshaw, "Indigenous Land Loss, Justice and Race: Ann Bon and the Contradictions of Settler Humanitarianism," in *Indigenous Communities and Settler Colonialism: Land Holding, Loss and*

imperial historiographies of humanitarianism. Through my analysis of colonial relationships with the APS, I show that colonial politics and perspectives played an important part in shaping British humanitarian agendas previously assumed to have been dominated by metropolitan forces.

British Worlds and Settler Colonialisms

Beyond considerations of scope, this thesis is historiographically differentiated from previous approaches to the APS by situating the experience of colonial informants within the broader theoretical frameworks of the British World and settler colonial studies. The British World school and settler colonial studies are two related approaches that are not necessarily contradictory or oppositional, but which emphasize different themes within British imperial history. Dane Kennedy provides one of the most in-depth comparisons of British World and settler colonial studies approaches, and he argues that one of the biggest differences between them is that the British World school focuses on the rupture of global Britishness by the rise of local nationalisms while settler colonial studies emphasizes the continuity of colonial oppression from the past into the present.⁴⁰ However, Kennedy arrives at this difference by using twentieth-century decolonization as a point of comparison, whereas if we shift our attention to nineteenth-century colonization, the difference between the two schools is completely reversed. The British World approach tends to emphasize the continuity of imperial belonging after the rise of settler self-government through the dissemination of cultural norms and ideals, and settler colonial

Survival in an Interconnected World, ed. Zoë Laidlaw and Alan Lester (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 45–61; Wendy Wickwire, *At the Bridge: James Teit and an Anthropology of Belonging* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2019).

⁴⁰ Dane Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 83-84.

studies tends to assert the rupture of imperial political authority through the rise of settler sovereignty.

The British World school, consisting of works such as John Darwin's *The Empire Project* (2009) and Cecilia Morgan's *Building Better Britains?* (2016), is a reaction against the nationalization of settler histories that disavows or downplays the importance of imperial connections, as well as against the exclusion of the settler colonies from British imperial history.⁴¹ British World historians argue that settler colonialism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was marked by continuities from the earlier period of direct British rule, whether continuities in political and legal systems, commercial dependence, or cultural affiliation. Darwin, for instance, contends that "while the political, economic, and cultural history of different colonial territories can be studied up to a point as a local affair, the links between them and other parts of the system exerted critical if variable influences on their politics, economics and culture."⁴² For historians such as Darwin, James Belich, and Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson, it was primarily the flow of British capital – both financial and human –

⁴¹ For further monographs based on the British World framework, see: Simon Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Hilary Carey, *God's Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c.1801–1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); For edited collections dedicated to the British World framework, see: Phillip Buckner and Douglas Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005); Jatinder Mann and Iain Johnston-White, eds., *Revisiting the British World: New Voices and Perspectives* (Bristol: Peter Lang, 2022); For critiques of the British World framework, see: Tamson Pietsch, "Rethinking the British World," *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 2 (2013): 441–63, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41999297>; Rachel Bright and Andrew Dilley, "After the British World," *The Historical Journal* 60, no. 2 (2017): 547–68, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X16000510>.

⁴² John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6.

that entrenched the settler colonies into a persisting British world even after they transitioned to nationhood.⁴³ This argument is particularly supported by Philip Buckner's assertion that the growth of the dominion of Canada in the late nineteenth century was predicated upon continuing British military protection, economic investment, and emigration.⁴⁴ Other British World scholars place greater emphasis on cultural continuities: Morgan, for instance, highlights continuing attachment to the monarchy and the consumption of British literature in the continuation of a wider settler Britishness, while Hilary Carey attends to continuing religious affiliation, and Simon Potter attends to continuing engagement with British news media.⁴⁵

Although the British World approach continues to structure a great deal of new scholarship, it is marked by serious limitations. Historians have recently critiqued the British World school for its hyperfocus on white settler communities, which creates an artificial boundary around one specific section of the broader British empire while simultaneously flattening disparate experiences of unequal power relations into one deracialized experience of Britishness.⁴⁶ These issues have led some historians to expand the British World framework to include analyses of Britishness within diverse communities from the West Indies to Hong Kong.⁴⁷ Tamson Pietsch suggests reconceptualizing multiple overlapping material, imagined,

⁴³ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 9; Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalization*, 3-6; James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

⁴⁴ Phillip Buckner, "The Creation of the Dominion of Canada, 1860-1901," in *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 68-70.

⁴⁵ Cecilia Morgan, *Building Better Britains?: Settler Societies in the British World, 1783-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 133-70; Carey, *God's Empire*; Potter, *News and the British World*.

⁴⁶ Pietsch, "Rethinking the British World," 445-446; Bright and Dilley, "After the British World," 562-564; Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 73-86.

⁴⁷ See in particular: Barry Crosbie and Mark Hampton, eds., *The Cultural Construction of the British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); David Killingray, "'A Good West Indian, a Good African, and, in Short, a Good Britisher': Black and British in a Colour-

and local British *worlds* in such a way as to capture how movements of economic and human capital were influenced by disparities of power and privilege.⁴⁸ Conversely, Rachel Bright and Andrew Dilley advocate for abandoning the British World framework entirely in favour of newer frameworks like settler colonial studies which integrate more nuanced analyses of power.⁴⁹ However, while settler colonial studies does provide a stronger analysis of unequal power relations while sharing similar attention to imperial connectivity, it simultaneously provides a weaker analysis of continuities between imperial and settler regimes. It should therefore not be considered a complete replacement for the British World, which continues to offer a valuable corrective to nationalized settler histories by revealing the continuing relevance of the imperial connection after the granting of self-government.

That being said, settler colonial studies does have some attractive benefits over the British World. Settler colonial studies is in many ways a reaction against British World histories that over-emphasize continuity between the periods of direct imperial administration and devolved settler government, a continuity that enables settler societies to absolve themselves of responsibility for colonial violence and “hide behind the metropolitan coloniser.”⁵⁰ Lorenzo Veracini, one of the most vocal proponents and theorists behind settler colonial studies, defines the school by two essential characteristics. First, he asserts that settler colonialism as developed in the late nineteenth century was structurally antithetical to imperial colonialism established in

Conscious Empire, 1760–1950,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 3 (2008): 363–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530802318474>; Donal Lowry, “The Crown, Empire Loyalty and the Assimilation of non-British White Subjects in the British World: An argument against ‘ethnic determinism’,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (2003): 96–120, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530310001705626>.

⁴⁸ Pietsch, “Rethinking the British World,” 457–462.

⁴⁹ Bright and Dilley, “After the British World,” 560–61.

⁵⁰ Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 14.

the early nineteenth century, and therefore that settler rule must be approached as a significant departure from rather than a continuation of imperial rule.⁵¹ Second, it asserts that settler colonialism arose from a triangular relationship between settlers, metropolitans, and Indigenous peoples, rather than the binary relationship between colony and metropole developed by theorists such as Jürgen Osterhammel.⁵² Not all proponents of the field agree that imperial and settler colonialisms were necessarily *antithetical*. Patrick Wolfe, for example, simply argues that imperial and settler colonialisms are *different*, with the former oriented around the extraction of labour and the latter oriented around the dispossession of land,⁵³ although he lumps all non-Indigenous groups together into a single category that lacks the nuance of Veracini’s triangular model. And scholars of Latin America like Shannon Speed and M. Bianet Castellanos argue that settler colonialism operated differently in Latin American colonies, where they complemented rather than opposed one another.⁵⁴ Yet Veracini’s concept of antithetical colonialisms aligns closest with historical narratives of the rise of settler self-government in British colonies, and it is his definition of settler colonialism that I adopt in this dissertation.

Settler colonial studies incorporates many elements of the British World school and the two are not mutually exclusive: Veracini himself acknowledges that “since the permanent movement and reproduction of communities and the dominance of an exogenous agency over an indigenous one are necessarily involved, settler colonial phenomena are intimately related to

⁵¹ Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 11–12.

⁵² Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 5–6.

⁵³ Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: A&C Black, 1999), 1-7.

⁵⁴ Shannon Speed, “Structures of Settler Capitalism in Abya Yala,” *American Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2017): 783–90, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0064>; M. Bianet Castellanos, “Introduction: Settler Colonialism in Latin America,” *American Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2017): 777–81, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0063>.

both [imperial] colonialism and migration.”⁵⁵ Kennedy is wise to warn against constructing too strict a binary between the two approaches,⁵⁶ and many historians combine elements of both schools to demonstrate the entanglement of imperial connectivity and the development of settler colonialism. Alan Lester’s work is a prime example of this. He uses a British World lens of imperial connectivity via newspapers, travelling governors, and commissions of inquiry to reveal how settler opposition to metropolitan humanitarian discourses forged a new, antithetical settler discourse by the mid-nineteenth century that reformulated Indigeneity from something to be ameliorated and protected into something to be controlled and assimilated.⁵⁷ Lester does not explicitly align himself with settler colonial studies, but his framework of settler discourse as a significant and violent departure from an earlier imperial discourse falls squarely within the settler colonial studies paradigm, and he uses the British World school’s attention to networks as the basis of his argument. Historians more explicitly engaged in settler colonial studies also borrow extensively from the British World school, as when Lisa Ford argues that settler courts invented a new form of “perfect settler sovereignty” through the circulation of legal theory and legal precedents across British/Anglo World spaces.⁵⁸ This blending of the British World

⁵⁵ Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 3.

⁵⁶ Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 84.

⁵⁷ Alan Lester, “Humanitarians and White Settlers in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Alan Lester, “British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire,” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 54 (2002): 24–48, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/54.1.24>; Alan Lester, “Colonial Settlers and the Metropole: Racial Discourse in the Early 19th-Century Cape Colony, Australia and New Zealand,” *Landscape Research* 27, no. 1 (2002): 39–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426390220110757>; Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*.

⁵⁸ Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty*, 3-4.

school's emphasis on connectivity with settler colonial studies' attention to power structures suggests that, to some degree, the latter can be understood as an evolution of the former.

However, it is important to recognize that the two schools have divergent approaches to continuity and change, and both schools have so far failed to incorporate one another's insights into temporality. Whereas British World scholars highlight continuities from early to late nineteenth century, settler colonial studies scholars highlight breakages and transformations, particularly regarding sovereignty and humanitarianism. For example, Richard Price's *Empire and Indigeneity* (2021) argues that the twentieth-century world of settler states and "white men's countries" was neither inevitable nor even imaginable in the early nineteenth century. Instead, Price argues that the British colonies of the early nineteenth century were defined by a dependence on Indigenous agency, a belief in the possibility of an empire based on racial cooperation, and a social and political fluidity that defies a teleological assumption that the foundations of settler colonialism were being laid.⁵⁹ To reconcile his narrative of early nineteenth-century cooperation with late nineteenth-century oppression, Price argues that the humanitarian notions which had formerly animated imperial policies were appropriated and reconfigured by settler society. This process turned humanitarianism on its head, changing it from a discourse to bring about racial cooperation into a discourse to legitimize racial marginalization.⁶⁰

Price's narrative of a radical disconnection between imperial humanitarian policies in the early nineteenth century and settler humanitarian policies in the late nineteenth century is particularly supported by Alan Lester and Fae Dussart's *Colonization and the Origins of*

⁵⁹ Richard Price, *Empire and Indigeneity: Histories and Legacies* (London: Routledge, 2021), 1–14.

⁶⁰ Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 235–66.

Humanitarian Governance (2014), which holds that the humanitarianism that was so contradictory to settler colonialism in the 1820s was rendered compatible with, indeed fundamental to, the operation of settler colonialism by the 1840s.⁶¹ The idea of radical change with the coming of settler self-government is also foundational to Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds' argument that the racialized political systems devised under self-government constituted a "betrayal of the idea of imperial citizenship" that had existed under imperial rule.⁶² So while both schools agree in many respects, one sees greater significance in the continuity of an imperial factor in the colonies and the other sees greater significance in the change from imperial to settler government.

While Bright and Dilley boldly contend that the rise of settler colonial studies means "there is no longer a need for a British World concept,"⁶³ settler colonial studies has also been heavily criticized in recent years and is hardly a perfect replacement. Particularly problematic are its tendencies towards "colonial fatalism." Colonial fatalism is a narrative identified by Alissa Macoun and Elizabeth Strakosch in which the nature of settler colonialism as a structure requiring constant reaffirmation is conflated with structural inevitability, normalizing today's settler-dominated societies and undermining the agency of historical actors whose decisions gave shape to colonial regimes.⁶⁴ This critique is expanded by Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, who argue that focusing on the settler-Indigenous relationship erases the host of

⁶¹ Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, 1–36.

⁶² Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5.

⁶³ Bright and Dilley, "After the British World," 560–61.

⁶⁴ Alissa Macoun and Elizabeth Strakosch, "The Ethical Demands of Settler Colonial Theory," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3 (2013): 434-438, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2013.810695>.

contingent and conditional elements that afforded settler colonialism the opportunity to become hegemonic.⁶⁵ Amy Fung similarly contends that settler colonial studies's hyper-focus on the racialization of Indigeneity and Whiteness detracts from scholarly awareness of the various economic and demographic contingencies upon which settler colonialism was built.⁶⁶ These critiques demonstrate that rather than building upon the British World school's nuanced analyses of how local colonial developments were contingent upon myriad imperial interconnections, settler colonial studies has gone in the opposite direction, analyzing local changes in Indigenous-settler power relations without attending to the imperial contingencies that informed and afforded those changes. As such, instead of conceptualizing settler colonial studies as an improvement upon or evolution of the British World approach, it is important to recognize that both have unique strengths and weaknesses and that they are best used to complement rather than replace one another.

Together, the British World and settler colonial studies approaches have both contributed to revealing the complexity of the settler colonies in the late nineteenth century, but their divergent foci on continuity and change raise important questions about how people living in the colonies made sense of the evolving world that was forming around (and through) them. Some effort has already been applied to answer these questions. Angela Woollacott and Richard Price both ask questions such as “how ‘Australians’ understood their rapidly evolving place in a profoundly changing world” and “what the *lived experience* of empire reveals about the internal

⁶⁵ Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, “Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (2014): 1-32, <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/21166/17970>.

⁶⁶ Amy Fung, “Is Settler Colonialism Just Another Study of Whiteness?,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 53, no. 2 (2021): 115–31, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2021.0011>.

dynamic of imperial culture and how it translated to the social and cultural formations [of settler colonialism].”⁶⁷ Woollacott, in the fashion of the British World school, points to the importance of imperial correspondence and newspaper networks in keeping settlers aware of developments in self-government and racial politics across the empire, concluding that the transition to self-government was less a radical shift than an application of ideas observed through continuing imperial connections.⁶⁸ Price, from a settler colonial studies perspective, underscores the psychological trauma that resulted from living within colonial violence and argues that psychological phenomena like unconscious denial, collective projection, and blindsighting enabled settlers to adapt to a settler world that was radically different from the previous imperial world.⁶⁹

Woollacott and Price thus offer explanations from within their own backgrounds in British World and settler colonial studies for how settler societies could reconcile imperial continuities and settler changes, but they fail to incorporate each others’ strengths. Woollacott falls into a British World trap of treating settler colonialism like an event (the granting of self-government) rather than a structure. Settler colonial studies as a field asserts that settler colonialism “is a structure, not an event,” something that needed constant consolidation and reinforcement to remain in place.⁷⁰ And so by querying how imperial connections fostered the development of self-government as an idea, rather than asking how imperial connections were continually reconciled with the settler transition on a quotidian basis, Woollacott’s British World

⁶⁷ Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2; Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 2.

⁶⁸ Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies*, 103–5.

⁶⁹ Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 173–207.

⁷⁰ J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “‘A Structure, Not an Event’: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity,” *Lateral* 5, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.25158/L5.1.7>.

approach fails to address the complexity and liminality of imperial continuities during the settler transition. Price, on the other hand, falls into a settler colonial studies trap of assuming that the settler transition was complete and all-encompassing. British World scholars characteristically reject the idea that settler self-government was a unanimous development, pointing, for instance, to the continuity of imperial federation societies well into the twentieth century that kept alive their hope for continued inclusion in an imperial political system.⁷¹ Price's psychological argument may explain how *some* settlers managed to reconcile their new world with their old one, but it fails to account for those less convinced of the benefits of the settler transition who did not deny or silence what they were witnessing. Those informants for the APS who make up the focus of this dissertation are prime examples of this. Veracini lamented in 2010 that scholars frequently fail to account for how "colonial and settler colonial forms constantly interpenetrate each other and overlap in a variety of ways," and called for "more thickly contextualized research" to close the gap.⁷² This call has remained unanswered. By remaining within the theoretical foundations of their historiographical schools, British World and settler colonial studies scholars have not succeeded in combining each others' strengths to produce rugged analyses of the entanglements of imperial continuities during the settler transition.

This dissertation adopts the British World focus on imperial connections along with the settler colonial studies focus on structural transitions to analyse the historical significance of the Aborigines' Protection Society's colonial informants. One particular benefit of combining these two approaches is that it enables us to observe the relationships between imperial connectivity and regimes of racial oppression in the colonies. Whereas the British World school largely

⁷¹ Morgan, *Building Better Britains?*, 135–44.

⁷² Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 12.

ignores power structures and settler colonial studies perceives racial oppression as a product of rejecting imperial sovereignty, this dissertation attends to how APS informants interweaved imperial connection with the maintenance of unequal race relations. For example, it will be shown that many settler informants requested APS support to pass legislation asserting control over Indigenous reserves, revealing some of the ways that settlers invoked imperial networks to deny Indigenous sovereignty. By emphasizing that the British World was rent with racialized power struggles and that settler colonialism was entangled with imperial citizenship, I demonstrate one way that the theoretical weaknesses in both schools can be overcome by combining them.

In addition to exploring continuities of imperial citizenship and subjecthood, this thesis also combines British World and settler colonial studies to explore continuities of colonial-metropolitan relations in the late nineteenth century. The APS was formed two years before settler self-government was considered a serious possibility (a development typically traced back to the Durham Report of 1839) and so was predicated on an 1830s assumption that Britain would remain indefinitely in control of the settler colonies. By the 1870s Natal and Western Australia still did not have responsible governments, and Britain also continued to withhold authority over internal Indigenous policies in various other colonies. But even though Britain technically maintained some vestige of control over some aspects of its settler colonies, many historians consider it nigh inconceivable by the 1850s that Britain would impose unwanted legislation in the manner that it could have done in the 1830s.⁷³ Realistically, then, the APS and its belief in a colonial empire ruled from the metropole was anachronistic throughout the mid to late nineteenth

⁷³ Buckner, "The Creation of the Dominion of Canada, 1860–1901," 70; Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 127.

century, but colonial inhabitants continued to volunteer as informants. And yet, crucially, very few of these informants opposed settler self-government, even amongst Indigenous and missionary informants. On the contrary, and with a couple of exceptions that will be explored, most of the APS's informants expressed in their letters a desire to increase or consolidate the settler colonial transition at the very same time that they were invoking the aid of an anachronistic continuity of imperial governance. These informants found ways to reconcile the APS's continuing attachment to the older imperial order with their new roles within the emerging settler order, and consequently present intriguing subjects to study the liminal period of British World continuities and settler colonial studies transitions in the late nineteenth century.

Imperial networks

One of the most tangible ways that I combine British World and settler colonial studies is through the spatial metaphor of imperial networks. Scholars of the British Empire have devised various spatial metaphors to model the connectivity of imperial spaces, each of which offers a unique advantage.⁷⁴ For instance, Tony Ballantyne's "web" metaphor emphasizes the importance of horizontal linkages between and within colonial spaces in addition to vertical linkages between colony and metropole,⁷⁵ and Sujit Sivasundaram's "wave" metaphor emphasizes the importance of waxing and waning cycles of interconnection.⁷⁶ But at the core of all these particular models is the simple metaphor of a network, which posits that people, goods, and ideas

⁷⁴ For detailed overviews of approaches to imperial networks, see: Zoë Laidlaw, "Breaking Britannia's Bounds? Law, Settlers, and Space in Britain's Imperial Historiography," *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 3 (2012): 807–30, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23263275>; Gareth Curless et al., "Editors' Introduction: Networks in Imperial History," *Journal of World History* 26, no. 4 (2015): 705–32, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43901798>.

⁷⁵ Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

⁷⁶ Sujit Sivasundaram, *Waves across the South: A New History of Revolution and Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

travelled between imperial spaces and facilitated mutually relational development. Some scholars emphasize the flow of people and goods,⁷⁷ but ideas have received considerably more attention. Major themes include the news that travelled through the imperial press system,⁷⁸ the science that connected imperial universities and sites of research,⁷⁹ and the personal experiences expressed through both personal and professional correspondence.⁸⁰

This concept of information networks has been liberally applied to explore how metropolitan and colonial histories were shaped by imperial awareness, and how people across the empire went about their lives while “thinking the empire whole.”⁸¹ These histories of imperial networks follow the broader pattern of disconnection between British World and settler colonial studies scholars outlined above. Settler colonialism-oriented studies of the imperial press by Alan Lester, Kenton Storey, and Sam Hutchinson argue that the settler press became a

⁷⁷ Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation*; Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*.

⁷⁸ Lester, *Imperial Networks*; Potter, *News and the British World*; Kenton Storey, *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire: Colonial Relations, Humanitarian Discourses, and the Imperial Press* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016); Sam Hutchinson, *Settlers, War, and Empire in the Press: Unsettling News in Australia and Britain, 1863-1902* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

⁷⁹ Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race*; Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility, and White South Africa 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Brett M. Bennett and Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Science and Empire: Knowledge and Networks of Science across the British Empire, 1800-1970* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Tamson Pietsch, Andrew Thompson, and John M. MacKenzie, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

⁸⁰ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Lindsay O’Neill, *The Opened Letter: Networking in the Early Modern British World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

⁸¹ Steven Pincus, Tiraana Bains, and A. Zuercher Reichardt, “Thinking the Empire Whole,” *History Australia* 16, no. 4 (2019): 610–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2019.1670692>.

vector for divergent settler identities by the mid-nineteenth century,⁸² but they do not take account of settler discomfort with such divergence and continuing preference for British papers. Meanwhile, British World historians like Simon Potter dispute that the settler press was a vector of settler divergence, and instead point to continuities of interdependence which are indicative of a unified imperial press system.⁸³ Histories of missionary networks are similarly bifurcated. British World historians of missionary networks like Hilary Carey study how Christian missions acted as an enduring cultural touchstone that tied early nineteenth-century imperialism with late nineteenth-century settler colonialism, providing settlers with a continuing imperial religious community when local political communities were drifting apart.⁸⁴ Conversely, settler colonialism-oriented historians like Amanda Nettelbeck show that missionaries broke with early nineteenth-century criticisms of colonial violence to become central collaborators in eliminationist settler policies of child-removal in the late nineteenth century.⁸⁵ Such arguments around the imperial press and mission work are not mutually exclusive: newspapers and mission stations contained both continuities of empire and adaptations to the settler transition. So long, however, as British World and settler colonial studies approaches towards imperial networks remain separated, we will not have a clear understanding of how these contesting continuities and changes were reconciled with one another.

Attending to the impact of self-government on the operation of imperial networks within settler colonies illuminates some of the continuities and changes that imperial networking

⁸² Lester, “British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire,” 39–44; Storey, *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire*, 8–19; Hutchinson, *Settlers, War, and Empire*, 1–10.

⁸³ Potter, *News and the British World*, 4–16.

⁸⁴ Carey, *God’s Empire*.

⁸⁵ Amanda Nettelbeck et al., *Fragile Settlements: Aboriginal Peoples, Law, and Resistance in South-West Australia and Prairie Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016).

experienced in the late nineteenth century. Imperial networks were, of course, nothing new by this time. Lindsay O’Neill demonstrates that imperial networking arose as far back as the creation of the English postal system in 1660 and flourished with the rise of newspapers and the formation of imperial clubs and societies in the eighteenth century.⁸⁶ Written correspondence became integral for the functioning of early voluntary societies like the Royal Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge by allowing them to maintain a connection with members spread across the growing empire.⁸⁷ Similarly, Laidlaw shows that early nineteenth-century colonial governors and lobbyists depended on imperial correspondence networks to influence imperial authorities.⁸⁸ In this sense, writing to the APS from the colonies was very much a continuation of previous imperial networking activities.

But whereas these early networking activities took place within the context of a (relatively) centralized imperial governing system in which communicating with the centre of power made sense, the APS informant network of the late nineteenth century operated in a space of settler self-government where communicating with an imperial humanitarian network was no longer completely sensible. By the early twentieth century, imperial humanitarian networks like the APS would be largely replaced by international humanitarian NGOs like Geneva’s Bureau International pour la Défense des Indigènes, reflecting the evolution from an imperial world system to a nation-state world system.⁸⁹ Indeed, when Indigenous groups in the twentieth century petitioned against settler colonialism, they typically turned not to the APS but to the League of

⁸⁶ O’Neill, *The Opened Letter*, 1–7.

⁸⁷ O’Neill, 141–68.

⁸⁸ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45*, 1–10.

⁸⁹ Daniel Gorman, *International Cooperation in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 97–124.

Nations to exert influence over British and settler governments,⁹⁰ demonstrating how imperial networking eventually adapted to the advent of settler self-government by morphing into international networking. Yet as Damousi, Bernard, and Lester point out, such international NGOs were essentially an extension of the settler nation-states that Indigenous groups were trying to outmanoeuvre, given that they were primarily established and governed by ex-settler colonies.⁹¹ The late nineteenth century, therefore, represents a final “moment of truth” before settler nation-states came to dominate world politics, and it offers us a window into how colonial inhabitants processed and reacted to self-government’s impact on imperial networking in the liminal period between imperial and international world systems. This dissertation reveals that colonial inhabitants did not immediately desire or even understand these changes, and instead sought to reconcile the slowly burgeoning forms of settler statehood into pre-existing networks of imperial connectivity and authority.

Through my analysis of the APS correspondence network, I propose two concepts to explain the interrelation of British World and settler colonial studies: network fluidity and network impotency. Fluidity and impotency are intimately connected. By fluidity, I refer to the availability and accessibility of myriad imperial networks that enabled people living in the colonies to move between networks as needed. By impotency, I refer to the inability of imperial networks to meet the needs of people in the colonies, thus pushing them to move from one

⁹⁰ Sophie Rigney, “On Hearing Well and Being Well Heard: Indigenous International Law at the League of Nations,” *Third World Approaches to International Law Review* 2 (2021): 122–53, <https://twailr.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/6.-Rigney-Indigenous-International-Law-at-the-League-of-Nations.pdf>; Arnulf Becker Lorca, “Petitioning the International: A Pre-History of Self-Determination,” *European Journal of International Law* 25, no. 2 (2014): 497–523, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chu033>.

⁹¹ Joy Damousi, Trevor G. Burnard, and Alan Lester, eds., *Humanitarianism, Empire and Transnationalism, 1760-1995: Selective Humanity in the Anglophone World*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), 17.

network to another and eventually to abandon imperial networks entirely. Neither of these concepts appears revolutionary, but they are novel in relation to the historiography of imperial networks. This is not to say that historians deny that multiple networks existed at the same time. Historians of print, missionary, and science networks regularly locate their studies in relation to each other, and Zoë Laidlaw in particular explores how people like Thomas Hodgkin belonged to multiple overlapping networks like the APS, the Ethnological Society of London, and the American Colonization Society.⁹² In execution, however, such monographs are oriented around singular networks: Catherine Hall's *Civilizing Subjects* isolates the Baptist Missionary Society, Simon Potter's *News and the British World* isolates newspapers, Alan Lester and Fae Dussart's *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance* isolates government networks, and so on. Erecting artificial boundaries around these networks affords a deeper investigation into their particular operation, but such boundaries also remove these networks from the complexly networked contexts that people in the colonies experienced. Eva-Marie Kröller's recent *Writing the Empire: The McIlwraiths, 1853-1948* offers perhaps the most successful attempt at escaping this trap, using a single family as a focal point to identify what networks they engaged with, how they engaged with them, and how they played different networks against one another.⁹³ Yet her focus on a single family is a significant limitation that prevents her analysis from identifying shared experiences of networks representative of broader historical patterns. This dissertation adopts a similar strategy to Kröller's, but significantly expands its scope by focusing on an organization rather than a family.

⁹² Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire's Humanity*.

⁹³ Eva-Marie Kröller, *Writing the Empire: The McIlwraiths, 1853–1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 12–13.

Historians similarly bypass the concept of network impotency. As storytellers and investigators of “significance,” historians are drawn to those imperial networks that *did* something rather than those that *failed to do* something. Laidlaw dealt with this problem by redefining failure. She argues that an imperial network’s success should not only be measured by its impact on the world, but also by its capacity to transmit information, leverage influence in a foreign space, and engage with foreign agents.⁹⁴ However, this approach only widens the definition of success and remains fixated on identifying the significance of what networks successfully *did*. Newspapers, for instance, are significant because they fostered self-government and imperial Britishness. Their potency in doing so renders unnecessary the additional step of identifying the other networks that people engaged with in moments of failure. If we instead focus on the experience of impotency, we can look towards what happened after the moment of failure. Becoming an informant for the APS was a back-up plan for virtually all of the informants examined in this dissertation, a second chance to achieve objectives that other imperial networks – particularly newspapers, petitions, and mission societies – had failed to deliver. This dissertation places network impotency and fluidity at centre stage, tracing how APS informants moved between various imperial networks in the pursuit of their goals, and suggests that impotency and fluidity is one way of understanding the transition from imperial to settler colonialism. By looking at how people scrambled from network to network to hold on to the imperial world that had existed before the settler transition, and observing how each network failed to fulfil expectations for various reasons, this dissertation suggests that the rise of the settler colonial world was less of an inevitable outcome of a hegemonic settler nationalism than a

⁹⁴ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45*, 127.

consequence of faltering imperial networks and evaporating alternative methods for sustaining a hybrid imperial-colonial subjecthood.

Approaching imperial humanitarian networks through the lens of impotency also contributes to orienting historiographical narratives of the development of humanitarian discourses around supply-side as well as demand-side factors. Historians of international humanitarianism from Silvia Salvatici to Kenton Storey agree that humanitarian discourses regarding Indigenous-settler relations shifted over the nineteenth century from emphasizing benevolent trusteeship to justifying assimilation and coercion as a result of newly self-governing settlers defining humanitarianism in a new and more racialized way.⁹⁵ However, according to Norbert Götz, Georgina Brewis, and Steffen Werther’s framework of humanitarianism as a moral economy made up of supply-side “donors” and demand-side “practitioners,”⁹⁶ this trajectory of evolving settler humanitarianism is principally demand-side. It assumes that the decline of settler interest in Indigenous rights drove the decline of Indigenous rights activism. On the contrary, Elizabeth Elbourne uses a supply-side perspective to argue that early nineteenth-century humanitarians became increasingly violent not because that is what they truly believed in, but because of a lack of viable alternative pathways.⁹⁷ Similarly, I propose that it was not interest in Indigenous rights that declined in the late nineteenth century, but rather the potency of imperial support for colonial humanitarianism that declined, without which colonial humanitarians

⁹⁵ Silvia Salvatici, *A History of Humanitarianism, 1755–1989: In the Name of Others* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 40–42; Storey, *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire*, 8–9.

⁹⁶ Norbert Götz, Georgina Brewis, and Steffen Werther, *Humanitarianism in the Modern World: The Moral Economy of Famine Relief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 16–22.

⁹⁷ Elizabeth Elbourne, “Violence, Moral Imperialism and Colonial Borderlands, 1770s–1820s: Some Contradictions of Humanitarianism,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 17, no. 1 (2016): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2016.0003>.

struggled to stay the course. Attending to rising network impotency in the face of continuing humanitarian interest reveals the extent to which supply-side factors as well as demand-side factors in the moral economy contributed to the bankruptcy of settler humanitarian discourses by the turn of the twentieth century.

Sources and methodology

To interrogate the lived experiences of network fluidity and impotency and locate these experiences within the overlapping scholarship of the British World and settler colonial studies, this thesis combines the historical methodology of life histories with the sociological methodology of uses and gratifications theory. Life histories are written using life writing, or fragmentary records that people leave behind that contain auto/biographical narratives of their lives and experiences: letters, diaries, memoirs, testimonies, and other documents that revolve around personal experience.⁹⁸ Life histories have become a pivotal element of recent imperial histories which “use the lives of ordinary individuals to elucidate wider historical processes.”⁹⁹ For the most part, imperial life histories have consisted of miniature biographies that trace the imperial trajectories of individual people over their lifetimes. David Lambert and Alan Lester’s *Colonial Lives across the British Empire* (2006) popularized this trend, tracing the lives of eleven British officials and travellers to “draw out the connections between different imperial and extra-imperial sites that are apparent from focusing on a single, though not isolated, life.”¹⁰⁰ Clare Anderson followed suit with *Subaltern Lives* (2012), altering the formula slightly by

⁹⁸ Paul John Eakin, *Writing Life Writing: Narrative, History, Autobiography* (New York: Routledge, 2020); Michael Mascuch, Rudolf Dekker, and Arianne Baggerman, “Egodocuments and History: A Short Account of the Longue Durée,” *The Historian* 78, no. 1 (2016): 11–56, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hisn.12080>.

⁹⁹ Curless et al., “Editors’ Introduction,” 723.

¹⁰⁰ David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Career in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21.

focusing on five non-European lives but otherwise following the same pattern. Edited volumes such as Desley Deacon *et al.*'s *Transnational Lives* (2010) have expanded the project so that the historiography of the British empire is rife with miniature biographies of a veritable menagerie of imperial subjects. Although such histories are useful for demonstrating the many imperial themes and processes that permeated individual lives, their orientation around isolated individuals can make it difficult to draw broader societal conclusions or make enquires into specific aspects of imperial life.

To address this limitation, historians like Angela Woollacott adapt life history by utilizing small life writing snapshots from a larger number of individuals to answer specific questions about imperial society as a whole. In *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies* (2015), Woollacott uses such snapshots to explore settler experiences of the rise of self-government, presenting “stories and incidents from the lives of scores of individual settlers...to juxtapose these stories in such a way that the evidence they present forms overlapping layers, in the hope that the layers cohere as linked political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of these evolving colonies.”¹⁰¹ Focusing on singular moments within many peoples’ lives, rather than multiple moments over an individual’s life, allows Woollacott to identify shared experiences from the decades leading up to self-government in Australia. Following her lead, this dissertation compares singular incidents recorded in the life writing of many APS informants to identify overlapping and shared experiences of empire in the decades after self-government.

However, Woollacott’s work revolves around discursive analysis of colonial life writing (i.e how and what people wrote about), while this dissertation is oriented around the mechanics of how colonial inhabitants navigated the fluidity and impotency of imperial networks while

¹⁰¹ Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies*, 11.

negotiating imperial continuities following the settler transition (i.e. to whom people wrote and why). To adapt Woollacott's life history method to my purpose, I combine it with uses and gratifications theory (UGT). UGT was developed by communications scholars in the late twentieth century to understand what different communication technologies allow people to do and how people use them strategically to navigate their lives. UGT holds that people engage with different types of media to satisfy different social needs, and that by examining the motivations behind engaging in different types of media we can piece together the lived experience of people from specific media contexts.¹⁰² My dissertation applies this theory to letters written from the settler colonies to the APS in the late nineteenth century, comparing the uses and gratifications of such letter-writing against other types of media use: writing personal letters to family members, writing letters to the editors of British newspapers, writing petitions to the imperial government, and writing letters to missionary societies. By doing so, I can piece together a small part of the lived experience of being an imperial subject in a complexly networked world.

To do this, I proceeded through iterative stages of research starting from letters written to the APS and then radiating outwards to trace concurrent engagements with parallel networks. The first stage was to search manually through the APS's archive for letters written from the settler colonies. This task was complicated by both the size of the archive, which contains 9,605 individual letters, and the necessity of identifying letters written from the settler colonies. The 9,605 letters are divided into fonds according to who was secretary of the APS at the time the letters were received: there is a Thomas Hodgkin fonds covering 1831-1855, a Frederick

¹⁰² Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch, and Hadassah Haas, "On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things," *American Sociological Review* 38, no. 2 (1973): 164–81, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094393>; Cheryl Bracken and Matthew Lombard, "Uses and Gratifications: A Classic Methodology Revisited," *New Jersey Journal of Communication* 9, no. 1 (2001): 103–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870109367401>.

Chesson fonds covering 1855-1888, a Henry Fox-Bourne fonds covering 1888-1909, and a miscellaneous fonds. The vast majority of the letters in the collection, 6,773 or 70% of the total, are in the Frederick Chesson fonds.¹⁰³ This thesis is based on the Chesson fonds alone, since it is most temporally relevant to the decades following self-government.

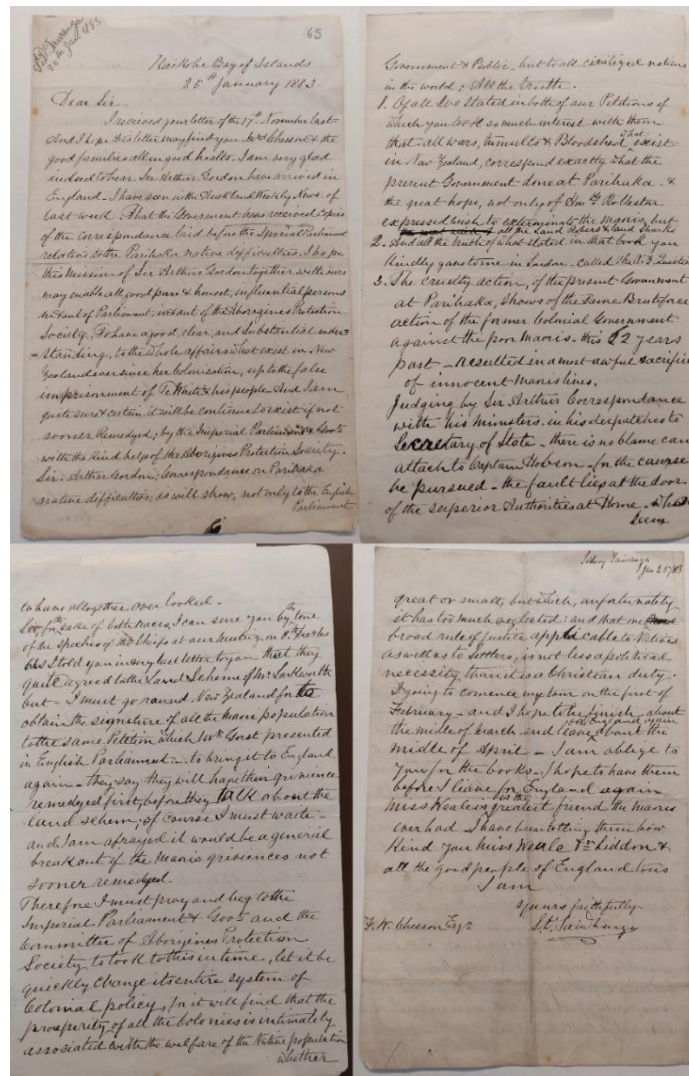


Figure 2: Example of an informant letter from New Zealand. Hirini Taiwhanga to Frederick Chesson, 25 January 1883, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G98 – 65.

¹⁰³ It is unclear why that ratio is so high. Charles Swaisland commented in his dissertation that, prior to being rescued in 1948 by the Bodleian Libraries, the Society’s correspondence archive had been languishing in a damp and mouldy cellar on Vauxhall Bridge Road, and that many letters had been destroyed by the mould. It is possible that many of the letters received by Hodgkin and Fox-Bourne perished during that time. Swaisland also comments that many of the

Identifying letters written from the colonies is not as easy as checking the writer's address included at the beginning of each letter. Such addresses cannot be relied on: they are often missing, illegible, or else unrepresentative of where the writer lived. For instance, letters signed from London, colonial port cities, or even ships like "HMS Natal" could easily have been written by either metropole- or colony-based writers while travelling or while temporarily living elsewhere. And so identifying relevant letters required a time-consuming process of reading each letter and looking for contextual clues to confirm colonial origin and categorize according to the three demographics that structure this thesis: settlers, missionaries, and Indigenous peoples. These demographic categories are based on Lorenzo Veracini's triangular model of imperial interest groups, in which settlers, imperial agents, and Indigenous peoples possessed competing agendas in relation to the land: imperial agents wanted resources exported to the empire, settlers wanted resources reinvested in settler society, and Indigenous peoples wanted resources protected from dispossession.¹⁰⁴ Veracini does not conflate missionaries with imperial agents, but I approach them as such due to their vested interests in metropolitan-based mission societies. These categories are not rigid or mutually exclusive and people could move between categories or even occupy multiple categories simultaneously, but when informants wrote to the APS they did so with a specific and timely objective and these objectives can typically be connected to one of the three demographics' interests. Once letters to the APS were identified and categorized, I used informant names, dates of writing, and subject matter to trace their presence in other

letters had been removed by George Cox while researching his 1888 *The Life of John William Colenso*, and are now in Cox's own archival collection. Letters to Hodgkin are similarly held in his fonds at the Wellcome Library in London, and letters to Fox-Bourne may be held in his fonds distributed between the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, the Durham University Library, and the London School of Economics Library.

¹⁰⁴ Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 5–7.

imperial networks. Some correspondents have personal letters stored in family collections, which I was able to find by searching local archives and genealogy centres. Many correspondents wrote letters to the editor of local and British newspapers, which I found by querying digitized collections of papers as well as manually searching individual papers. Correspondents also commonly sent petitions to imperial and colonial government offices, which I found scattered in Colonial Office records, printed parliamentary papers, and native affairs department records. Missionary informants also stayed in regular contact with metropolitan mission societies, and their correspondence is housed in institutional archives. By building outwards from APS letters to these other activities, I traced the entanglement of the APS's correspondence network with other major networks of imperial communication.

Once I constructed this web of letters, newspapers, and government records, my analysis was guided by existing methods of epistolary and petition analysis. To begin with, it is important to recognize that despite the various networks that they appeared in, the letters to the APS, personal letters, missionary letters, letters to newspaper editors, and petitions I study all share similar epistolary characteristics that I use as shared categories of analysis. The similarity between these different types of letters is easy to establish: as Rebecca Earle observes, public/official letters contain so much personal context and personal letters were so important to the conduct of public/official business that “the desire for clear epistolary demarcation into public and private represents an attempt to impose an artificial clarity.”¹⁰⁵ Writers certainly wrote in different ways to different recipients, reflecting Patricia Spacks's finding that within bodies of correspondence “the writer's tone and material shift from one correspondent to another, [and we]

¹⁰⁵ Rebecca Earle, ed., *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945* (London: Routledge, 2016), 3–4.

see sometimes virtually different selves emerging in different epistolary relationships.”¹⁰⁶ But this is simply an aspect of human identity, reflecting Afsaneh Najmabadi’s argument that people constantly narrativize new and relational “horizontal identities” in response to the situations they encounter.¹⁰⁷ The similarity between letters and petitions is perhaps less obvious. However, if we take Lex Heerma van Voss’s widely-cited definition of petitions as requests for favour from an established authority, which van Voss uses to expand his analysis from official petitions to “petition-like documents,” petitions begin to appear as merely a sub-category of a letter. For instance, beyond subject matter and context, there is little essential difference between a personal letter requesting news from home, a business letter requesting a shipment of goods from a partner, and a petition requesting remuneration from a governor. The line between letter and petition is further blurred in the context of network fluidity, when petitioners may reformat their failed petitions into letters to the APS or the editor of *The Times*, changing the form but not the content or motive.

Moreover, a comparison of analytical methods shows that letters and petitions are treated almost identically by historians, with methodologies divided by a focus on either external agency or internal identity formation. In terms of internal identity formation, Ravi de Costa’s influential study of Indigenous petitions argues that petitions are sites of identity formation since they contain “implicit descriptions of the moral worlds in which particular claims are sensible and legitimate. Thus petitions act to articulate the identity and status of the petitioner and that of

¹⁰⁶ Patricia Meyer Spacks, “Forgotten Genres,” *Modern Language Studies* 18, no. 1 (1988): 51, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3194700>.

¹⁰⁷ Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Professing Selves: Transsexuality and Same-Sex Desire in Contemporary Iran* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 276–77.

authority in a shared moral order.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, petitions require the petitioners to describe how and why they want to be perceived by an authority as well as how they expect the authority to behave in relation to themselves. This process of identity formation is also applied to letters. David Gerber’s study of immigrant letters from North America to families in Britain traces how immigrants used letters to maintain a connection to a shared collective identity while simultaneously fashioning how they would like themselves to be seen by their families.¹⁰⁹ Laura Ishiguro applies this concept specifically to settler colonialism, arguing that settler letter-writers used strategic silences in their letters back home to forge settler identities as improvers of empty and waste lands.¹¹⁰

As for external agency, Karen O’Brien’s survey of Indigenous petitions emphasizes that petitions are a means by which Indigenous peoples “instigated, set in motion and subsequently brought about transformation in the most oppressive conditions...they demonstrate resilience, authority, agency and lay out the initial groundwork for self-determined futures.”¹¹¹ For O’Brien, petitions are most significant for the impact they had on the world outside of their writers’ and readers’ minds. This viewpoint is shared by Lindsay O’Neill’s survey of letter-writing in the British World. O’Neill acknowledges that imperial pen pals were an important source of emotional support, but argues that letter-writers valued pen pals “most importantly for the

¹⁰⁸ Ravi De Costa, “Identity, Authority, and the Moral Worlds of Indigenous Petitions,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 3 (2006): 670, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417506000260>.

¹⁰⁹ David Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 57–90.

¹¹⁰ Laura Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home about: British Family Correspondence and the Settler Colonial Everyday in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 6–8.

¹¹¹ Karen O’Brien, *Petitioning for Land: The Petitions of First Peoples of Modern British Colonies* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 9.

actions they could take on one's behalf."¹¹² This reflects Susan Whyman's suggestions that although letter-writing often morphed into a method for maintaining collective identities with family members and communities, letters usually "start off being merely functional," whether it be conducting a business or arranging a marriage.¹¹³ And so despite there being two separate historiographies of letters and petitions, both historiographies ask the same questions of their sources and expect similar answers: that letters and petitions are similar vectors of identity formation and agency.

Adapting these frameworks for analysing petitions and letters to my study of network fluidity centred around the APS, I approach letters and petitions with three central questions. First, what is the document's intended manifestation of agency? Second, what representations of self and audience are made within the document that hint towards the writer's self-identification and preferred moral world? Third, how do these aspirations of agency and identity differ from network to network, thereby reflecting the relationship between network fluidity, British Worlds, and settler colonialism?

The letters examined in this dissertation come with both benefits and limitations as historical sources. Letters are "probably the largest single body of the writings of ordinary people to which historians have access,"¹¹⁴ and thus are extraordinarily valuable as sources of non-elite history. Letters written to the APS from a range of colonial subjects – from labourers to priests to lawyers - are therefore critical to my project of exploring diverse lived experiences of imperial subjecthood. Yet letters are also fraught with difficulties. Since they were typically written to

¹¹² O'Neill, *The Opened Letter*, 3.

¹¹³ Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8.

¹¹⁴ Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives*, 5.

known acquaintances, letters seldom describe the author and it can be difficult to provide biographical context. Moreover, a key difficulty of working with the records of “ordinary people” is that correspondence is typically divided between two people: the more famous correspondents may have their half of the conversation archived, but the ordinary correspondents seldom leave archives behind.¹¹⁵ Consequently, correspondence collections like that of the APS contain only one side of two-sided conversations. In the case of the APS, the archive has only preserved the letters it received from correspondents and not the letters it sent. Fortunately, for the purposes of this study, the APS’s side of the conversation is not particularly important. The central premise of this dissertation is to decentre the APS and attend to the other side of the conversation, and if the APS’s perspective is needed it is easy enough to trace through its publications.

Of course, letters are highly subjective accounts that cannot be assumed to contain neutral or objective reflections of the events they describe. Like all documents, they are created for a reason, and although they are often not intended to be publicly consumed, they are certainly written to influence a certain audience. What is contained in letters cannot be interpreted as fact, but merely as what the writer wanted the recipient to know or not to know. Moreover, since writing home to Britain was such a significant medium for settlers to express and reflect on their identities, letters also became sites for spreading and entrenching racialized and gendered notions of settlerness, and Laura Ishiguro in particular explores how writing letters home facilitated the normalization of exclusionary and oppressive settler discourses.¹¹⁶ Such issues arise constantly in the letters examined in this dissertation, such as when a settler from Natal justified his desire to

¹¹⁵ Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives*, 7–8.

¹¹⁶ Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home About*, 8.

reform Zulu law as a necessary means to protect Zulu women (see Chapter Two), or when a missionary from Western Australia explained that his right to critique race-relations derived from his “Christian manhood” (see Chapter Five). Such problematic discourses require careful unpacking if these letters are to be used to assess the events depicted within them, but that is not what this study is about. I am less interested in what writers were *saying* than in what they were *doing* with their letters. The letters examined here often contain pages upon pages of dubious stories that are impossible to verify as well as language that historians of race or gender could write an entirely separate thesis on, but while I utilize such pages for important context about the racialized and gendered worldview of their authors, they are not the pages I focus on here. Instead, I focus on the final closing sentences and the postscripts, where writers often confessed their motives and explicated their conceptualizations of imperial-colonial connectivity. As such, the limitations that typically complicate letters as historical sources are less of a concern for my project.

On the other hand, the construction and organization of letter archives represent a very significant limitation for my research. Archives, just like texts themselves, are created for a purpose, and the decisions made to include or exclude documents structure collections around their archivists’ perspectives. Ann Laura Stoler explores the implications this has for colonial government archives, arguing that such archives were created to facilitate colonial governance and provide evidence and intelligence to benefit future colonial objects, so that colonial government archives should be approached as repositories of government anxieties and epistemologies.¹¹⁷ While I extensively employ government archives belonging to the Colonial

¹¹⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1–20.

Office, Canada's Department of Indian Affairs, and New Zealand's Native Office, I use them precisely because they reveal government anxieties and responses to the APS's informants, and so the epistemological bias of colonial archives is more of an advantage than a limitation for this project.

However, the epistemological bias of the APS's archivists is very problematic. At one level, the APS archive could be thought of as a counterbalance to colonial government archives, as it was not run by a state agency, and it purposefully collected documents that it believed were being ignored or suppressed by colonial governments. Yet as Nicholas Dirks observes, even non-governmental archives of colonial records were created "in the context of colonial interest," so that any documents they contain are those deemed important or valuable from a colonial rather than Indigenous perspective.¹¹⁸ The archives of the Royal Colonial Institute, for example, collected and arranged documents to tell a story of heroic discovery and exploration,¹¹⁹ while missionary archives collected and arranged documents to tell stories of successful, useful, and underfunded evangelism.¹²⁰ The APS certainly did the same, constructing an archive that reflected its ideological understandings of "protection" and "civilization" as well as its definitions of deserving causes and credible informants. The problem is, there is no way to know whether the informant letters examined in this dissertation represent all of such letters the APS received, or merely a selection of letters deemed valuable by the APS. This makes it very

¹¹⁸ Nicholas Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History," in *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Keith Axel (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 54–59.

¹¹⁹ Ruth Craggs, "Situating the Imperial Archive: The Royal Empire Society Library, 1868–1945," *Journal of Historical Geography* 34, no. 1 (2008): 48–67, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2007.04.002>.

¹²⁰ Emma Wild-Wood, "Missionary Archives on Africa: A Fine Grained Understanding," *African Research & Documentation*, no. 136 (2019): 62–71, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305862X00022093>.

difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about the APS's informants as a group. For example, only three of the 140 colonial correspondents I have identified were women, while each of the thirty Indigenous correspondents I have identified had an elite status of some kind. But is this because women and non-elite Indigenous people did not become APS informants, or because their letters were excluded from the archive? Or, alternatively, are the labours of women and non-elite Indigenous informants hidden within letters signed by others? Without knowing the answers to these questions, I refrain from drawing conclusions about who the APS's correspondents were beyond differentiating between Indigenous peoples, settlers, and missionaries. Nonetheless, it is important to approach the arguments within this dissertation as representing some of the many possible ways that people living in the colonies perceived their connection to empire, and to keep in mind that women's and non-elite Indigenous people's perspectives may have differed.

Chapter outline

I have structured my chapters according to Veracini's triangular model of colonial interest groups: two chapters are dedicated to settler correspondents, one chapter to missionary correspondents, and one chapter to Indigenous correspondents. By doing so, I am able to attend to how people with different stakes in – and different experiences of – empire wrote to the APS for different reasons, while still having the shared experience of writing to the APS as a connecting strand running through each chapter. Two chapters are dedicated to settler correspondence due to the relative prevalence of their letters; as can be seen in Table 1 below, I have identified more than twice as many settler correspondents than missionary or Indigenous correspondents. Similarly, South African correspondents feature in three of the four chapters

because I have identified significantly more South African correspondents than New Zealanders, Australians, and Canadians combined.

Correspondent breakdown by demographic

Settlers	85
Indigenous peoples	30
Missionaries	25

Correspondent breakdown by region

South Africans	79
Canadians	22
New Zealanders	24
Australians	15

Table 1: Correspondent breakdowns, see Appendix for details.

Chapter Two: “Settler Correspondents and Imperial Citizenship in South Africa.” This chapter examines letters written by settlers from the Cape Colony and Natal who attempted to use the APS as a backdoor into the British House of Commons. In the context of the late nineteenth century, when imperial identities were being actively replaced with national identities in the settler colonies, historians argue that settlers maintained cultural and economic attachments to empire but rejected notions of imperial citizenship. Using letters written to the APS by two settlers in Natal (John Akerman and John Colenso) and one from the eastern Cape Colony (Robert Lester), I argue that Natal and Eastern Cape settlers thought of themselves not just as culturally British but also as imperial citizens subject to imperial legal jurisdiction. That settlers actively appealed to imperial authority to make up for perceived limitations in self-

government suggests that imperial intervention was not understood as the antithesis of self-government. Instead, these appeals to imperial authority open the possibility for approaching self-government and imperial authority as overlapping and interlocking legal subjecthoods. This chapter further demonstrates that settler invocations of imperial citizenship and applications to imperial authority were overtly racialized. Settlers writing from Natal applied to imperial authority for the power to control African law and prohibit undesirable Zulu customs. Those writing from the Eastern Cape, on the other hand, applied to imperial authority for the power to take land away from Afrikaner settlers. In examining the racial aspects of these events, this chapter reconsiders the extent to which identities as imperial citizens were articulated as non-racial, and suggests that there was more continuity than change in the rise of racialized settler citizenship regimes that regulated voting rights, immigration, land ownership, and occupation by skin colour.

Chapter Three: “Letters to the editor: the Aborigines Protection Society as publishing agent for a participatory imperial press.” In this chapter, I discuss how settlers in Canada and the Cape Colony tried to use the APS network to supplement their ability to shape British public opinion through British daily newspapers. Historians have shown that the imperial press system was very important to the development of settler identities, and that settler editors produced newspapers with metropolitan audiences in mind. However, no research has addressed the significance of settler letters written directly to the editors of metropolitan newspapers. Using correspondence discussing reader letters between the APS and two settlers, Philip Carpenter from Canada and Harold Stephens from the Cape Colony, I argue that letters written to the editors of *The Times*, the *Standard*, and the *Telegraph* performed many of the same functions as settler newspapers but operated in very different ways. First, while both settler newspapers and

letters to metropolitan editors aimed to shape public opinion in Britain, the latter contained very different understandings of Indigenous-settler relations which directly challenged the narratives that local editors and government officials were disseminating to Britain. Moreover, I show that the urge to publish in Britain was motivated by explicit censorship by local editors and governments. I argue that these two differences mark the culture of writing letters to metropolitan papers as a secondary information channel, through which settlers could subvert the control of local editors and officials over imperial communication. I also show that by turning to the APS in the face of rejection by metropolitan editors, settlers co-opted that society for the same purpose.

Chapter Four: “Indigenous Petitions and Settler Disinformation in New Zealand and the Cape Colony.” This chapter investigates how and why Indigenous groups from New Zealand and the Cape Colony corresponded with the APS in relation to petitions they were presenting to the British government. Three Maori petitions were forwarded to the British government between 1882 and 1884: one by the Ngāpuhi iwi (nation), one by the four Maori members of the New Zealand House of Representatives, and one by the Waikato iwi. Many more petitions were launched across the South African colonies around the same time, from an 1883 petition against land theft in Pondoland to an 1887 petition against disfranchisement in the Cape Colony. All of these petitions failed, prompting historians to conclude that settler self-government precluded imperial intervention and consequently that Indigenous petitions to the British government were futile anachronisms from before the settler transition. However, a comparative analysis of these petitions and the petitioners’ concurrent correspondence with the APS reveals that neither the petitioners, the settler governments, nor the British government were overly concerned with the rights of responsible government. Indeed, there was clear legal authority and legal precedent for

the British government to supercede the rights of responsible government in all of these cases. Instead, the correspondence revolving around these petitions indicates that the primary consideration was whether the grievances within the petitioners were correct, and that the failure of these petitions had more to do with the petitioners' credibility than their rights to imperial intervention. Focusing on the Ngāpuhi petitioner Hirini Taiwhanga and the mFengu petitioner John Tengo Jabavu, I argue that Indigenous petitioners moved between government, newspaper, and APS networks in pursuance of the credibility that could prove the legitimacy of their grievances in the face of disinformation campaigns launched against them by their colonial governments. I suggest that the importance of credibility over the rights of responsible government illuminates the liminality of the late-nineteenth-century moment between imperial and settler worlds. In this liminal moment, the division of sovereignty between empire and colony was undefined and unstable and Indigenous issues were more likely to be decided by the power of persuasion and the manipulation of facts than by jurisdictional boundaries.

Chapter Five: "Mission Society Capitalism Versus Imperial Humanitarianism in British Columbia and Western Australia." This chapter explores letters written by missionaries to the APS in order to assess the complicated relationship between humanitarian missionaries in the field and British mission societies which adopted pro-settler policies in the late nineteenth century. I present two case studies from opposite ends of the empire. First, I discuss William Duncan's humanitarian efforts in British Columbia throughout the 1880s and his consequent persecution by the Church Missionary Society, and explore how the Church Missionary Society was driven to oppose Indigenous land rights and ally itself with the Canadian state over concerns about the impact of Duncan's doctrinal errors and denominational disloyalty on domestic fundraising. I then turn to Reverend John Gribble's humanitarian efforts in Western Australia in

1886 and consequent persecution by the Church of England Diocese of Perth, finding that the Diocese of Perth denounced Gribble's activism because of the negative impact it was having on grant applications to British funding organizations. Through a comparative analysis of these two cases, I demonstrate that mission societies in the 1880s opposed the attempts made by their own missionaries to advocate Indigenous rights against settler encroachment because of the negative financial impact that activism had on mission society fundraising efforts. Moreover, by comparing concurrent missionary correspondence with their employers and with the APS, I show that missionaries moved between mission networks and the APS network to challenge mission society censorship without sacrificing their connections to the metropole. I argue that missionary correspondence with the APS thus reveals a transitional moment in the rise of the settler world when mission societies had to choose whether or not to ally themselves to settler governments against their own missionaries, a transitional decision that missionaries attempted to influence by working with the APS.

Conclusion. The concluding chapter reflects on the overall significance and limitations of this dissertation, focusing on two overall findings: that late nineteenth-century colonial subjects perceived the relationship between empire and colony as ambiguous, and that they personally engaged with imperial power by interweaving multiple imperial networks. These findings hold different implications for the separate historiographies of the APS, the British World, and settler colonial studies. Within the historiography of the APS, my findings suggest that the APS functioned not only as a conduit of imperial knowledge and a metropolitan lobbyist, but also as a space that fostered imperial participation and belonging. Within British World scholarship, my findings nuance representations of imperial connectivity as isolated from settler colonial power structures, instead demonstrating that imperial connectivity was directly invoked in the

negotiation of both Indigenous-settler and colonial-metropolitan relations. As for settler colonial studies, my findings challenge logics of colonial fatalism that too easily conflate the dawn of settler self-government with the inevitable rise of settler nationalism. On the contrary, this dissertation demonstrates that settler self-government continued to be interpreted through assumptions of continuing imperial sovereignty throughout the late nineteenth century, indicating that the period was characterized by more ambiguity and open-endedness than has previously been perceived. Although the latitudinal scope of these findings is limited by my focus on APS informants rather than sampling colonial societies as larger wholes, this dissertation nevertheless demonstrates that APS informants provide a valuable window into the late Victorian settler world. The decision to become an APS informant was not made frivolously or lightly, and the motivations behind the decision are revealing of perceptions, attitudes, and hopes surrounding the experience of being imperial subjects and citizens.

2. Settler Correspondents and Imperial Citizenship in South Africa

We are taking measures to bring this subject before the [Natal] legislative council in the approaching session; but constituted as the council is we have very little hope of anything being done in the matter... They surely form proper subjects of inquiry for your honourable Society and the imperial parliament.¹²¹

The above statement was written in a letter to the APS in 1877 by a Natal settler, teacher, and farmer named William Adams, and his fluid movement between colonial and imperial parliaments reveals a remarkably multidirectional legal subjecthood. Adams's intention to bring his dispute before his colonial legislature indicates a deference to the local jurisdiction of the colony and the rights conferred on citizens of that colony through representative government. Simultaneously, Adams's intention to ignore the colony's jurisdiction if it ruled against his interests and apply to the British parliament indicates a deference to the overarching jurisdiction of the empire. The context that enabled such a multidirectional legal subjecthood is well established: Britain granted the settler colonies increasing levels of self-government from the 1840s onwards but withheld full sovereignty until the Balfour Declaration of 1926. During this period of 70-80 years, settlers of British colonies possessed what Daniel Gorman refers to as "de facto dual citizenship," a status of living under colonial and imperial jurisdictions simultaneously.¹²² For colonised peoples throughout the British empire who were disenfranchised under colonial governments, the overlapping jurisdictions of colonial and imperial law afforded opportunities to perform imperial citizenship, moving between imperial

¹²¹ William Adams et al. to Frederick Chesson, 18 December 1877, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/57, Bodleian Libraries (BodL).

¹²² Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 213.

and colonial spaces in search of rights that were denied to them.¹²³ Yet little attention has been given to settler experiences of imperial citizenship. On the contrary, narratives of settler experiences of empire are dominated by quests for independence and the rise of local nationalisms.

In a legal sense, there were never *citizens* of the British empire, only *subjects*. Since the *Calvin v. Smith* case of 1608, all who lived within the sovereignty of the British monarch were British subjects, and through allegiance to the monarch could claim protection.¹²⁴ Citizenship, albeit largely synonymous with subjecthood in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,¹²⁵ by the late nineteenth century had become entwined with political rights and responsibilities: the right to vote, to stand for office, and to have a say in public affairs.¹²⁶ Throughout the nineteenth century, such rights came from a combination of having an interest in the local environment, typically measured by land ownership or wealth, as well as passing social requirements such as

¹²³ For instance, see: Neil Parsons, *King Khama, Emperor Joe, and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Fiona Paisley and Kirsty Reid, eds., *Critical Perspectives on Colonialism: Writing the Empire from Below* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Cecilia Morgan, *Travellers through Empire: Indigenous Voyages from Early Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017); Coll Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Sarah Carter and Maria Nugent, eds., *Mistress of Everything Queen Victoria in Indigenous Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Charles Reed, *Royal Tourists, Colonial Subjects and the Making of a British World, 1860-1911* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

¹²⁴ Subjecthood was a reciprocal relationship between subject and sovereign: in return for recognizing the monarch's sovereignty, monarchs were obliged to enforce their sovereignty by protecting the subject by allowing them the right to access English law and to petition the Crown to redress personal grievances. Hannah Weiss Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign: Bonds of Belonging in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 25–32.

¹²⁵ Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 4.

¹²⁶ This is a definition based on classical Greek and Roman ideas of “the ideal polity, a community where man's highest function was the political, and where citizenship was a privilege that held both rights and responsibilities.” Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*, 13.

religious and gender restrictions. Citizenship and the political rights that came with it were therefore highly local, and to be an “imperial citizen” one would have to own property and meet the social requirements of every colony and territory of the empire.¹²⁷

In the past decade or so, historians have moved beyond such legal definitions, applying a discursive approach to identify how ideas of imperial citizenship were rhetorically invoked rather than legally bestowed, as something that was laid claim to despite never legally existing. Sukanya Banerjee adopts this approach in her study of Indian claims to political rights in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Banerjee argues that despite imperial citizenship not being a codified legal concept, *languages* of imperial citizenship were commonly employed to rhetorically transfer the rights of citizenship onto the status of imperial subjecthood.¹²⁸ Various other historians have followed suit, applying a discursive concept of imperial citizenship to other locations in the British empire.¹²⁹ Consequently, invoking rhetorics of imperial citizenship to demand rights denied by colonial governments has been demonstrated to be a commonly shared experience of empire by victims of colonization, who are represented as mobile and adaptable actors who could reconcile and move between imperial and colonial jurisdictions.

¹²⁷ Thus, as E.B. Sargant said in a 1912 speech to the Royal Colonial Institute, the only true imperial citizen was the monarch. Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*, 21.

¹²⁸ By “situating citizenship not so much in the realm of statutory enactment as in the cultural, imaginative, and affected fields,” she argues that “in claiming their perceived rights as subjects of the Crown, British Indians simultaneously underwrite themselves as citizens of empire, imperial citizens.” Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens*, 3–4.

¹²⁹ Khwezi Mkhize applies the idea of imperial citizenship to the Cape Colony in the 1880s, where he argues journalist John Tengo Jabavu (1859-1921) adopted a rhetoric of imperial subjecthood to defend the African franchise. Khwezi Mkhize, “‘To See Us As We See Ourselves’: John Tengo Jabavu and the Politics of the Black Periodical,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44, no. 3 (2018): 413–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1462993>. Zika Nahaboo brings the concept to colonial Mauritius, arguing that journalist Rémy Ollier (1816–45) claimed rights of imperial citizenship “under conditions of its formal absence.” Zaki Nahaboo, “Rémy Ollier and Imperial Citizenship,” *Interventions* 20, no. 5 (2018): 718, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2018.1487317>.

No similar attention has been given to settlers. To be sure, Hannah Weiss Muller shows that white imperial subjects of the eighteenth century living in what would eventually become the settler colonies regularly invoked their British subjecthood to lay claim to rights and privileges we now associate with citizenship.¹³⁰ But Muller sees this practice ending by the mid-nineteenth century, after which it was only “non-European inhabitants” who would use imperial citizenship to buttress campaigns for equal rights.¹³¹ On the contrary, historians represent settlers as rejecting ideas of imperial citizenship in favour of local, autonomous, and nationalist concepts of citizenship. In Daniel Gorman’s study of imperial citizenship, he frames a narrative in which metropolitan political theorists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attempted to assert a vision of imperial citizenship upon the settler colonies for the protection of unity and the preservation of Britain’s imperial interests. The settler colonies, however, were unwilling to concede their demands for sovereignty (especially over immigration issues), and so “the ideal of a common imperial citizenship ultimately foundered on the shoals of colonial nationalism.”¹³² Similarly, in their recent study on colonial petitions to the House of Commons, Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller argue that “the number of petitions and signatures relating to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and southern Africa waned once responsible or representative government was granted.”¹³³ This conclusion is based on the number of petitions presented to the British parliament through official channels, yet such a methodology is unreliable considering

¹³⁰ Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 6–16.

¹³¹ Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 220.

¹³² Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*, 27. For Gorman, settlers did not *want* imperial citizenship, largely because they wanted to police their own borders of who could and could not receive the political rights of citizenship along racialised lines not supported by the imperial government. See Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*, 205-16.

¹³³ Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller, “Colonial Petitions, Colonial Petitioners, and the Imperial Parliament, ca. 1780–1918,” *Journal of British Studies* 61, no. 2 (2022): 268, <https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2021.185>.

that public petitioning was a practice that the settlers examined in this chapter found too public. As will be seen, they preferred sending petitions anonymously through the APS.

Historians have been challenged by the apparent paradox that settlers demanded independence from imperial sovereignty while simultaneously claiming an imperial Britishness that far outlasted achievements of self-government. To reconcile this paradox, they have rendered settler claims to Britishness compatible with projects of self-government by distinguishing between cultural Britishness and political imperial subjecthood. On the contrary, by using letters to the APS written from Natal and the Cape Colony as case studies, I argue that settlers thought of themselves not just as culturally British but also as imperial citizens, and that they appealed to the British parliament through the APS in moments when they felt disenfranchised by their colonial governments. The settlers in this chapter thus experienced overlapping colonial and imperial jurisdictions in a way similar to colonised peoples who moved between jurisdictions in search of enfranchisement. However, there were also significant differences between the two experiences of imperial citizenship, starting with the fact that settlers in Natal and the Cape were *not* disenfranchised. Rather, as I will show, these settlers were merely disgruntled when local politics proved unfavourable to their interests, and they appealed to the British parliament not for literal enfranchisement, but for a second chance at attaining their goals. That settlers actively appealed to imperial authority to make up for perceived limitations in self-government suggests that, contrary to settler colonial studies arguments that imperialism and settler colonialism are antithetical,¹³⁴ imperial intervention was understood by some contemporaries as complementary to self-government. These appeals to the

¹³⁴ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 11–13.

British parliament suggest that the decline of settler petitions did not equate with a decline in imperial citizenship, and they open the possibility of approaching self-government and imperial authority as overlapping and mutually reinforcing subjecthoods.

Importantly, reconceptualizing settler self-government and imperial citizenship as mutually constitutive rather than mutually exclusive is revealing of the continuities of racialization from colony to statehood. A recurring formula posited by imperial historians is that between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, settler identities as non-racial British subjects were replaced by racialized identities as national citizens. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds argue that the racialization of citizenship in self-governing settler states was a “betrayal of the idea of imperial citizenship” which “helped render the imperial non-racial status of British subjects increasingly irrelevant and provided a direct challenge to the imperial assertion that the Empire recognized no distinction on the basis of colour or race.”¹³⁵ Charles Reed similarly contends that by the late nineteenth century, “the languages of nationalism and whiteness came to culturally overwhelm discourses of imperial citizenship, even if they were deeply imbricated in its language and history.”¹³⁶ Bill Schwarz uses a language of evolution rather than betrayal, exploring how “Britishness, once invoking a set of liberties, came...to be overlaid by faith in the singular race patriotism of its bearers.”¹³⁷ For these historians, settler citizenship and imperial citizenship were on two ends of a spectrum of racialization. However, the settler invocations of imperial citizenship and applications to the British parliament examined in this chapter were overtly racialized. As will be elaborated on below, the settlers writing from

¹³⁵ Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 5.

¹³⁶ Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 81.

¹³⁷ Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume 1: The White Man's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 193.

Natal applied to imperial authority for the power to control African law and prohibit undesirable Zulu customs. Those writing from the Cape, on the other hand, applied to imperial authority for the power to take land away from Afrikaner settlers. In examining the racial aspects of these events, this chapter reconsiders the extent to which identities as British citizens can be construed as non-racial. I suggest that there was more continuity than change in the rise of highly racialized settler citizenship regimes, just as Hilary Carey demonstrates that there was more continuity than change in the transition from religious to secular theories of race in the mid to late nineteenth century.¹³⁸

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section delves deeper into the historiographical issues around imperial sovereignty and citizenship, introduces my case studies, and sketches out some relevant historical background. The second section examines letters written by two Natal settlers – the African rights activist John Colenso and the Mayor of Pietermaritzburg John Akerman – in response to the Native Administration Act of 1875. I argue that their letters seeking representation in the British parliament in response to colonial politics are revealing of how imperial and colonial subjecthoods were mutually constitutive. The third section examines letters written to the APS by a lawyer from the eastern Cape Colony named Robert Lester regarding the creation of British Bechuanaland in 1884-85. I argue that Lester attempted to leverage imperial authority against the marginalization of the eastern Cape by western representatives in the colonial parliament, thereby revealing how imperial subjecthood could be perceived as a corrective for partisan imbalance in the colonies. The final section locates these arguments within wider debates around the colonial experience. First, I suggest that

¹³⁸ Hilary Carey, “Babylon, the Bible and the Australian Aborigines,” in *Chosen People: The Bible, Race and Empire in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Gareth Atkins, Shinjini Das, and Brian Murray (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 67-69.

the imperial citizenship evoked by these correspondents was constitutive of imperial power through settler internalizations of imperial authority. Second, I suggest that the entangled legal subjecthoods examined in this chapter challenge portrayals of settler colonialism as antithetical to imperialism. Third, I suggest that evocations of imperial citizenship to police racial boundaries challenge previous depictions of imperial citizenship as the nineteenth-century non-racial opposite of twentieth-century racialized nationalisms.

Imperial versus settler sovereignty?

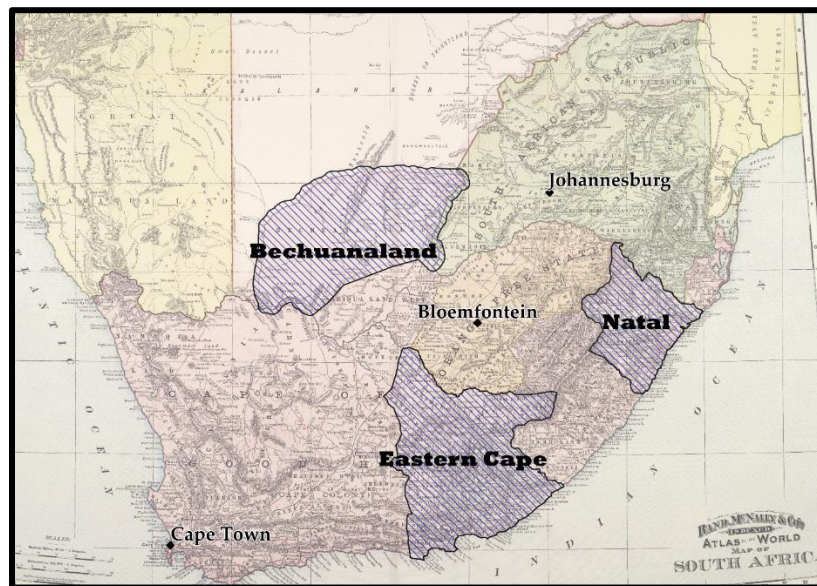


Figure 3: 1892 map of South Africa showing Natal, Bechuanaland, and the Eastern Cape. Base map in the public domain from the Dr Oscar I. Norwich Collection, Stanford University Libraries, <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/maps-of-africa/catalog/nz926xc1513>.

Sovereignty was one of the most fundamental battlegrounds within Britain’s settler colonies throughout the nineteenth century. Commonly defined as “the final and absolute political authority in the political community,”¹³⁹ sovereignty in settler colonies was claimed and

¹³⁹ F. H. Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 26.

disputed by Indigenous nations, settler communities, and imperial authorities simultaneously. Audra Simpson coined the term *nested sovereignty* to describe this state of competition between multiple groups seeking ultimate political authority over the same land, and she emphasizes the “terrific tension” that inevitably pushes these nested sovereign groups to challenge one another even into the present.¹⁴⁰ Settler campaigns to eliminate Indigenous sovereignties were the most violent of such conflicts and have received by far the most historical attention. Lisa Ford in particular argues that settler colonies “redefine themselves as modern states by erasing indigenous rights,”¹⁴¹ and she uses a string of court cases across the Anglo world in the 1820s and 1830s to demonstrate how settlers used their legal systems to establish complete jurisdiction over Indigenous nations. But for settler states to achieve sovereignty over Indigenous nations they also had to remove themselves from imperial sovereignty, for as David Armitage points out, “empires are structures of political and economic interference...they thus represent the major conditions that statehood is designed to escape.”¹⁴² Paul McHugh and Lisa Ford locate settler independence from imperial sovereignty around the 1860s, when “the Crown ceased rather suddenly to act as a check on settler ambition.”¹⁴³ They argue that the language and ritualism of imperial sovereignty continued, but that this was merely a rhetoric of imperial sovereignty that “belied its absolutist, settler core.”¹⁴⁴ Indeed, while the Privy Council occasionally challenged

¹⁴⁰ Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 10–12.

¹⁴¹ Ford, *Settler Sovereignty*, 2010, 183.

¹⁴² David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 2007), 106–7.

¹⁴³ Paul McHugh and Lisa Ford, “Settler Sovereignty and the Shapeshifting Crown,” in *Between Indigenous and Settler Governance*, ed. Lisa Ford and Tim Rowse (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 24.

¹⁴⁴ McHugh and Ford, “Settler Sovereignty,” 29.

settler judicial authority, by the turn of the twentieth century, settler governments had largely legislated their affairs out of the Privy Council's jurisdiction.¹⁴⁵

This timeline of judicial sovereignty roughly matches the historiography of political self-government, in which historians interpret the granting of representative and responsible government institutions in the mid to late nineteenth century as the end of imperial sovereignty. Sparked by imperial policies like convict transportation and Indigenous protection as well as observations of concurrent campaigns for self-government in other colonies, all of the settler colonies pushed for and achieved democratic political institutions by the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁶ And while vestiges of imperial sovereignty continued to exist in theory, historians from Philip Buckner to Ann Curthoys insist that imperial infringement upon settler sovereignty after self-government was “inconceivable”¹⁴⁷ and “illusory.”¹⁴⁸ Indeed, unlike Indigenous petitions to the imperial government that continued into the twentieth century (see Chapter Five for my analysis of Indigenous petitioning), settler petitions to the imperial government appear to halt immediately after self-government. Perhaps this is because, as Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller identify, most settler petitions to imperial authorities were to protest *against* imperial interference.¹⁴⁹ Regardless, Huzzey and Miller identify no significant settler petitions post-1850, and in reference to South Africa in particular, Anthony Christopher shows that the vast majority

¹⁴⁵ McHugh and Ford, “Settler Sovereignty,” 30–32.

¹⁴⁶ Alan Lester, “Race and Citizenship,” in *The Victorian World*, ed. Martin Hewitt (London: Routledge, 2012), 386–91.

¹⁴⁷ Buckner, “The Creation of the Dominion of Canada, 1860–1901,” 70.

¹⁴⁸ Ann Curthoys, “The Dog That Didn't Bark: The Durham Report, Indigenous Dispossession, and Self-Government for Britain's Settler Colonies,” in *Within and Without the Nation: Canadian History as Transnational History*, ed. Karen Dubinsky, Adele Perry, and Henry Yu (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 39–40.

¹⁴⁹ Huzzey and Miller, “Colonial Petitions,” 274–75.

of petitions sent to London after self-government were from Indigenous nations.¹⁵⁰ These accounts hold that sovereignty in the settler colonies, whether judicial or legislative, had been stripped from Indigenous and imperial sources and vested predominantly in settler societies during the settler transition of the mid to late nineteenth century.

Indeed, many historians suggest that cultural devotion to British values entirely replaced subjecthood to British sovereignty. Saul Dubow and Andrew Thompson present this dichotomy in the specific case of settler nationalism in South Africa. Dubow argues that the rejection of British political control over South African politics was accompanied by the fervent adoption of a British cultural identity, and that even the most radical nationalists “were highly respectful of British values.”¹⁵¹ Thompson similarly argues that “there was a great difference between being loyal to ‘Downing Street’ – never very popular in South Africa – and being loyal to Britain (or, rather, an idea of ‘Britain’).”¹⁵² He demonstrates that while attachment to imperial political control was “dead in the water,” attachment to imperial cultural identity was alive and thriving across English, Afrikaner, and African communities alike.¹⁵³ In doing so, South African historians replicate the dichotomy of cultural attachment/political independence proposed by imperial historians more broadly. John Darwin, for instance, writes of a “Britannic nationalism” that was characterized by settlers “rejecting subservience to the British *government*, but

¹⁵⁰ Anthony Christopher, “South African Petitions to the House of Commons, 1833-1914: Grievances, Protests, Advice and Information,” *Historia* 63, no. 1 (2018): 1–23, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2309-8392/2018/v63n1a1>.

¹⁵¹ Saul Dubow, “How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 1 (2009): 6–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530902757688>.

¹⁵² Andrew Thompson, “The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa, c. 1870-1939,” *The English Historical Review* 118, no. 477 (2003): 620, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/118.477.617>.

¹⁵³ Thompson, “The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa,” 620.

affirming equality with Britain as ‘British peoples’ or ‘nations.’”¹⁵⁴ And Cecilia Morgan contends that the exportation of British art forms (e.g. fiction, poetry, and drama) and symbolism of the monarchy ensured the continuity of cultural attachments to the empire throughout the settler colonies in the face of growing settler nationalisms.¹⁵⁵ From these perspectives, the continuing cultural attachments of the wider British World existed in an inverse relationship with the disintegrating political sovereignty of the imperial government.

Settler correspondence with the APS, however, reveals a very different picture of imperial sovereignty. Settlers constantly bombarded the APS with requests to petition the British parliament on their behalf. Examples of this behaviour are discussed from various perspectives in other chapters of this thesis, including Philip Carpenter’s letters from Quebec in Chapter Three and David Carley’s letters from Western Australia in Chapter Five. But while many settler correspondents asked if their concerns could be “brought before the Imperial Parliament,”¹⁵⁶ only three explain in explicit detail how they perceived imperial sovereignty to relate to settler sovereignty: John Akerman of Natal, John Colenso of Natal, and Robert Lester of the Cape Colony. All three hailed from the South African colonies, but each described to the APS in extensive detail different visions of their relation to imperial sovereignty, making each a valuable case study around which to frame this chapter.

John Akerman and John Colenso are particularly valuable case studies because of their contrasting relationships with Natal’s settler society. John Akerman (1825-1905) immigrated from Britain to Natal in 1850 initially as a cotton farmer before working as a teacher and finally

¹⁵⁴ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 147.

¹⁵⁵ Morgan, *Building Better Britains?*, 133–69.

¹⁵⁶ Philip Carpenter to Frederick Chesson, 17 March 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G83b Volume 1 - 6, BodL.

as a chemist in Pietermaritzburg. In 1857 he joined the town council, in 1859 he was elected mayor, and between 1862-1892 he served on the Legislative Council.¹⁵⁷ In politics, he fought for African assimilation and the rights of settlers to self-government. In his own words, he was “somewhat popular” among his settler comrades,¹⁵⁸ while to the editor of the *Natal Witness* he was “a champion of popular rights in the Colony.”¹⁵⁹ John Colenso (1814-1883) was as different from Akerman as they come. He came to Natal not as a settler but as a missionary, leaving his position as a maths tutor at Cambridge to become the first Anglican Bishop of Natal in 1854. Colenso is also well-known to historians of South Africa as one of the most vocal nineteenth-century opponents of settler colonialism and defenders of African rights, albeit through a fundamentally racist and paternalistic liberal framework that itself legitimated settler colonialism.¹⁶⁰ He was convinced of the importance of imperial authority checking the inhumanity of colonial society, and when he pursued his beliefs was branded an enemy of the colony. The *Natal Mercury* once wrote of Colenso that “a traitor to his religion, his friends and his adopted country will not be countenanced and received among us.”¹⁶¹ Akerman and Colenso, therefore, offer opposing perspectives on the role of imperial sovereignty in settler contexts: Akerman as a staunch supporter of settler independence, Colenso as an outspoken advocate for imperial oversight. This difference makes the similarities between their perspectives on imperial sovereignty even more striking.

¹⁵⁷ Shelagh O’Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal, 1824-1857: A Biographical Register*, vol. 1 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1981), 20–21.

¹⁵⁸ John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 2 August 1878, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/94, BodL.

¹⁵⁹ Leader, *The Natal Witness*, 23 July 1878.

¹⁶⁰ Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso, 1814-1883* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), ix–xii.

¹⁶¹ Quoted in Guy, *The Heretic*, 231.

Less information is available on Robert Lester. According to his own letters, he was a resident of a mid-sized town in the eastern Cape called Cradock, he had “been 35 years in practice as a barrister” as of 1881, and he was a “senior member of the Natal Bar.”¹⁶² But despite the dearth of biographical detail for Lester, he is valuable as a case study because he was so politically active: his name appears on several town meeting minutes and public petitions that provide insightful comparisons of how he performed imperial citizenship publicly versus in his private letters to the APS. Each correspondent had a different connection to imperial politics and a different conception of imperial sovereignty, and they expressed their ideas of imperial citizenship in relation to two historical moments: the passing of the Natal Native Administration Act in 1875, and the creation of British Bechuanaland in 1884-85.

These two moments, although very different, were both fundamentally about the role of imperial authority in colonial politics and the control of racialized Others. The Native Administration Act was a straightforward attempt by the imperial government to interfere in Natal’s native policy. In 1873, the Natal government abused legal ambiguities within its system of “native law” to punish the Hlubi chief Langalibalele for an exaggerated rebellion.¹⁶³ When the imperial government learned of this abuse of power, the Colonial Office dismissed Natal’s Lieutenant-Governor Benjamin Pine and ordered legal reforms to codify and normalize native law and remove it from the complete control of Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native

¹⁶² Robert Lester to Frederick Chesson, 27 July 1881, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C140/90, BodL; Robert Lester to Frederick Chesson, 10 May 1881, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C140/88, BodL.

¹⁶³ For historical coverage of the Langalibalele affair, see: Jeff Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal: African Autonomy and Settler Colonialism in the Making of Traditional Authority* (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013), 403–6; David Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal, 1845-1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 145–48; Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society and British Southern and West Africa,” 47–73; Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*, 238–40.

Affairs.¹⁶⁴ Settlers were outraged at Pine's recall, resentful that Natal was being punished for what they considered to be a necessary act of defence.¹⁶⁵ Yet their reaction to the Colonial Office's mandated reforms of native policy was somewhat welcoming, as settlers had long been resentful of Shepstone's refusal to allocate African land and outlaw Zulu polygamy.¹⁶⁶ But the imperial government's reforms were not successful. Shepstone had been given the task of drafting the reform bill, and when he submitted his Native Administration Bill to the Legislative Council it was roundly criticized for failing to change anything and actually reinforcing his previous monopoly of power. The bill was passed on 9 December 1875, enshrining Shepstone's control of native policy.¹⁶⁷ It was, essentially, a failed imperial intervention.

The creation of British Bechuanaland was not so much an imperial intervention in colonial politics as it was a negotiation between imperial and colonial governments. Bechuanaland – known today as Botswana - was a region to the north of the Cape Colony and the west of the Transvaal. Ruled before 1885 by Tswana chiefs, Bechuanaland was of little concern to the British world until Afrikaners from the Transvaal attacked the Tswana chiefs Mankoroane and Montsioa and claimed Bechuanaland for their own. This concerned the Cape government because it threatened to cut off access to trade routes into the African interior, but it also concerned the British government due to the geopolitical context of the Scramble for Africa. Germany had just claimed its first colony of German South West Africa in 1884, and the idea of

¹⁶⁴ Earl of Carnarvon to Benjamin Pine, 3 December 1874, in British House of Commons, *Further papers relating to the Kafir outbreak in Natal, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, February 1875* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1875), 86-95.

¹⁶⁵ Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, 442; Swaisland, "The Aborigines Protection Society and British Southern and West Africa," 66-67.

¹⁶⁶ Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, 442-51; Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation*, 152-57.

¹⁶⁷ Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, 446-50.

a German-Transvaal alliance surrounding the Cape and Natal motivated Britain to intervene. Britain and the Cape had a shared interest in annexing Bechuanaland, but they held competing visions for how annexation would unfold. Britain wanted Afrikaner land claims returned to the Tswana and for the Cape to ultimately assume responsibility for the region.¹⁶⁸ The Cape, on the other hand, only wanted to assume responsibility if it could dispose of Tswana land as it desired.¹⁶⁹ Initially, when Britain decided to get involved, it made intervention conditional on colonial collaboration: the Cape would need to supply local forces in addition to imperial troops.¹⁷⁰ The Cape government rejected Britain's assistance, declaring that the affairs in Bechuanaland were a Cape concern.¹⁷¹ Consequently, the Cape came to an arrangement with the Afrikaners that allowed them to keep their land in return for recognizing Cape authority. But such an arrangement was unacceptable to the British government, which decided to send in an imperial force to expel the Afrikaners and establish British Bechuanaland as a Crown Colony.¹⁷² Whereas the Natal Native Administration Act concerned control over African society, the founding of British Bechuanaland concerned the containment of Afrikaner expansion.

It is tempting to read into the Native Administration Act and the founding of British Bechuanaland a narrative of imperial versus settler sovereignty, a temptation that historians have typically succumbed to. In the case of the Native Administration Act, Charles Swaisland notes that an imperial intervention was attempted and defeated by a colonial legislative council, and so concludes that the passing of the Act "represented a significant experience on the road to self-

¹⁶⁸ Anthony Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 53; Deryck Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger: Liberal Government & Colonial 'Home Rule' 1880–85* (London: Routledge, 1969), 459–60.

¹⁶⁹ Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate*, 58; Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger*, 461–62.

¹⁷⁰ Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger*, 451.

¹⁷¹ Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger*, 453.

¹⁷² Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger*, 455–56; Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate*, 52–53.

government, for the Secretary of State was frustrated.”¹⁷³ But this is not quite accurate. The intentions of the Act were defeated in the Legislative Council, but they were defeated by the empire-nominated Secretary for Native Affairs against the wishes of the settler-elected Members of the Legislative Council. Another historian, James Heartfield, focuses his study on protests made against the Act by prominent Natal activists John and Harriette Colenso. He argues that by challenging the imperial government’s authority – in the guise of Theophilus Shepstone - over native affairs, John and Harriette Colenso supported the devolution of authority from the imperial administrators to colonists. “The Colensos’ intervention in the Langaliabele affair marked ‘the end of the monopoly that Shepstone has over the African voice in Natal and Zululand’...Colenso and his daughters were taking the colonial policy of self-government and pushing it forward.”¹⁷⁴ But this is not quite accurate either. Breaking Shepstone’s control over policy was in the settler’s interest, but the Act that was to break his control was itself an imperial intervention, and supporting the empire’s right to intervene in colonial politics can hardly be considered a move towards self-government. The Act, therefore, resists such narratives of empire versus colony. Settler desire for a more responsible government was in response to the irresponsibility of imperial agents like Shepstone, but their support for an imperial solution via the Act suggests an acceptance of a continued role of the empire in colonial politics.

In the case of Bechuanaland, historians Anthony Sillery and Deryck Schreuder construct an imperial versus settler sovereignty narrative in which Britain overrode the Cape government’s settlement against settler wishes. This is more or less accurate, but it takes for granted that the Cape government reflected colonial perspectives. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Cape

¹⁷³ Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society,” 66.

¹⁷⁴ Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*, 240.

government was divided between western colonists centred around Cape Town and eastern colonists in the eastern Cape. Western colonists, distanced as they were from the dangers of frontier violence and focused more on urban trade than rural farming, were considered by easterners to be unfit to dictate policy for the east, and yet the eastern provinces were routinely underrepresented in Cape politics. In response, an eastern separatist movement was active from the 1820s through to the 1900s.¹⁷⁵ Eastern anxieties about political representation were particularly high in the 1880s due to the rise of the Afrikaner Bond, a political party formed in 1881 that came to dominate the Cape parliament for more than a decade, created by Afrikaners who felt marginalized in Cape politics.¹⁷⁶ The Bond's grip on parliament made easterners extremely anxious that their voices and interests were not represented in the colonial government, and this was very much true in the case of the Bechuanaland debate. Little historical attention has been directed to eastern opinions on Bechuanaland, but as I will demonstrate, eastern Cape settlers were absolutely against getting involved in Bechuanaland and grew deeply concerned that westerners were rejecting imperial assistance. For easterners, a narrative of empire versus colony would not have made sense. They saw the annexation of Bechuanaland by imperial forces into a Crown Colony as the means of saving their access to northern trade routes without involving Cape resources, and the Cape parliament was jeopardizing their interests by trying to arrange a settlement independently from the empire.

¹⁷⁵ T. R. H. Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, ed. T. R. H. Davenport and Christopher Saunders (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000), 106; Thompson, "The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa," 623–25; Basil A. Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism 1820-1854* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981).

¹⁷⁶ Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 107–11; See also T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

Correspondence between the APS and John Akerman, John Colenso, and Robert Lester shows that the debate over the Native Administration Act and the formation of British Bechuanaland were not understood at the time in terms of imperial versus colonial sovereignty. Rather, these settlers articulated an entangled connection between empire and colony which suggests a complementarity of both contrary to the notion of inherently contradictory nested sovereignties. Consequently, I use the following case studies to assess the ways that imperial citizenship was utilized in reference to the Natal Native Administration Act and the formation of British Bechuanaland as a means of bridging imperial and settler sovereignties.

The Natal Native Administration Act

When the Natal Native Administration Act of 1875 was passed in a form that neither reformed native law nor reduced the power of Secretary for Native Affairs Theophilus Shepstone, two opponents of the Bill - John Colenso and John Akerman - wrote to the APS for political support. Despite their differences highlighted above, both Akerman and Colenso became united in their opposition to the Native Administration Bill and, when Shepstone managed to get it passed with his powers unchecked, they both applied to imperial authority in their letters to the APS as a strategy to undermine the Act. Their letters consist of two main elements: their critique of the Act, and their plan for what the imperial government could do to address their critique. They both critiqued the Act for the same reason: that it made Shepstone too powerful. Akerman wrote that the Act “did no more than make the Secretary for Native Affairs both lawgiver, lawmaker and judge; and retained that most objectionable mixing up of the political with the judicial elements.”¹⁷⁷ Colenso similarly wrote that the Act “simply

¹⁷⁷ John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 18 December 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/69, BodL.

perpetuates and intensifies Mr Shepstone's power...He administers the law...and he will execute the law."¹⁷⁸

As for how the imperial government could help, Akerman hoped that the Secretary of State for the Colonies could be convinced to remove the amendments that Shepstone had made to the Act, and he believed the APS could get that done for him. When he first broached the subject with the APS, Akerman was not overly forceful and framed his strategy as a simple favour.

I shall esteem it a favour if you will bring the principles of the first session measure especially to the notice of your influential parliamentary directors, so that they may prevail on the Secretary of State to remit it back to the colony for restoration to the form in which it was brought up by the select committee.¹⁷⁹

He became more assertive in his subsequent letters, providing the APS with the specific questions he wanted to be raised in parliament by William McArthur, MP for Lambeth and committee member of the APS. The first question he wanted to be raised was intended to prove that the Colonial Office did not properly understand the implications of the Act because it was relying on information from Shepstone himself.

Let an M.P. first obtain an official reply as to what was the date of receipt by the colonial office of copies of the votes and proceedings of the Natal legislative council for 1875. Should it be found, as I suspect is the truth, that this receipt was long posterior to Lord Carnarvon's reply to you on my opinions, then it follows that the pretended research into these matters was not made in England at all as the reply, I understand, imparts; but is but the endorsement of a report made from the colony and necessarily of a partisan character.¹⁸⁰

This question requires some unpacking. When Akerman had originally asked the APS the 'favour' of getting the Act remitted, the APS forwarded his letter to the Secretary of State

¹⁷⁸ John Colenso to Frederick Chesson, 3 August 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C131/86, BodL.

¹⁷⁹ Akerman to Chesson, 18 December 1875.

¹⁸⁰ John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 25 September 1876, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/70, BodL.

for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon. Carnarvon replied that he had analyzed the debate over the Act in Natal's Legislative Council and decided that Akerman's concerns about the Act were unfounded and that he would not remit it.¹⁸¹ Akerman believed that Carnarvon had not seen the actual Votes and Proceedings of the debate but only a report of the debate "of a partisan character," that is, written by Shepstone. By raising this question, Akerman hoped to convince the House of Commons to read the actual debate and reconsider remitting the Act. But McArthur was unwilling to ask such a question. Akerman was able to meet with McArthur personally when in London in 1877 and found McArthur hesitant to call for imperial intervention in Natal's native affairs when Shepstone insisted that meddling in native affairs could result in rebellion.¹⁸² McArthur's hesitation frustrated Akerman, "as if England's mission in the world were to build up a wrong and never reform for fear of consequences!!"¹⁸³

Akerman adapted to McArthur's hesitation and offered him two more parliamentary questions that focused on revealing the immorality of the Act's failure to reform native law without explicitly calling for imperial intervention. One question focused on the immorality of effectively legalizing polygamy.

Mr. McArthur M.P. to ask Mr. Lowther, whether it is true that a bill introduced into the newly constituted legislative council of Natal by the Secretary for Native Affairs and passed by the council and which enacts that the 'customs and usages' of the natives shall be administered in the courts of law in that colony, has received the assent of the Crown. And whether HM government is aware that

¹⁸¹ Colonial Office minutes, "Delay of Local Authorities in Carrying out the New Native Policy Authorised by Sec of State," 4 November 1875, CO 179-119 no. 12171, The National Archives, Kew (TNA).

¹⁸² For instance, Shepstone had said in 1864 that native law was a system "which only time can abrogate, because both men and women would equally oppose any violent attempt to destroy it." Quoted in Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation*, 71–72.

¹⁸³ John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 7 March 1877, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/82, BodL.

within this term ‘customs and usages’ is included woman purchase and sale under and in the guise of marriage, that cattle unpaid for her at marriage can be recovered as a common debt in courts of law presided over by paid British magistrates and that polygamy is also freely practised by law. Is HM government aware that such Bill contains no provision to relieve natives when becoming Christians from native law; does not recognize a marriage between natives even when performed by a clergyman as legal, and that the paid official staff of the colony prevented those necessary provisions from being inserted in the bill?¹⁸⁴

The other question emphasized the immorality of failing to “civilize” Africans within British territory.

Is not the ratification by special statute of the ‘customs and usages’ of the natives at this late period in the government of Natal a departure from the original intention which was the elevation of the native races and but a temporary toleration of their objectional practices.¹⁸⁵

These references to “woman purchase” and “polygamy” relate to Zulu practices of *isithembu* (polygenous marriage) and *ilobolo* (the offering of cattle from a groom to a bride’s family), which became prominent focal points in the 1850s-1870s for Natal settlers to criticize Zulu inferiority and justify interference in Zulu society.¹⁸⁶

As an imperial subject but not a British citizen,¹⁸⁷ Akerman was not entitled to raise these questions in the House of Commons. He could not vote for British Members of Parliament, and McArthur was not his parliamentary representative. And Akerman clearly did not care. He acted *as if* he had a right to representation in the House of Commons, and thereby manifested what Engin Isin calls “enacted citizenship,”¹⁸⁸ similar to how Sukanya Banerjee has shown Indians

¹⁸⁴ Akerman to Chesson, 7 March 1877.

¹⁸⁵ John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 7 March 1877, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/81, BodL.

¹⁸⁶ T.J. Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal: Indigeneity and the Violence of Belonging in Southern Africa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 15–52.

¹⁸⁷ British citizenship in 1877 being limited to men over the age of 21 who owned property or paid rents of at least £10 per year.

¹⁸⁸ Engin Isin, *Citizens without Frontiers* (New York: Continuum International PubGroup, 2012), 108–46.

claimed political rights as imperial citizens in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Approaching Akerman's attempts to raise questions in the British House of Commons as a performance of imperial citizenship sheds light on Akerman's perception of the metropole-colony relationship. Akerman did not consider the imperial metropole to be spatially external from his colonial context, even though they were geographically distant. Rather, Akerman was personally debating in his colonial parliament and – by proxy of the APS – debating in the imperial parliament *at the same time*, collapsing the apparent separation of metropole and colony into one singular imperial space. Beyond the performance itself, the motivation behind Akerman's movement between imperial and colonial jurisdictions also reveals his perception of imperial and settler sovereignties. By raising questions in the British House of Commons to support settler responsibility for native policy, Akerman weaved together imperial and colonial sovereignty and made them co-dependent and co-productive. Sukanya Banerjee notes in the case of late nineteenth-century Indian anticolonialism that removing the British from India was not within the conceptual horizon of the time.¹⁸⁹ The same argument can be applied to Akerman's concept of self-government: he apparently could not conceive of a world outside of British sovereignty. To him, self-government was not a rejection of British sovereignty, but a development of British sovereignty that would give more credence to settler knowledge and perspectives.

Ultimately, Akerman's strategy of appealing to imperial authority was unsuccessful. Upon receiving Akerman's letters, the APS did proceed to lobby the government on Akerman's behalf. The APS's first response was to forward Akerman's complaints – anonymously - to the Colonial Office, but the Colonial Office dismissed them. Regarding the complaint that the

¹⁸⁹ Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens*, 26.

Secretary for Native Affairs should not hold judicial and executive powers simultaneously, the Colonial Office countered that such an arrangement was desirable as a way of maintaining continuity between old and new native policies, and because only the Secretary for Native Affairs had the required knowledge of native law to effectively adjudicate.¹⁹⁰ The APS did then raise questions in the House of Commons with the help of William McArthur. First, on 23 April 1877, McArthur asked the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies whether he was aware that the Native Administration Act failed to reform Natal's native law and thereby essentially legalized polygamy, and the Undersecretary replied that he could not go into the requisite detail and that the question was better if put to the House as a motion.¹⁹¹ McArthur obliged. Raising a motion in the next session of parliament "that this House strongly condemns the policy of the Local Government in Natal" in failing to reform native law, he recommended "the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the subject."¹⁹² But the Secretary of State for the Colonies challenged the motion. He responded, "we cannot accept this as a fair statement of the facts of the case. No doubt, native law is recognized by the British courts in Natal; but it must be remembered that over a large portion of our Indian empire laws are recognized of the precise character of those which are deprecated in the Motion."¹⁹³ McArthur conceded the point and

¹⁹⁰ Aborigines' Protection Society, "Native Law in Natal," *The Aborigines' Friend*, 1 August 1876.

¹⁹¹ "Native Customs and Colonial Legislation - Question," 23 April 1877, UK House of Commons, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1877-04-23/debates/d639fd81-b890-4475-a951-6d77088a885a/NativeCustomsAndColonialLegislation%E2%80%9494Question?highlight=%22natural%22%20%22native%20law%22#contribution-b7ae7bb0-d498-4f8e-9e0e-22307e837ec5>.

¹⁹² "Colony of Natal - Administration of Native Affairs," 26 July 1878, UK House of Commons, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1878/jul/26/resolution>.

¹⁹³ "Colony of Natal - Administration of Native Affairs," 26 July 1878.

withdrew his motion, and that was the last mention of the Native Administration Act in the House of Commons.

Akerman's attempt to amend the Act by appealing to the imperial government did not work, yet it is striking that his strategy of gaining representation in the House of Commons through the APS *did*. That the APS brought his case to the House of Commons demonstrates that, not only did Akerman perceive the APS to be a link between two very entangled and concomitant metropolitan and colonial spaces, but that this perception reflected reality. This is rendered even more significant in light of Akerman's earlier attempts to participate in imperial politics from Natal. Akerman had twice before called for imperial intervention, once in 1870 and again in 1873, both times seeking to use imperial sovereignty to override political decisions made by the local government, and both times sent in the form of letters directly to the Colonial Office.¹⁹⁴ The Colonial Office dismissed the first letter out of hand because it had not been sanctioned by the Lieutenant Governor of Natal,¹⁹⁵ and the second letter was largely ignored.¹⁹⁶ We can therefore observe that moving between the Colonial Office's and the APS's imperial networks was not just a way of performing imperial citizenship, but more specifically was a strategy of utilizing alternative overlapping networks (i.e. what I term network fluidity) as a means of circumventing barriers to imperial citizenship.

John Akerman and John Colenso may have critiqued the Native Administration Act for the same reasons (namely, that it did nothing but reinforce Shepstone's power), but their visions

¹⁹⁴ John William Akerman to Earl of Kimberley, 17 September 1870, CO 179-100 no. 12169, TNA; John William Akerman to Earl of Kimberley, 28 November 1873, CO 179-113 no. 12879, TNA.

¹⁹⁵ Colonial Office minutes, "Minute Paper," 18 November 1870, CO 179-100 no. 12169, TNA.

¹⁹⁶ Colonial Office minutes, "Mr Shepstone's Mission to Zulu, on Occasion of Cetewayo's Assumption of Chieftainship," 28 November 1873, CO 179-113 no. 12879, TNA.

for how imperial authority could rectify the situation were very different. Colenso did not expect the imperial government to amend the Act. Instead, he sought to make the best of a bad situation by ensuring that the Act was enforced in the best way possible. He sought to do this in two ways. First, believing that Shepstone's power over native law would be derived from his control of the Native High Court, Colenso asked the APS to get himself placed on the appellate board of that court so that he could balance Shepstone's influence. The problem Colenso faced was that he was not qualified to sit on the appellate board, which was to consist of three members of the executive council, a judge of the High Court, and three Justices of the Peace.¹⁹⁷ Being none of these, Colenso turned to the APS to convince the Secretary of State for the Colonies to order the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal first make Colenso a Justice of the Peace, and then to nominate him to the appellate board of the High Court. Colenso believed that if he was on the appellate board, he would be able to balance Shepstone's power and by so doing "white and black would be satisfied."¹⁹⁸ Colenso believed that the APS could make this happen by having a Member of Parliament bring the matter before the House of Commons, and so he asked the APS, "can you not manage this through Mr. Forster or some other MP having influence in Downing Street?"¹⁹⁹ There is no documentary evidence of the APS acting upon Colenso's request. They very well may have done this in a private letter or a personal interview, but Colenso was never made a Justice of the Peace nor nominated to the board of the Native High Court.

Regardless, Colenso had a backup plan. If he could not be on the appellate board, then at least the Native High Court needed to be composed of the right sort of people. Believing that the

¹⁹⁷ John Colenso to Frederick Chesson, 11 December 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C131/91-92, BodL.

¹⁹⁸ Colenso to Chesson, 13 December 1875, in Colenso to Chesson, 11 December 1875.

¹⁹⁹ Colenso to Chesson, 13 December 1875, in Colenso to Chesson, 11 December 1875.

judges of the Court needed to be independent thinkers who would not simply do whatever Shepstone told them to do, Colenso asked the APS to ensure that a strong-willed man from Britain was sent down to act as head of the Court. “Unless a judge for the High Court is sent from England the primary sentence in the High Court will be given, in any case of alleged political offence, by a nominee of Mr. Shepstone.”²⁰⁰ Colenso specifically recommended his friend Arthur Haliburton, “an independent and able man who would not be long in the lead-strings,”²⁰¹ but he ultimately left the issue in the hands of the APS: “I can only throw out these suggestions, which I hope you may be able to turn to account.”²⁰² This plan too failed to come to fruition, and an independent judge was not sent down. Colenso lamented in a later letter that a local politician John Ayliff was appointed as head of the Court,²⁰³ “a mild, amiable man, who will just do as he is directed.”²⁰⁴

Colenso’s appeals to imperial authority were considerably different from Akerman’s and are indicative of a different experience of imperial citizenship. Colenso was not trying to assert his voice in the House of Commons or participate in the development of imperial policy. He was simply trying to leverage the power that he believed the imperial government held over the appointment of judges and Justices of the Peace in the colonies. This is not a performance of imperial citizenship in the sense that he was demanding a right to representation in the imperial parliament. However, the basic premise of his requests, the premise that it was the job of “Mr. Forster or some other MP having influence in Downing Street” to represent his interests to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, is indicative of Colenso’s perception of himself as an

²⁰⁰ John Colenso to Frederick Chesson, 14 January 1876, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C131/93, BodL.

²⁰¹ Colenso to Chesson, 13 December 1875, in Colenso to Chesson, December 11, 1875.

²⁰² Colenso to Chesson, 13 December 1875, in Colenso to Chesson, December 11, 1875.

²⁰³ John Colenso to Frederick Chesson, 4 March 1877, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C131/104, BodL.

²⁰⁴ John Colenso to Frederick Chesson, 13 July 1876, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C131/100, BodL.

imperial citizen. William Forster, MP for Bradford, had no responsibility to Colenso or any other colonist. To conceive that personal issues like his own appointment as a Justice of the Peace were eligible for representation by William Forster, Colenso had to believe that he was owed political representation on grounds other than constituency or British citizenship. Colenso had to believe that his Britishness and colonial status came with a right to political representation in Britain, and in this way, his appeals to imperial authority through the APS were premised upon an assumed imperial citizenship.

As with Akerman, I argue that approaching Colenso's appeals to imperial authority through the lens of imperial citizenship is valuable because it helps us understand Colenso's vision of the metropole-colony relationship. Akerman's vision was quite typical: he saw the metropole as a check on colonial legislation. But Colenso saw the metropole as a check on something as mundane as the appointment of Justices of the Peace, a very local concern not under the purview of the Colonial Office. Colenso did not differentiate between what was a colonial issue and what was a metropolitan issue, to him they were the same. By appreciating how Colenso leveraged his assumed imperial citizenship rights within purely colonial matters, we gain insight into lived articulations of the entanglement of imperial and colonial subjectivities.

While Akerman and Colenso discursively invoked imperial citizenship *similarly* to how colonized peoples have been shown to have done, it is important to recognise that there are significant differences as well. For colonized peoples, claiming rights as imperial citizens was often a strategy in response to their political rights being denied. For instance, when John Tengo Jabavu and Mohandas Gandhi asserted that Africans and Indians, as British subjects, were entitled to vote in Cape Colony and Natal parliamentary elections, it was in the context of their

colonial governments undermining the African and Indian franchises through the Cape Parliamentary Registration Act of 1887 and Natal Franchise Law Amendment Act of 1894.²⁰⁵ When Kahkewāquonāby (Peter Jones) and Nahneebahweequa (Catherine Sutton) petitioned the imperial government in the early and mid-nineteenth century for their right, as British subjects, to own land in Upper Canada, it was in the context of the colonial government seizing their land and denying their right to reclaim it.²⁰⁶

In contrast, Akerman and Colenso enjoyed full political rights in Natal and took great advantage of them. As a member of the Natal Legislative Council, Akerman had every opportunity to protest the Native Administration Act as a colonial citizen before he turned to the imperial government. On 28 October 1875, seven weeks before his letter to the APS, Akerman gave a lengthy speech in the Council against the Act, making the same arguments that he made in his letter. Coverage of his speech in the *Natal Witness* reads:

If the bill provided that the Native High Court should be a subsidiary court, he [Akerman] would not oppose it; but it made it the Supreme Court of the colony, and the Secretary for Native Affairs would be supreme head of the colony... He [Shepstone] would be a perfect despot and invested with such power as no other person in any British colony.²⁰⁷

Akerman then sat on the Select Committee that was appointed to review the Act and, as he told the Legislative Council, “had done his utmost to make the best of the measure before him” by fighting to have the appellate authority moved from the Secretary of Native Affairs to a board of the Supreme Court.²⁰⁸ Colenso also exercised his substantial political voice within the colony before he turned to the imperial government. On two separate occasions in August 1875, Colenso

²⁰⁵ Mkhize, “‘To See Us As We See Ourselves,’” 428; Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens*, 75–115.

²⁰⁶ Morgan, *Travellers through Empire*, 59–64.

²⁰⁷ “Legislative Council,” *The Natal Witness*, 2 November 1875.

²⁰⁸ “Legislative Council,” *The Natal Witness*, 14 December 1875.

brought issues before the Natal government regarding the treatment of Langalibalele and the Hlubi. On the first occasion, Colenso reported to Special Commissioner for Natal Garnet Wolseley that the Hlubi, who had been persecuted by Natal during the so-called “rebellion,” were destitute and in need of assistance.²⁰⁹ Wolseley conducted the requisite inquiries and essentially concluded that Colenso was lying, telling the Secretary of State for the Colonies that “neither in this Colony, in the Orange Free State, nor in Natal, is there any destitution as was reported.”²¹⁰ On the second occasion, Colenso brought charges against Shepstone’s son, John Shepstone, for attempting to murder an African named Matyana after luring him to a meeting under false pretences in 1858.²¹¹ These charges were investigated by one Colonel Colley, who ruled in favour of John Shepstone despite acknowledging that all of the evidence supported Colenso.²¹² It is therefore clear that Akerman and Colenso appealed to imperial authority, not to make up for a lack of colonial citizenship, but to compound and fortify the political rights they already enjoyed. However, while Akerman and Colenso were not literally disenfranchised, they did both face political failures in the sense that the Act was not passed in the form they wanted. From that perspective, settler invocations of imperial citizenship can be located in the same context as those of colonized peoples, as far as political failure and political disenfranchisement can be construed as leading to a shared experience of “not getting what I want.” Yet the

²⁰⁹ Guy, *The Heretic*, 237.

²¹⁰ Garnet Wolseley to Earl of Carnarvon, 13 August 1875, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence relating to the colonies and states of South Africa: Natal, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, February 1876* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1876), 15.

²¹¹ George Colley to Henry Bulwer, 10 September 1875, in Henry Bulwer to Earl of Carnarvon, 13 September 1875, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence relating to the colonies and states of South Africa: Natal...February 1876*, 35.

²¹² George Colley to Henry Bulwer, 10 September 1875, in Bulwer to Earl of Carnarvon, 13 September 1875.

significant difference between “not getting what I want” and “not having the right to get what I want” is an important distinction. It suggests that the ways in which settlers colonized peoples moved between colonial and imperial jurisdictions cannot be treated as directly comparable and shared, but rather manifestations of the unequal balance of power inherent in settler colonialism.

Another significant difference between how settlers and colonized peoples moved between imperial and colonial jurisdictions is how publicly visible such movements were. For Jabavu, Gandhi, Kahkewāquonāby, and Nahneebahweequa, claiming rights as imperial citizens entailed publicly demanding recognition as British citizens in highly visible petitions, delegations, and even mass protests.²¹³ The opposite is true for Akerman and Colenso. Akerman explicitly demanded that the APS protect his identity and that his questions to parliament remain anonymous. Akerman marked his letters to the APS as “private,” and he remonstrated the APS when they did forward one of his letters to the Colonial Office without his permission. “I did not quite intend for my name to have appeared so conspicuously before Lord Carnarvon and am not sure that I have escaped persecution in consequence.”²¹⁴ Such persecution, he explained, was a consequence of his position as an elected MLC. “A public man in this mixed-class government is much in the position of a non-commissioned officer in the army. His position is never safe if he moves against the policy of fixed officials.”²¹⁵ Akerman’s concern was reinforced by local newspapers that castigated him for failing to act with the neutrality of a proper public official.

²¹³ Gandhi, for instance, sent a petition of over 10,000 signatures to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1894, and organized a mass strike of over 5,000 Indian labourers in 1913. See Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens*, 93–110; For Nahneebahweequa, her audience with Queen Victoria in 1860, her visit was broadcast in newspapers across Britain. See Morgan, *Travellers through Empire*, 89–92.

²¹⁴ John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 14 June 1876, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/71, BodL.

²¹⁵ Akerman to Chesson, 14 June 1876.

When the *Natal Witness* learned that Akerman had been in communication with the despised John Colenso, it ran an editorial stating: “as a private person, Mr. Akerman had a right to do whatever he pleases. But as a public person...his position, unless the report we have referred to can be explained or contradicted, is very seriously compromised.”²¹⁶ Akerman, therefore, felt that openly moving against Shepstone outside of the Legislative Council posed a risk to his position, and that acting through the APS provided a level of privacy and anonymity that openly petitioning did not.

Colenso did not explicitly ask that the APS maintain his anonymity, but the APS does appear to have understood that Colenso may not have wanted his protests against the Native Administration Act made public. In August 1875 the APS forwarded one of Colenso’s letters to the Colonial Office without his permission,²¹⁷ and the Colonial Office criticized Colenso for going above the head of Special Commissioner Wolseley.²¹⁸ The APS then replied that they were

anxious your Lordship should understand that the Bishop did not ask us to send these extracts to you, his letter having been written for our private information, and not for public use. No doubt the Bishop, for reasons which readily occur to us, has considered it inexpedient to make to Sir Garnet Wolseley a formal representation as to his views as to Langalibalele; and perhaps we may have committed an error in sending your Lordship an expression of opinion which possibly he might not have wished to become the subject of an official communication.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Leader, *The Natal Witness*, 23 July 1878.

²¹⁷ Aborigines’ Protection Society to Colonial Office, 12 August 1875, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence relating to the Colonies and States of South Africa: Natal...February 1876*, 1.

²¹⁸ Colonial Office to Aborigines’ Protection Society, 23 August 1875, Aborigines’ Protection Society to Colonial Office, 12 August 1875, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence relating to the Colonies and States of South Africa: Natal...February 1876*, 12.

²¹⁹ Aborigines’ Protection Society to Colonial Office, 24 August 1875, Aborigines’ Protection Society to Colonial Office, 12 August 1875, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence relating to the Colonies and States of South Africa: Natal...February 1876*, 14.

This exchange between the APS and the Colonial Office tells us two things. First, it shows that Colenso did not have a right to bring political grievances directly before the Colonial Office, but had to work through the local chain of command. Second, it shows that there were reasons why Colenso did not feel comfortable protesting the Act in public. The reasons seem to be too obvious to the APS to require explicating and so we can only make speculations as to what they were. A likely explanation is the fact that local administrators like Wolseley and Colley had deliberately shut down his attempts to help the Hlubi, along with Wolseley's unhidden contempt for Colenso as a person.²²⁰ Regardless, we can observe that both Akerman's and Colenso's appeals to imperial authority were much more private than those of Jabavu, Gandhi, Kahkewāquonāby, and Nahneebahweequa. This not only further substantiates my argument that discourses of imperial citizenship were invoked differently by settlers than by colonised peoples, but also points to a possible reason why settler imperial citizenship has been understudied. Without the visibility of petitions or delegations, these private appeals lay scattered and hidden in disparate epistolary archives such as that of the APS.

By emphasizing how Akerman and Colenso appealed to imperial authority, I challenge Charles Swaisland's, James Heartfield's, and Jeff Guy's representations of the Native Administration Act according to a narrative of colony versus empire. Colonial resistance against imperial intervention was certainly a major theme: Akerman and Colenso were both angry at the irresponsibility of the Secretary for Native Affairs to local public opinion and laboured to have Shepstone respond to local concerns. This is the sort of anger that Swaisland, Heartfield, and Guy point to as evidence of an imperial-colonial contest.²²¹ But by appealing to imperial

²²⁰ Guy, *The Heretic*, 237.

²²¹ Swaisland, "The Aborigines Protection Society," 66; Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society*, 239; Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, 442–51.

authority and seeking to oppose and undermine the Act through British MPs, Akerman and Colenso were working *through* imperial sovereignty rather than against it. They were not challenging the right of the imperial government to intervene in their affairs, they were asking for further intervention and thus were legitimizing and internalizing imperial sovereignty. The issue at the heart of the Native Administration Act was self-government, but for Akerman and Colenso the goal of self-government was to be achieved within a wider imperial sovereignty that could be appealed to when local politics failed to work out in their favour. This case study is therefore a good starting point to develop an understanding of how settlers articulated entangled conceptions of empire and colony, showing how two settlers in Natal envisioned themselves as simultaneously citizens of their colony as well as of the empire, and how writing to the APS was a means of laying claim to their perceived rights of imperial citizenship.

I chose to focus on the letters of Akerman and Colenso because they were the most prolific correspondents from Natal, but they were not the only ones who sought political representation through the APS. Alongside theirs are letters from settlers including teacher William Adams,²²² newspaper editor John Sanderson,²²³ and politician John Robinson,²²⁴ whose letters would not fit in this chapter but are nonetheless important indicators of how settlers negotiated the overlapping jurisdictions of colonial and imperial power. Even so, the case of the Native Administration Act in Natal is only one isolated moment and illustrates only one way in which correspondence with the APS encapsulated performed articulations of imperial and

²²² Adams et al. to Chesson, 18 December 1877.

²²³ John Sanderson to Frederick Chesson, 1 December 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C146/103, BodL.

²²⁴ John Robinson to Frederick Chesson, 7 March 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C145/251, BodL.

colonial citizenship. During the creation of British Bechuanaland in 1884-5, other articulations emerged.

The creation of British Bechuanaland

In September of 1884, when the Cape Colony government and the British government were debating whether Transvaal incursions in Bechuanaland should be dealt with by the Cape alone or by a joint imperial-colonial force, an eastern Cape settler named Robert Lester wrote to the Aborigines' Protection Society to have his say in the debate. The British government had offered to send imperial troops to oust the Transvaalers from Bechuanaland if the Cape agreed to also contribute colonial militia, but the Cape government opted to deal with Bechuanaland alone and sent Thomas Upington and Cecil Rhodes to make a deal with the Transvaalers. Lester's letters were written while the Cape was still considering its response, and he was deeply concerned about the possibility that imperial assistance would be rejected. As with the letters from Akerman and Colenso, Lester's letters consist of two elements: his critique of the Cape's plan to settle Bechuanaland alone, and his plan for how the imperial government could address his critique.

Lester believed that the Cape government was fundamentally incapable of settling affairs in Bechuanaland and therefore that any settlement required imperial assistance. He first argued that the incumbent Cape government would never move against the interests of the Transvaalers in Bechuanaland because it was too dependent on Afrikaner votes to remain in office. "The Cape Government when it comes to the point will render no assistance whatever. The Cape Boer votes, and support, upon which Mr. Scanlen alone depends, would be lost to him, and his dishonest, incapable ministry, if he did so and it is upon these votes they rely, to enable them to

retain office.²²⁵ He then argued that even if the Cape was willing to intervene, they lacked the resources to effectively administer the territory. “The colonists even if willing to annex ‘Stellaland’ [the portion of Bechuanaland claimed by the Transvaal] are quite unable unassisted to govern it, or protect the natives from the murderous attacks of the infamous Boers. We cannot even protect Englishmen from them still less the natives.”²²⁶ Given the Cape’s incapacity to settle affairs in Bechuanaland, Lester insisted that imperial intervention was the only option. “If any help is to come it must be from England.”²²⁷ By writing to the APS, Lester hoped that his perspective could be presented on his behalf to Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Derby and Prime Minister William Gladstone. “I would suggest that your Society...interview Mr Gladstone or Lord Derby etc. etc. by deputation.”²²⁸

By itself, Lester’s request that the APS impress upon Derby and Gladstone the importance of imperial intervention in Bechuanaland seems relatively insignificant, given the fact that the imperial government was already planning on sending a force to oust the Transvaalers from Bechuanaland. The significance of Lester’s request lies in the context of eastern Cape anxiety over representation in Cape politics. At a public meeting held in Cape Town on 24 September 1884 to discuss the imperial government’s offer to intervene in Bechuanaland with contributions from the Cape, western colonists agreed to a resolution that “the Colonial Government should render all the assistance in its power to Her Majesty’s Government.”²²⁹ When news of this meeting reached the eastern Cape, eastern colonists were

²²⁵ Robert Lester to Frederick Chesson, 8 March 1884, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C140/94-95, BodL.

²²⁶ Robert Lester to Frederick Chesson, 27 September 1884, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C140/100, BodL.

²²⁷ Robert Lester to Frederick Chesson, 14 August 1884, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C140/98, BodL.

²²⁸ Lester to Chesson, 14 August 1884.

²²⁹ P.J. Stigant to Hercules Robinson, 25 September 1884, in Hercules Robinson to Earl of Derby, 24 September 1884, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence respecting*

outraged. For several days afterwards, the eastern *Grahamstown Journal* castigated western colonists for pledging to assist an imperial intervention against the interests of easterners. “The resolution which pledged the Capetown meeting to assist the Imperial Government by all means in the power of the Colony, is of a highly imprudent character, and tends to show that the Capetown press and public have lost touch of the state of feeling throughout South Africa.”²³⁰

The problem with a joint imperial-colonial endeavour, according to the *Journal*, was that if Cape colonists were to intervene in Transvaal matters, it would sow conflict between the Cape and the Transvaal, whereas imperial interference would direct Transvaal anger towards the empire rather than the Cape. “If a man is misconducting himself in the streets, a policeman who wishes to apprehend him will hardly expect much aid from the offender’s brothers and cousins, and might by insisting on such aid raise up a much larger difficulty than at first existed.”²³¹ As such, the *Journal* insisted that “if force has to be used, it must be by the Imperial power,”²³² and that “the Colony should be kept out of all complications in Bechuanaland.”²³³ A public meeting held in Grahamstown supported the *Journal*’s view, resolving that it was “imprudent for the Colonial Government to interfere in these matters, either by annexation, or in any other way whatever.”²³⁴

the affairs of the Transvaal and adjacent territories, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, October 1884 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1884), 79-84.

²³⁰ Leader, *The Grahamstown Journal*, 27 September 1884.

²³¹ Leader, *The Grahamstown Journal*, 29 September 1884.

²³² Leader, *The Grahamstown Journal*, 29 September 1884.

²³³ Leader, *The Grahamstown Journal*, 27 September 1884.

²³⁴ J.J. Wood to Hercules Robinson, 30 September 1884, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of the Transvaal and adjacent territories, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, December 1884* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1884), 14.

This anxiety that western colonists were leading the Cape into conflict with the Transvaal was shared by Lester, who enclosed cuttings of the above *Grahamstown Journal* articles in his letters to the APS. His request to have the APS interview Gladstone and Derby on the Cape's incapacity to assist in Bechuanaland can therefore be understood as an attempt to bypass the overrepresentation of western interests in the Cape government and assert eastern political perspectives. Viewed from this perspective, Lester's appeal to the imperial government was an invocation of imperial citizenship very comparable to the invocations by Akerman and Colenso. Where Akerman and Colenso appealed to the imperial government when they experienced political defeat at the hands of a colonial official that was irresponsible to their interests, Lester appealed to the imperial government when he feared political marginalization at the hands of a Cape government that seemed to prioritize western Cape interests. Lester was not a British citizen and had no political right to representation before Gladstone and Derby, but he acted as if he did to supplement his rights as a colonial citizen (which he believed were being violated) with imagined rights as an imperial citizen. By attending to how Lester combined colonial and imperial citizenship to feel politically empowered, we can see that his perceived connection to the metropole was far more than the cultural connection of loyalism. Lester conceived of the metropole and the colony as very much in the same frame, articulating subjectivity between the two in response to regional conflicts between westerners and easterners over the Cape's political voice.

As for the effectiveness of appealing to imperial authority, it is difficult to arrive at any definitive conclusions. Lester's desired outcomes were certainly achieved since Bechuanaland did end up becoming a Crown Colony and not a district of the Cape, but there is no evidence to support a causal relationship between his letters and the outcome. A question was raised in the

House of Commons by John Gorst, MP, on 4 November 1884, which did raise the same concerns as Lester about the Cape's suitability and capacity for administering Bechuanaland.²³⁵ A similar comment was made by William Forster, MP, at a public meeting hosted by the APS on 25 June 1885.²³⁶ But while these comments align with Lester's letters, there is no evidence that they are necessarily connected. More importantly, it would be borderline laughable to suggest that the imperial government decided to make Bechuanaland a Crown Colony simply because the APS lobbied for that outcome, and not because the Cape Colony would only accept the administration of Bechuanaland if Britain footed the bill. Regardless, the importance of Lester's appeal to imperial authority is not that it was effective, but that it demonstrates the ease with which he reconciled the on-going existence of imperial sovereignty as complementary to the growing sovereignty of the Cape, and reveals how settlers strategically moved between imperial and colonial jurisdictions.

Just as with Akerman and Colenso in Natal, the way that Lester appealed to imperial authority was similar to how colonized peoples discursively invoked imperial citizenship only as far as the former's perceived political marginalization can be equated with the latter's literal disenfranchisement. Both invoked imperial citizenship in response to feelings of disempowerment, but one was clearly in a more privileged position.

Lester's letters also share Akerman's and Colenso's concerns with privacy. Lester feared that Cape Boers would seek revenge against him for speaking out against Boer interests, whether in Bechuanaland or elsewhere. At the very least, he feared that the Boers would destroy his legal

²³⁵ HC Deb 4th November 1884, 293, col. 959-88. [Online] [Accessed 15 March 2021] <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1884/nov/04/amendment-mr-gorst-south-africa>

²³⁶ "A South African Breakfast," *The Aborigines' Friend*, 1 November 1885, sec. 229, 4, Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.

practice. “I shall lose my practise if the Boers here know I am exposing the crimes of their relatives in the Transvaal and Stellaland.”²³⁷ At the very worst, he feared that he “shall be murdered by these wretches who being liars themselves cannot bear to hear the truth spoken or written of them and their secret society ‘the Africander Bond’ would soon tell all the Boers to do me to death.”²³⁸ Lester’s fear of death extended also to his son, who worked in the Transvaal gold mines. “They would be quite capable of murdering him in cold blood out of revenge for my having written you this letter, every word of which is nevertheless true.”²³⁹ Because of his paranoia, Lester repeatedly instructed the APS to “please keep my name out of print.”²⁴⁰ That Lester displayed so much concern about privacy when appealing to imperial authority shows that anonymity was not just an isolated quirk of Akerman and Colenso in Natal. Their shared concern about privacy suggests that writing to the APS or appealing to imperial authorities in general was socially frowned upon, and highlights that Lester, Akerman, and Colenso cannot be taken as representative of widespread settler sensibilities. Yet the fact that there were so many settlers writing to the APS besides these three, many of whom expressed the same privacy concerns, also affords the possibility that feelings of imperial citizenship were more widespread than people believed but were suppressed due to notions of taboo. Surveying the prevalence of imperial/humanitarian identities in South Africa is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is an interesting direction to build upon this research.

Nevertheless, there is one more level of complexity in this case, for while Lester certainly was concerned about his political opinions becoming public, he did not write to the APS *instead*

²³⁷ Lester to Chesson, 8 March 1884.

²³⁸ Lester to Chesson, 14 August 1884.

²³⁹ Lester to Chesson, 8 March 1884.

²⁴⁰ Lester to Chesson, 8 March 1884.

of publicly petitioning the imperial government. Rather, Lester both petitioned *and* wrote to the APS. Between September 1884 and June 1885, a deluge of seventy-two mass petitions from all corners of the Cape Colony fell upon the desk of Governor Hercules Robinson, all calling for imperial intervention in Bechuanaland. Forty-seven towns in total sent petitions, one of which, from Cradock, bears the signature of Robert Lester. This petition carries the same general message as Lester's letter to the APS, requesting that the imperial government intervene in Bechuanaland. However, the petition carries none of the nuanced critical detail that appears in Lester's letter to the APS. There is nothing about the Cape government being too dependent on Afrikaner votes, and nothing about the Cape being incapable of effectively administering Bechuanaland. The petition simply implores the queen "to graciously consider this their petition, and by maintaining the said Convention [of London, 1884], save this land from the disasters which must inevitably ensue if a breach of its provisions be tolerated."²⁴¹ Lester's fear of Afrikaner reprisal suggests one reason why he kept his political views out of the petition. He was terrified that Boers in his community would take vengeance on him for opposing the Transvaal, and the petition he attached his name to was signed by 171 members of the Cradock community.²⁴² Anything written in such a petition would be common knowledge in the petitioners' town. Moreover, this petition was forwarded to the imperial government through the colonial government, a process which not only entailed the local community observing the petitioners' critiques, but also entailed copies of the petitions being recorded in publicly available bluebooks. This publicity would have made it very unappealing for Lester to express any views

²⁴¹ Petition of the undersigned loyal subjects of Your Majesty, Colonists of the Cape of Good Hope, residing at Cradock, 30 September 1884, in Hercules Robinson to Earl of Derby, 30 September 1884, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of the Transvaal and adjacent territories... October 1884*, 84.

²⁴² Robinson to Earl of Derby, 30 September 1884.

that may have been controversial and shines light onto why privacy was so important for him and other settlers appealing to imperial authority in politically divided communities.

However, the reason for the discrepancy between Lester's letter and the Cradock petition is unlikely solely one of publicity. The *Grahamstown Journal* was very publicly vocal about why the Cape should not get involved in Bechuanaland, and a public meeting held in Grahamstown affirmed the *Journal's* views.²⁴³ Yet Grahamstown, like Cradock, also sent a petition to Queen Victoria, and their petition lacked critical detail in the exact same manner as the Cradock petition.²⁴⁴ Clearly, the people of Grahamstown were not afraid of criticizing western colonists in public and so there must have been an understood difference between what one could say in a petition and what one could say in a newspaper or a private letter. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine settler attitudes towards petitioning, a subject that I suggest requires further examination. The crucial point is that petitioning did not satisfy Lester's need for political engagement and that he therefore combined petitioning with writing to the APS to lay claim to his perceived right to political representation in Britain.

The fact that Lester appealed to imperial authority publicly via petition and privately via the APS is not particularly noteworthy. As I have written elsewhere, colonised peoples such as Mqikela in Pondoland, Samuel Moroka in Thaba Nchu, and John Tengo Jabavu and Shadrach

²⁴³ Wood to Robinson, 30 September 1884.

²⁴⁴ "The Petition of the undersigned Loyal Subjects of Your Majesty, and Colonists of the Cape of Good Hope," in Hercules Robinson to Earl of Derby, 15 October 1884, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of the Transvaal and adjacent territories, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. February 1885* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1885), 1.

Boyce Mama in the Cape also did this.²⁴⁵ Mankoroane himself did this in 1886.²⁴⁶ What is noteworthy is the discrepancy between Lester's letter and the petitions from Cradock and Grahamstown, the fact that one contains critiques of the Cape while the others do not, which is not the case in the letters/petitions of Mqikela, Moroka, Jabavu, and Mankoroane. This discrepancy does more than support my argument that settler appeals to imperial authority were marked by privacy concerns and therefore may have been unnoticed until now because of a lack of public petitions. This discrepancy also calls into question the usefulness of settler petitions as historical sources. Several historians have recently argued for the usefulness of petitions as historical sources, particularly emphasizing that they were more open and inclusive than voting and so have the potential to reveal a wider breadth of perspectives and political opinions.²⁴⁷ My previous research into African letters/petitions supports such claims with regard to Africans. However, the discrepancy between Lester's letter and petition, and the greater context of settler concerns about privacy when appealing to imperial authority, suggests that settler petitions may hide more than they reveal and that historians should treat them with heightened caution.

By showing how Lester opposed western colonists' support for Cape involvement in Bechuanaland by appealing to imperial authority and seeking political representation in Britain, I

²⁴⁵ Reid, "Shadrach Boyce Mama and the 'Kaffir Depot'"; Reid, "The Aborigines' Protection Society as an Anti-Colonial Network," Reid, "The Aborigines' Protection Society as an Imperial Knowledge Network."

²⁴⁶ Mankoroane to High Commissioner, 25 January 1886, in Hercules Robinson to Earl of Granville, 31 March 1886, in *Further correspondence respecting the affairs of the Transvaal and adjacent territories, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, June 1886* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1886), 65; Mankoroane to Robert Fowler, 25 January 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C142/22, BodL.

²⁴⁷ See Christopher, "South African Petitions to the House of Commons"; Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller, "Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture: Petitioning the House of Commons, 1780–1918*," *Past & Present* 248, no. 1 (2020): 123–64, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtz061>; Niamh Corbett, "Parliamentary Petitions: An Untapped Library Resource," *The Australian Library Journal* 60, no. 3 (2011): 218–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049670.2011.10722618>.

challenge Anthony Sillery's and Deryck Schreuder's representations of the creation of British Bechuanaland as a contest between settler autonomy and imperial authority. As Sillery and Schreuder show, the imperial government *did* overturn the Cape government's desire to settle Bechuanaland affairs internally. However, the Cape government did not represent a monolithic settler perspective. As I have shown, settlers in the eastern Cape were fervently against Cape involvement, while westerners were strongly in favour of it. For westerners, a narrative of empire versus colony would have made sense. But for easterners like Lester, an intracolonial narrative would have been much more relatable, with the empire representing an ally rather than an opponent. In the nationally-bounded model of empire that Sillery and Schreuder operated within in the 1950s and 1960s, such a variegated imperial terrain is difficult to imagine. By working within a webbed model of empire, however, it is much easier to see that there was not one empire-colony connection but many. By attending to Lester's letters to the APS, we can see that the APS formed one such strand of the imperial web, connecting the eastern Cape to the metropole and facilitating articulations of entangled imperial-colonial political subjectivities far more complicated than cultural loyalism can account for. Importantly, Lester was not the only settler who wrote to the APS about Bechuanaland: alongside him was Andrew Anderson, William King, Bryan Knights, Harold Stephens, Paul Berthoud, Sidney Cuthbert, William Brannan, and others whom I did not have room to include here. These settlers claimed a right to be represented in imperial politics, thereby acting like imperial citizens as a strategy to political barriers in the Cape and demonstrating that imperial authority was not antithetical or incompatible with their experience as settlers. On the contrary, imperial authority was perceived as a fallback option when colonial authority failed them.

Conclusion

In their letters to the APS, John Akerman, John Colenso, and Robert Lester did not simply supply information that the APS could use as it willed, nor were they merely complaining about local events to an abstract sympathetic society. For these settlers, writing to the APS was a strategy to intervene in imperial politics and have their political perspectives represented in Britain. Their need to feel represented in imperial politics arose from specific experiences of perceived disenfranchisement in the colonies. In Natal, the empire-nominated executive – particularly the Secretary for Native Affairs Theophilus Shepstone – blocked settler demands for reform and fuelled demand for self-government. Yet demand for self-government was not in direct opposition to a continued desire for imperial sovereignty. On the contrary, Akerman’s and Colenso’s strategy of appealing to the British House of Commons through the APS reveals an overlapping and concomitant political subjectivity to both imperial and colonial jurisdictions. In the Cape Colony, the colonial government was perceived by eastern Cape settlers as unrepresentative and irresponsible to their political viewpoints. Far from challenging imperial sovereignty, Robert Lester and his fellow petitioners from Cradock and Grahamstown welcomed imperial intervention and appealed to imperial authority as a means of counter-balancing the power of western colonists over regional politics. The entangled subjectivities displayed by Natal and eastern Cape settlers are reminiscent of the imperial citizenship displayed by colonized peoples throughout the empire. By acting like imperial citizens and demanding a right to political representation in Britain in moments when they felt disenfranchised locally, these correspondents illustrate one way that imperial historians can actualize Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler’s famous proposition to “treat metropole and colony in a single analytic field.”²⁴⁸ Their

²⁴⁸ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4.

performances of imperial citizenship in response to perceived colonial disenfranchisement show that they not only considered their status as colonists to give them political rights in the metropole, but also that they believed imperial authority to be constitutive of their political rights in the colony.

Indeed, perpetuating narratives of colony versus empire may hide the extent to which the power of settler colonialism was contingent upon settler beliefs that they could fall back upon imperial authority in times of need. In their 1975 monograph, Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin propose what they believe could be an alternative mode of conceptualizing British imperial power apart from military and economic strength. They argue that imperial power may have resided in the false confidence settlers had that they would be supported by imperial power.²⁴⁹ A similar concept is forwarded by John Weaver, who argues that settler conceptions of their right to take Indigenous land were based on their belief that the Crown held ultimate sovereignty over the land and would, or at least theoretically could, retroactively recognize land claims.²⁵⁰ This concept - that settler actions were contingent upon a (perhaps erroneous) presumption that an imperial authority “had their back” - can be applied to explain how Akerman, Colenso, and Lester could have perceived themselves as imperial citizens in the midst of demands for self-government.

To some extent, Akerman’s, Colenso’s, and Lester’s appeals to British authorities could also be explained through the historical traditions of British loyalism in Natal and the eastern Cape. The populations of Natal and the eastern Cape were both built upon British emigration

²⁴⁹ Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin, *Reappraisals in British Imperial History* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 5.

²⁵⁰ John Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 140.

schemes – the famous “1820 settlers” were placed in the eastern Cape to secure the frontier, and the “Byrne settlers” were brought to Natal between 1849-51 by the J.C. Byrne & Co. emigration company.²⁵¹ Natal and the eastern Cape were also more historically reliant on imperial defence. In Natal, where an African population outnumbered whites by around fifteen to one in the 1870s, settler insecurity and desire to maintain control depended upon imperial military support.²⁵² In the eastern Cape, a century of frontier warfare with African nations also rendered settlers more insecure and anxious for imperial defence than those living in Cape Town.²⁵³ Being dependant on the British government continuing to fund their defences, and on a British public continuing to sanction that expense, Natal and eastern Cape settlers had a vested interest in maintaining the appearance of their loyalty and Britishness and were in this way more connected to empire than other groups in South Africa.²⁵⁴ These traditions of loyalism help contextualize why Natal and eastern Cape settlers did not respond to the Native Administration Act and the creation of British Bechuanaland solely as colonists, but as colonists who considered themselves deeply connected to the empire.

²⁵¹ Thompson, “Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa,” 623.

²⁵² An imperial garrison was stationed in Pietermaritzburg, and while a colonial militia did develop over time, up until responsible government in 1893 the imperial garrison was greatly superior and the main assurance of security in Natal. Paul Thompson, “The Natal Militia: Defence of the Colony, 1893–1910,” *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 29, no. 1 (2011): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02590123.2011.11964164>.

²⁵³ For overviews of the Cape frontier wars, see: Martin Legassick and Robert Ross, “From Slave Economy to Settler Capitalism: The Cape Colony and Its Extensions, 1800–1854,” in *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885*, ed. Bernard K. Mbenga, Carolyn Hamilton, and Robert Ross, vol. 1, Cambridge History of South Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 253–318; Norman Etherington, Patrick Harries, and Bernard Mbenga, “From Colonial Hegemonies to Imperial Conquest, 1840–1880,” in *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885*, ed. Bernard K. Mbenga, Carolyn Hamilton, and Robert Ross, vol. 1, Cambridge History of South Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 319–91.

²⁵⁴ Thompson, “The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa,” 623.

Yet loyalism, as it has been developed as a historiographical concept, does not explain the letters that settlers wrote to the APS appealing for legal assistance from the imperial government, because historians have adapted loyalism to the apparent separation of imperial and colonial sovereignties of the settler transition by bifurcating settler identity into a dichotomy of a rejected legal subjecthood and an adopted cultural identity. Given that law is an element of culture, I admit that there can be no strict distinction between legal subjecthood and cultural identity. For instance, Charles Reed argues that for many settlers throughout the empire, a cultural identification as British came attached with certain expectations about legal rights and freedoms. Reed demonstrates that when Prince Alfred visited New Zealand in 1869 and shops were not closed to allow workers to attend the ceremonies, the workers invoked “the rights and responsibilities of British citizenship” to participate in civic culture.²⁵⁵ Reed also points to eastern Cape settler invocations of the British right to protest when advocating secession.²⁵⁶ Such examples indicate that loyalism did come with certain beliefs about legality and legal rights. However, there is a difference between replicating British legal culture in the colonies and remaining subject to British legal jurisdiction, and these examples fall within the former category. Such a concept of loyalism may explain why settlers believed themselves to have certain rights, but it fails to account for the worldview of settlers who sought the protection of such rights by the British government when so much trouble had been made to create replica governments in the colonies. Thus, the cultural loyalism of Natal and the eastern Cape does little to explain the entangled perceptions of imperial and colonial politics that manifested in settler

²⁵⁵ Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 89.

²⁵⁶ Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 97.

letters to the APS, and this chapter insists that settler imperial citizenship encompassed legal as well as cultural subjecthood far longer into the settler transition than has been realized.

It is important to acknowledge the role that imperial citizenship played in Akerman's, Colenso's, and Lester's relationality with racialized Africans and Afrikaners. Their conceptions of imperial citizenship were far more racialized than proposals of a non-racial imperial citizenship allow for. Granted, when historians such as Schwarz, Lake and Reynolds, and Reed talk of a non-racial imperial citizenship, they mean that citizenship was theoretically not denied to anyone based on their race, and Akerman, Colenso, and Lester certainly gave no indication that they thought it should be. Yet if we consider how they tried to leverage their imperial citizenship to gain control over African society and to gain protection from an imagined Afrikaner threat, then it becomes difficult to construe their visions of imperial citizenship as non-racial. Their articulation of imperial citizenship as a means of racial control suggests that the development of legislated "white men's countries" in the early twentieth century was not a "betrayal of the idea of imperial citizenship,"²⁵⁷ but an evolution of an implicit notion into explicit policy.

There is also something to be said about the function of claiming imperial citizenship in the development of Akerman's, Colenso's, and Lester's identities as white British men. Angela Woollacott and Bill Schwarz, for example, both emphasize the insecurity of colonists as inferior Britons as a motivation for the development of the colonies into "white men's countries." Schwarz argues that metropolitan confluences of settler and Indigenous "strangeness" pushed settlers to differentiate themselves from Indigenous Others.²⁵⁸ Woollacott similarly argues that

²⁵⁷ Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 5.

²⁵⁸ Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume 1: The White Man's World*, 118.

because of settlers “occupying an in-between ranking in imperial hierarchy,” somewhere between Indigeneity and true Britishness, they “sought to elide the inferiority inherent in their colonialness by emphasizing their whiteness.”²⁵⁹ In this framing of colonial race relations, a fear of being racially misrecognized drove settlers to insist upon and defend their Britishness, and the claims to imperial citizenship expressed by Akerman, Colenso, and Lester may have been one means of doing so. This theme is developed further in the next chapter’s discussion of the imperial press system and racial imaginaries.

This chapter’s findings also have implications regarding the types of sources historians can use to study settler histories. With exceptions like Laura Ishiguro and Liz Stanley,²⁶⁰ historians of settler colonialism typically rely on public sources like newspapers and legal reports.²⁶¹ Whereas historians such as Sukanya Banerjee have revealed very public and visible demands by Indians for the rights due to them as imperial citizens, the settler appeals to imperial authority explored in this chapter were hidden in private letters to a private organization. Settlers’ insistence on privacy is one of the most salient finds of this chapter. It justifies the

²⁵⁹ Angela Woollacott, “Whiteness and ‘the Imperial Turn,’” in *Re-Orienting Whiteness*, ed. Leigh Boucher, Jane Carey, and Katherine Ellinghaus (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 24.

²⁶⁰ Laura Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home about: British Family Correspondence and the Settler Colonial Everyday in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2019); Liz Stanley, “Settler Colonialism and Migrant Letters: The Forbes Family and Letter-Writing in South Africa 1850–1922,” *The History of the Family* 21, no. 3 (2016): 398–428, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1081602X.2015.1127176>.

²⁶¹ For instance, see: Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Lauren A. Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400--1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900*; James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

importance of studying private correspondence like that of the APS in addition to public records like petitions and newspapers, since public records may not reveal things that settlers were unwilling to communicate publicly. It also opens up further avenues of research, since the APS is only one organization with which settlers corresponded. If there are differences between settler correspondence with various imperial organizations, these differences may help flesh out the entangled experiences of empire and colony for Britain's imperial citizens.

The Aborigines' Protection Society was more than a political lobby group. As this chapter has demonstrated, it was also a medium through which people in the colonies could intervene in imperial politics and have their perspectives represented in Britain, but there were many other correspondents beyond those covered in this chapter who envisioned the APS in other ways. In addition to lobbying the government, the APS is also known for its publishing activities, both in its journal and in popular daily newspapers of the time. These activities were not lost on settlers in the late nineteenth century, many of whom wrote to the APS not for political support but for publishing support. The next chapter explores the publishing aspect of the APS, demonstrating that settlers wrote to the APS not only as imperial citizens, but also as imperial authors.

3. Letters to the Editor: the Aborigines Protection Society as Publishing Agent for a Participatory Imperial Press.

Many British settlers in the late nineteenth century wrote to the APS about their aspirations to publish letters in British newspapers. Some turned to the APS for publication assistance after having their letters rejected, as when John Akerman of Natal wrote in 1876: “can you vouchsafe me any advice on how I can obtain the ear of an influential editor?...To write letters for the press which they very often do not publish at all is too wearisome a task.”²⁶² Others turned to the APS pre-emptively in the expectation that their letters would be rejected. Writing from Queensland in 1871, John Douglas informed the APS of a letter he had submitted to *Fraser’s Magazine* with a request that “in the event of Fraser refusing it, will you get the paper from them and make the best use of it you can?”²⁶³ And yet others turned to the APS without even trying to publish letters themselves. W.C. Brannan of the Cape Colony told the APS in 1883 that he wanted a letter inserted in *The Times* or the *Daily News*, but “thought it would be better to put it in the shape of a letter to you and you would get it inserted.”²⁶⁴ Together, these letters indicate that British settlers strongly associated the APS with publication in the British press.

In this chapter, I analyse letters written by two settlers – Philip Carpenter from Canada in the 1870s and Harold Stephens from the Cape Colony in the 1880s - to British newspapers, along with their concomitant correspondence with the APS. Publishing letters in British newspapers, which I call “reader letters” to distinguish them from correspondence with the APS, served three important functions for these settlers. First, it afforded a means of distancing oneself from the

²⁶² John William Akerman to Frederick Chesson, 5 October 1876, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C123/78, Bodleian Libraries (BodL).

²⁶³ J. Douglas to Frederick Chesson, 30 September 1871, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C133/15, BodL.

²⁶⁴ W.C. Brannan to Frederick Chesson, 5 March 1883, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C126/109, BodL.

violent and oppressive racialized rhetoric that was common in colonial newspapers. Second, it provided a space for expressing alternative interpretations of Britishness and the proper relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples that colonial editors were unwilling to publish. And third, it afforded space for opposing colonial corruption and disinformation through the notion of the fourth estate. Although publishing letters in British newspapers held so much meaning for these settlers, it was a difficult method to utilize and came with a low success rate. London dailies had the largest circulations in the empire, so competition from other letter writers was intense. Consequently, settlers used the APS as a de facto publishing agent. Becoming “informants” for the APS was a strategy to capitalise on the Society’s connections within the London press.

The arguments in this chapter offer two significant historiographical contributions. First, by supplementing consumption-oriented approaches to identity formation via newspapers influenced by Benedict Anderson with the agency-oriented methodology of epistolary scholarship, I move the study of the imperial press beyond considerations of the identities propagated by editorial staff and toward a consideration of how newspaper readers used participatory journalism to forge their own identities as settlers and Britons. Rather than merely consuming pre-existing narratives, settlers used their letters to propose alternative identities and reformulated relationships between settlers, Indigenous peoples, and metropolitan Britons. This interpretation problematizes assumptions within settler colonial studies that colonial newspapers can be taken as representative of collective settler identities and instead suggests that settlers could capitalize on the interconnectedness of the British World to express dissent from their local communities. Far from adhering to popular historiographical metanarratives like fatal impact theory, scientific racism, and disavowal, which propose that settlers normalized colonial violence

by assuring themselves of Indigenous peoples' inevitable inferiority and extinction, the correspondents under study refused to ignore the injustices they witnessed and turned to the British press to express opinions which were unpublishable in colonial newspapers. These findings suggest that settler society was more fractured and interspersed with humanitarian sentiment than previously imagined, a possibility that calls for further research into how the strictly racialized settler regimes of the late nineteenth century managed this internal dissent.

My second significant historiographical contribution is a reconsideration of how settlers conceptualized the political function of their letters. There is a substantial difference between nineteenth-century and modern understandings of participatory journalism, and the current historiography fails to grasp the importance that contemporaries attached to the act of publishing letters. Whereas newspaper scholars typically dismiss reader letters as insignificant space-filler, this chapter builds upon Allison Cavanaugh's recent epistolary approach to participatory journalism to assess what writing reader letters meant to colonial inhabitants.²⁶⁵ Finding that settlers used British newspapers as a public forum to participate in imperial politics and inform British audiences about Britain's obligations to intervene in colonial affairs, I argue that settler letter-writers approached the British press as a fourth estate to undermine the colonial censorship of those who advocated for continued imperial citizenship. This problematizes British World arguments that the imperial press fostered economic and cultural rather than political connectivity, and suggests that settlers relied upon the imperial press as a bridge between the influence of British public opinion and the operation of colonial politics. It also raises important

²⁶⁵ Allison Cavanaugh, "Letters to the Editor as a Tool of Citizenship," in *Letters to the Editor: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, ed. John Steel and Allison Cavanaugh (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan., 2019), 89–108.

questions about the role of censorship in the operation of settler colonialism, questions developed further in Chapter Four.

The two settlers examined in this chapter were chosen as representative case studies of broader trends. I have so far identified twenty-four APS correspondents who wrote on the theme of publishing in the British press, making it one of the most commonly recurring trends in the archive. Not all correspondents conceived of the utility of the British press in the same way. However, there were two general use cases.

The first use case for publishing reader letters in Britain was to pressure the imperial government to interfere in colonial politics. This theme is represented through Harold Stephens's calls for British intervention in Bechuanaland from 1882-1885, but his case is joined by many others. For example, there are Alfred Roche's calls for the imperial government to take over the Hudson's Bay Company's lands in Canada in 1857, and Alfred Davidson's calls for imperial intervention in native labour practices in Queensland in 1870.²⁶⁶ These instances of using the British press as a gateway into British politics reflect Alison Cavanaugh's interpretation of participatory journalism as citizenship, only at an imperial rather than a national scale.²⁶⁷ Such letters are, in some ways, extensions of the more direct petitioning form of imperial citizenship examined in Chapter Two. However, whereas petitions imply an expectation that writers have a right to participate in politics, reader letters indicate a need for surreptitious political participation that belies the perceived existence of imperial citizenship rights. These letters thus

²⁶⁶ Alfred Roche to Frederick Chesson, 7 February 1857, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C145/262, BodL; Alfred Davidson to Frederick Chesson, 20 December 1870, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C132/91, BodL.

²⁶⁷ Cavanaugh, "Letters to the Editor as a Tool of Citizenship," 96.

provide a valuable counterpoint to the petitions in Chapter Two, showing how settlers could participate in British politics without recourse to a language of imperial citizenship.

The second use case for publishing reader letters in Britain was to pressure colonial governments by arousing shame and outrage in England. This theme is represented by Philip Carpenter's attempt to shame the Canadian government into protecting Mohawk land rights in 1875, but this is also one case out of many. Other examples include David Smith's attempts to shame the Orange Free State government into giving dispossessed land back to the Seleka-Rolong nation in 1884,²⁶⁸ and Arthur McCallum's efforts to shame British Columbia officials to stop surveying Tsimshian land without consent in 1887.²⁶⁹ These cases are fascinating because they combine settler concerns about imperial surveillance and surreptitious political activism without actually involving formal imperial power. All three of these correspondents explained that they did not believe the imperial government had the power to intervene in settler politics. Instead, they believed that settler identification with Britishness was so powerful that messages of disappointment from Britain would be enough to impact settler government policies. In so doing, these correspondents illustrate how settlers perceived informal imperial power to continue flowing outwards even after the notion of formal intervention became outdated, and how newspapers were a means of cultivating this informal power. By differentiating reader letters into these two use cases, I offer insight into the multitude of ways that settlers interpreted the concept of the fourth estate in colonial spaces.

²⁶⁸ David Smith to Frederick Chesson, 4 December 1883, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C147/115, BodL.

²⁶⁹ Arthur McCallum to Frederick Chesson, 26 October 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C141/137, BodL.

Moreover, attending to the overarching similarities between these use cases highlights the broader culture of participatory journalism that accompanied the interconnected imperial press. Indeed, the extent of their apparent differences highlights the significance of their similarities, recalling Lara Putnam's reflection that "telling examples" at a microhistorical scale can reveal interconnections of transnational scope simply by dispelling previous assumptions of separation.²⁷⁰ Each correspondent hailed from different social backgrounds: Carpenter was a minister turned doctor of conchology while Stephens was a businessman, clerk, and lawyer. They also wrote from two different decades and two different colonies, each experiencing a very different colonial context: Carpenter settled in Quebec decades after the frontier had moved far to the west, so that Indigenous-settler warfare was far out of sight, whereas Stephens settled on the northern frontier of the Cape Colony where warfare with the Tswana was a constant worry. Despite these important differences (which are explored further throughout this chapter), both shared similar beliefs about the role of the British press in colonial society, both tried with varying levels of success to publish reader letters, and both turned to the APS when they encountered barriers. These case studies are not only representative of two different approaches to using the British press, but also illustrate how participatory journalism in the British press was a pervasive and stable element throughout settler societies in the late nineteenth century.

This chapter unfolds in four sections. In the first section, I provide a detailed overview of the various bodies of historiography that this chapter engages with, giving particular attention to the different ways of approaching the link between identity formation and newspapers between British World, settler colonial studies, and epistolary scholars. The second and third sections are

²⁷⁰ Lara Putnam, "To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 616–17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3790281>.

dedicated to each case study, offering detailed explorations of how the overarching nature of the participatory imperial press was encountered in local circumstances. The final section reflects on the limitations and implications of this chapter's findings, and points to further research that needs to be done into dissent and censorship in settler colonial information regimes.

It is still a small mystery why settlers chose to send their reader letters to the APS in the first place, as none of the correspondents explains their reasoning. If I had to make an informed hypothesis, I would suggest that the pervasiveness of Frederick Chesson's name in the British press, often as the author of reader letters, ensured that all who regularly perused British newspapers would be aware of his connection to the editorial world. Victorian newspaper editors were typically anonymous and left very few descriptions of their daily activities, let alone explicit explanations for how they selected letters for publication,²⁷¹ but it is easily observable that editors favoured certain well-known or established characters. A quantitative assessment of reader letters published in *The Times* reveals that the same big names predominate. For example, of the nineteen letters published on the subject of Bechuanaland in 1882-1883, eleven were written by the same five people, all of whom claimed some degree of fame: Frederick Chesson, Sir Henry Rider Haggard (author), Sir George Grey (politician), Dr Gavin Brown Clark (politician), and Morton Green (lawyer). Other names on the list include Sir Robert Fowler (politician) and James Anthony Froude (author).

The predominance of prominent names, and the fact that most of these names were published multiple times, makes it quite evident that newspaper editors tended to publish letters from a select group of important figures. This is also supported by a rare surviving letter from

²⁷¹ Marysa Demoor, "Editors and the Nineteenth-Century Press," in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton (New York: Routledge, 2016), 90–94.

Thomas Chenery, the editor of *The Times* from 1877-1884, to Sir Edward James Reed, railroad magnate and member of parliament, in which he wrote: “I shall always be glad to publish any communication from you.”²⁷² Of this select class of individuals, few were more successful at publishing letters than Chesson: the secretary of the APS published over 120 reader letters in the decades between 1860-1890, spread across *The Times*, the *Standard*, the *Telegraph*, the *Daily News*, and the *Morning Post*, all commenting on colonial affairs. This would not have been lost on readers of the British press like Carpenter and Stephens, and their decisions to seek publication assistance from the APS were most likely based on an assumption that Chesson had connections to metropolitan editors that could increase their chance at publication.

Approaches to imperial identities through newsprint

There is a substantial historiography examining settler entanglements with the British press. Just as settlers maintained personal correspondence with friends and families in Britain, so did they continue to follow events in British newspapers. Between 1840 and 1900, the annual exports of British papers to Canada alone increased from around 300,000 to over 6,000,000, with similar levels of exports to the other colonies relative to population.²⁷³ According to Julie Codell, “the most popular and powerful determinant for bridging ‘home’ or ‘mother’ country and its colonial peripheries was the press.”²⁷⁴ But whereas this historiography has uniformly approached settlers as *consumers* of British newspapers, letters written to the APS reveal a much more participatory relationship between settlers and the British press. Approaching settlers as only

²⁷² Thomas Chenery to Edward James Reed, 23 May 1883, TT/ED/CHE/2/2, News UK Archive.

²⁷³ Simon Potter, “Journalism and Empire in an English-Reading World: The Review of Reviews,” in *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 282.

²⁷⁴ Julie Codell, ed., *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), 16.

consumers of British news contributes to historical narratives in which empire was merely a context for settler colonialism, where empire was primarily relevant to settlers as a source of inspiration for how self-government or racialized categories had been implemented in other colonial spaces.²⁷⁵ By taking seriously settler aspirations to participate in British press culture, we can move past the simple notion of empire as context for settler colonialism and towards an understanding of how individual settlers actively engaged with empire in their daily lives and imbricated empire with the settler colonial project.

The historiography of settler engagement with the British press is divided between those who emphasize Benedict Anderson's theory of community formation and those who emphasize postcolonial theories of representation, but they agree that newspapers were significant for inculcating settler consumers with imperial identities. Anderson argued that newspapers facilitated the formation of imagined communities by regularly exposing readers to images from across geographically dispersed locations.²⁷⁶ British World historians such as Simon Potter, Cecilia Morgan, and James Belich adapt this theory to the imperial press and equate settler consumption of imperial news with the continuity of an imperial imagined community of Britishness. The primary impact of this imagined Britishness became manifest in settler dedication to integrated economic and political objectives. Morgan points to settler participation in industrial exhibitions and imperial wars as contingent upon the "imperial devotion and loyalty" instilled through the imperial press.²⁷⁷ Potter argues that trade and capital flows were

²⁷⁵ For examples of this narrative, see: Pincus, Bains, and Reichardt, "Thinking the Empire Whole"; Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture*, 1–15.

²⁷⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), 62–64.

²⁷⁷ Morgan, *Building Better Britains?*, 134–35.

reliant on the availability of commercial information in the imperial press, and that newspaper coverage of imperial federation policies like tariff reform fostered settler support for economic unity.²⁷⁸ James Belich takes this association between identity and exposure to imperial information even further, arguing that the relative number of British newspapers exported to different colonies can be used as a direct proxy for the relative strength of imperial identification in different colonial spaces.²⁷⁹ Problematically, however, there is very little room for reader agency in these narratives, with editors largely dictating the parameters of the imagined imperial community through their selection of what to include in their papers.

Conversely, historians of settler colonialism dispute that exposure to imperial news can be directly tied to identity formation, and instead attend to the racialized representations within settler newspapers. Of course, no single newspaper can be said to reflect or shape collective identities. Multiple newspapers compete against one another with conflicting perspectives and interpretations of events, and readers generally have the agency to read whichever newspaper contains appealing narratives. Nevertheless, as I demonstrate further below, historians of settler colonialism use the racialized representations with colonial newspapers to trace the formation and maintenance of collective settler identities relative to Indigeneity and metropolitan Britishness, or what some scholars have taken to calling “settleness.”²⁸⁰

The concept of settleness as a form of collective identity is similar to Whiteness, only Whiteness is a racial lens and settleness is more class-based, dealing primarily with access to and control over land.²⁸¹ Settler colonialism is broadly defined as the reproduction of foreign

²⁷⁸ Potter, *News and the British World*, 160–85.

²⁷⁹ Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 460–61.

²⁸⁰ Lorenzo Veracini, “On Settleness,” *Borderlands* 10, no. 1 (2011): 10, <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.3/95012>.

²⁸¹ Fung, “Is Settler Colonialism Just Another Study of Whiteness?,” 115–31.

societies on foreign territory via the dispossession of Indigenous land, and settlerness is broadly defined as the narratives, self-representations, and collective identities formed to justify and perpetuate that dispossession.²⁸² There are many different aspects of settlerness, but one of the most important elements throughout the nineteenth century was the need to establish a cohesive collective identity in the context of competing interests between Indigenous societies, settler societies, and metropolitan societies, or what Lorenzo Veracini calls the “triangular system of relationships.”²⁸³ Each side of this triangle sought control of land for its own purposes, and the formation of settlerness as a collective identity entailed defining and defending settler control of land against other competing claims. This was (and remains) an active process. There are foundational moments in each of the settler colonies when settlers felt victimized by a tyrannical imperial government that they believed prioritized Indigenous over settler interests, such as Lord Glenelg’s retrocession of British Kaffraria from the Cape Colony to the Xhosa in 1836 and Governor George Gipps’ execution of settler perpetrators of the Myall Creek Massacre in New South Wales in 1838. Imperial officials made such decisions believing that naïve and helpless Indigenous peoples needed protection, but to settlers living in constant anxiety and fear of Indigenous resistance, such beliefs proved that they were being tyrannized by absentee officials with no real understanding of colonial race relations. It was in reaction to this feeling of victimization that settlerness was actively forged through the representation of settlers as the true experts and rightful rulers of Indigenous peoples through institutions ranging from literature and

²⁸² Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 7; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), xi–5.

²⁸³ Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 6.

theatre to heritage tourism and anthropology,²⁸⁴ and newspapers played a pivotal role in the dissemination of these representations.

Alan Lester, Kenton Storey, and Sam Hutchinson use colonial newspapers to map the parameters of settlerness as a collective identity by identifying shared discourses across multiple newspapers within local press communities. They argue that colonial newspapers set the parameters of settlerness through strategic and pervasive representations of Indigenous peoples and metropolitan Britons. Lester, for instance, demonstrates that newspapers in the Cape Colony, New Zealand, and New South Wales represented Indigenous peoples as dangerous and metropolitan Britons as blinded by humanitarian fervour, and by so doing defined settler identities as anti-humanitarian wardens of an inherent Indigenous threat.²⁸⁵ Storey builds upon Lester's idea of settler newspaper discourse shaping settler identities. However, by comparing newspaper discourses between British Columbia and New Zealand, he suggests that settler identities were not *anti-humanitarian* as much as they were *cynically humanitarian*, in that newspaper discourses retained humanitarian rhetoric only to placate metropolitan observers.²⁸⁶ Responding to both Lester and Storey, Hutchinson re-examines connections between Australian settler newspapers and the metropolitan press and challenges their definitions of settlerness as anti-humanitarian or cynically humanitarian. He argues that humanitarian discourses were crucial for settler self-perception as legitimate occupiers of land, a perception that was repeatedly challenged by Indigenous resistance, so that settler newspaper discourses in Australia used humanitarian rhetoric to define settlerness as benevolent in the face of continuing frontier

²⁸⁴ Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 240–51.

²⁸⁵ Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 132-175; Alan Lester, "British Settler Discourse," 30–32.

²⁸⁶ Storey, *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire*, 8.

violence.²⁸⁷ By exploring how newspaper representations of settlers in relation to Indigenous peoples and metropolitan Britons shaped collective settler identities, they demonstrate that newspapers editors in the colonies exercised significant agency over the representation of colonial affairs. Yet they place colonial editors in contradistinction to colonial readers. Editors were active agents: they “selected, copied, and shaped news content,”²⁸⁸ and by doing so, “editors took advantage of the complex networks of communication that tied Great Britain to its settler colonies to advocate their political interests.”²⁸⁹ The role of readers, on the other hand, was to consume the content crafted by editors. Thus, while historians of the British World and settler colonialism offer contrasting interpretations of how newspapers contributed to identity formation in the colonies, both schools agree that the imperial press system was constituted by active editors who decided which images of empire and which representations of settlerness to propagate, and passive readers who consumed the images and representations provided to them.

More recently, a new approach to newspapers spearheaded by Allison Cavanaugh emphasizes the agency of writing letters to the editor as one of the most important aspects of the nineteenth-century press.²⁹⁰ In addition to material factors such as the invention of the printing press in 1810 and the abolition of newspaper taxes in 1855, the rise of newsprint culture across the British empire was associated with democratic ideals of the power of public opinion and of newspapers as the “fourth estate.”²⁹¹ Reader letters were a fundamental element of this culture. Cavanaugh argues that newspapers provided “empowered spaces” for ordinary people that

²⁸⁷ Hutchinson, *Settlers, War, and Empire*, 79.

²⁸⁸ Hutchinson, *Settlers, War, and Empire*, 7–8.

²⁸⁹ Storey, *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire*, 191.

²⁹⁰ Cavanaugh, “Letters to the Editor as a Tool of Citizenship,” 89–108.

²⁹¹ Frederick Knight Hunt, *The Fourth Estate: Contributions Towards a History of Newspapers, and of the Liberty of the Press* (London: David Bogue, 1850), 1–8.

“allowed them to access what they saw as a broader and more legitimate sphere of power than those encountered in daily life.”²⁹² Cavanaugh formulates this model in reference to Victorian Britain, where everyday citizens wrote reader letters to address personal grievances, and she argues that letter-writers treated newspapers as empowered spaces because they perceived editors as “one who was empowered against vested interest, potentially one of ‘us’ rather than one of ‘them.’”²⁹³ Especially in the context of Britain’s democratic institutions being limited by class and gender, publishing letters in such empowered spaces could be highly valued by the disenfranchised as one of the only means to participate in democratic governance.²⁹⁴ Over twenty years ago, Aled Jones called for press historians to stop treating nineteenth-century reader letters as “an inexpensive space-filler conveniently provided by the passionate or the vain.”²⁹⁵ Cavanaugh’s work is a major response to Jones’s call to reappraise reader letters. This chapter expands Cavanaugh’s work to the colonies and shows that the British press was not just a domestic fourth estate, but an imperial one as well.

My approach to reader letters is informed by scholarship on letter-writing more generally, which has been shown to involve an entirely different mechanism for identity formation than newspaper-reading. For Benedict Anderson, identity formation is largely derived from newspapers inherently forging connections between distant locations by placing their news together in the same paper. In the act of reading such a paper, an imaginative community would

²⁹² Cavanaugh, “Letters to the Editor as a Tool of Citizenship,” 95.

²⁹³ Cavanaugh, “Letters to the Editor as a Tool of Citizenship,” 94–95.

²⁹⁴ Sarah Pedersen, “Speaking as Citizens: Women’s Political Correspondence to Scottish Newspapers 1918-1928,” in *Letters to the Editor: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Allison Cavanaugh and John Steel (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 25–47.

²⁹⁵ Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 187–88.

be formed due to the implication that the two locations were linked.²⁹⁶ The only agency in such a process lies with the editor in deciding which pieces of news to print together. For postcolonial theorists like Edward Said, identity formation is derived from the propagation of binary discourses of difference. This process involves an interplay between producers of knowledge, who create essentialized and politicized representations of inferior others, and consumers of knowledge, who internalize the representations they consume and propagate them into a discourse of subordination.²⁹⁷ There is, again, only agency on one side of this process: Said calls on producers (particularly academics) to change the way they represent different cultures, and consumers are left to await the production of new representations to internalize and reproduce.²⁹⁸

Letter-writing, on the other hand, places identity formation in the hands of the writer. David Gerber's analysis of letter-writing adopts Anthony Giddens' definition of identity as "the capacity to keep a particular narrative going," and Gerber argues that letter-writing is an active process to establish identity continuity.²⁹⁹ There is agency in deciding whom to write to, whether it be maintaining identity continuity with family members, with organizations like the APS, or, indeed, with national publics via letters in national newspapers. And there is also agency in explicating how the writer wishes to be remembered by the recipient, and how the writer wishes the recipient to act in relation to themselves.³⁰⁰ Although Gerber wrote about personal letters, reader letters were not much different. In seeking publication, reader letters demand recognition of belonging to the newspaper's community. They typically contain autobiographical statements telling the newspaper's community how the writer wishes to be identified, as well as calls to

²⁹⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 62–64.

²⁹⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 3.

²⁹⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 325–28.

²⁹⁹ Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives*, 67.

³⁰⁰ Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives*, 64.

action indicating how the writer wishes the community to act in relation to themselves. And, as Cavanaugh demonstrates, nineteenth-century reader letters typically expected readers to respond with letters of their own, leading to protracted public debates not unlike two-way familial correspondence.³⁰¹ Julie Codell uses this approach to letter-writing to examine the agency of “native informants” who wrote articles for the British press in the late nineteenth century,³⁰² and Stefanie Markovits provides a similar study on soldiers during the Crimean War,³⁰³ but nothing of the sort has yet been applied to settlers. This chapter, therefore, offers a new perspective on the imperial press system, and particularly on its impact on imperial identities, by applying a participatory lens to the settler colonies.

³⁰¹ Cavanaugh, “Letters to the Editor as a Tool of Citizenship,” 96.

³⁰² Julie Codell, “The Empire Writes Back: Native Informant Discourse in the Victorian Press,” in *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press*, ed. Julie Codell (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), 188–218.

³⁰³ Stefanie Markovits, “Rushing into Print: ‘Participatory Journalism’ during the Crimean War,” *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 4 (2008): 559–86, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40060404>.

Shaming settler governments: Philip Carpenter and the Seminary of St. Sulpice, 1875

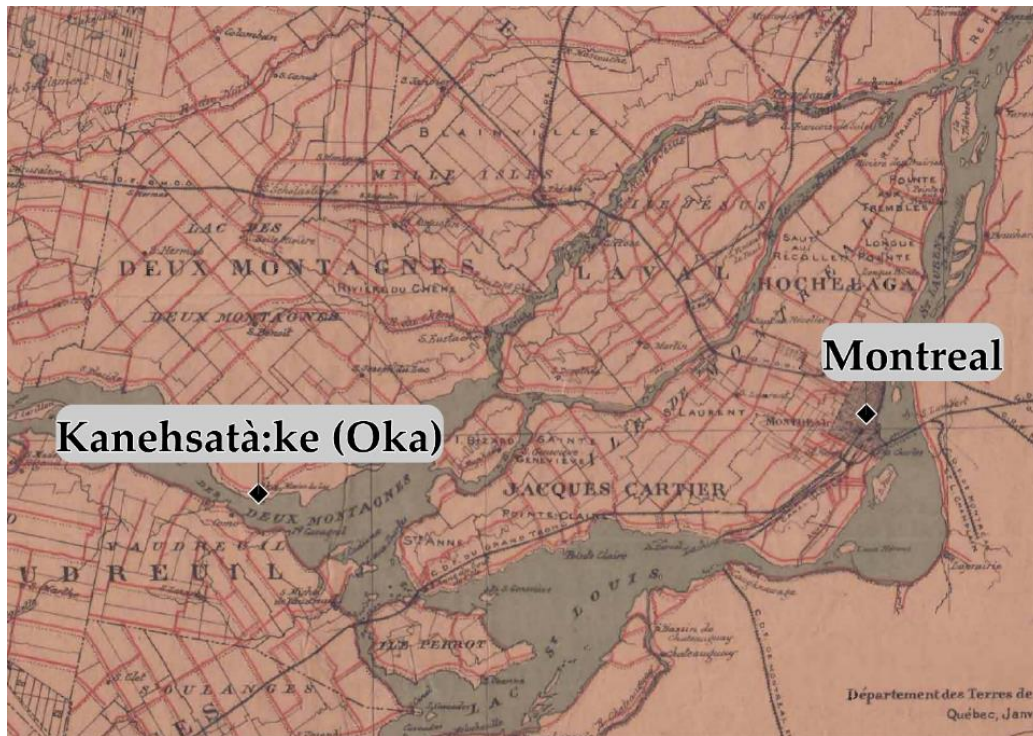


Figure 4: 1882 map of the Isle de Montreal showing Kanesatake. “Extrait de la Carte régionale de la province de Québec (...) dressée au Département des Terres de la Couronne par P. M. A. Genest et C. E. Gauvin, Géomètres, sous la direction de l’Assistant-Commissaire. – 1882.” VM66-5P019. Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

My first case study, Philip Carpenter (1819-1877), represents those correspondents who hoped that hostile public opinion in British could put pressure on colonial governments. Carpenter was born to a wealthy family in Bristol, but as a Presbyterian was prohibited from many of England’s older elite institutions and instead attended Bristol College, Manchester College, and University College, London. He initially worked as a Presbyterian minister, but his true passion was for natural history. In 1858 he left England to curate collections of shells at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. and the State Cabinet of Natural History in Albany, New York, where he obtained a doctorate in natural science. Carpenter then settled with his

family in Montreal, Quebec, and lectured on conchology at McGill College until his death in 1877.³⁰⁴ In Montreal, Carpenter witnessed a land dispute between the Mohawk First Nations and the Roman Catholic Seminary of St. Sulpice and lobbied the Canadian government to defend Mohawk land rights, but found the federal government unwilling to get involved in provincial matters. He then turned to the British press and the APS in an attempt to shame the Canadian government into action, writing a series of reader letters to *The Times*, the *Daily News*, and the *Telegraph* and using the APS to secure publication.

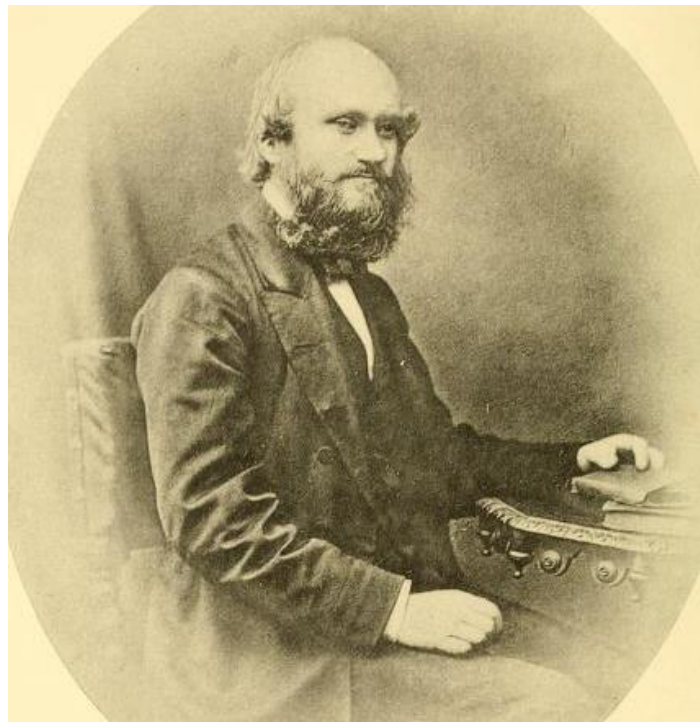


Figure 5: Photo of Philip Carpenter from the frontispiece of Katherine Palmer, Type Specimens of Marine Mollusca Described by P.P. Carpenter from the West Coast (Ithaca: Paleontological Research Institution, 1958).

³⁰⁴ Katherine Palmer, “Carpenter, Philip Pearsall,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

Carpenter's letters revolve around a long-standing land dispute between the Mohawk First Nation and Roman Catholic missionaries which boiled over in 1875 when the Catholic missionaries tore down a Methodist church on Mohawk territory. The Mohawk had lived at Kanesatake village west of Montreal since 1721, when the French government had granted land to missionaries of the Roman Catholic Seminary of St. Sulpice in return for removing the Mohawk from their previous village in central Montreal.³⁰⁵ The land at Kanesatake was disputed from the very beginning: the Mohawk had been told that they were to possess a deed to the new village in return for abandoning Montreal, but the deed was instead registered to the Seminary. This discrepancy went unnoticed until the 1780s, when settlers in the area began enclosing Mohawk land. The Mohawk tried to assert their ownership of the land and discovered that it legally did not belong to them. The Mohawk sent many petitions to colonial and imperial authorities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to regain ownership of the land to no avail, but relations with the Seminary remained cordial.³⁰⁶ This changed in the mid-nineteenth century with the decline of the fur trade and the rise of the timber industry: whereas hunting rights were guaranteed without possession of land, logging rights were contingent upon possession. When the Mohawk began logging on what they believed to be their own land in the 1830s, the Seminary charged any Mohawk found cutting down trees with trespass, sparking significant resentment. In 1851 Methodist missionaries began visiting Kanesatake, and many Mohawk converted out of dissatisfaction with the Seminary. The Bishop of Montreal responded in 1852 by excommunicating four Methodist Mohawk chiefs, and from that point onwards Kanesatake was riven by conflict between Catholics and Mohawk converts. This conflict

³⁰⁵ John Thompson, "A Brief History of the Land Dispute at Kanesatake [Oka] from Contact to 1961" (Treaties and Historical Research Centre, January 1991), 9, Library and Archives Canada.

³⁰⁶ Thompson, "A Brief History of the Land Dispute at Kanesatake," 13–25.

escalated via arrests and lawsuits until 8 December 1875, when the Seminary tore down the Mohawk's Methodist church.³⁰⁷ It was the destruction of this church that disturbed Philip Carpenter the most and pushed him to shame his government via the British press.

The mainstream Montreal press framed the conflict between the Mohawk of Kanesatake and the Seminary of St. Sulpice as a matter of private property rights. There were three competing English-language newspapers in 1870s Montreal. The *Montreal Gazette* was the mouthpiece of the Conservative Party of Quebec, which was aligned with Ultramontane Catholicism and dominated Quebec politics throughout the mid-late nineteenth century.³⁰⁸ The *Montreal Herald* was an organ of the Liberal Party of Quebec, which, although hostile to the powerful Ultramontane Quebec church hierarchy and known as the “party of Protestant Dissent” for much of the nineteenth century, had begun in the 1870s to downplay sectarianism in order to promote non-denominational unity.³⁰⁹ And the *Montreal Witness* was an independent paper dedicated to virulent Protestantism (and anti-Catholicism, discussed more below), temperance, and social morality issues.³¹⁰ The *Witness* was the only one of these papers to take up the Mohawk-Seminary conflict, but its circulation was small and it was also actively suppressed by the powerful Bishop of Montreal, who in 1875 banned the newspaper because of its anti-Catholic

³⁰⁷ Thompson, “A Brief History of the Land Dispute at Kanesatake,” 25–13; Harry Swain, *Oka: A Political Crisis and Its Legacy* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 21–22.

³⁰⁸ P.B. Waite, “White, Thomas,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

³⁰⁹ Lorne Ste. Croix, “Penny, Edward Goff,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); James Forbes, “‘A Deplorable Speech’: The Liberal Party vs. Anti-Catholicism During the Alexander Mackenzie Administration, 1873-1878,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 28, no. 1 (2017): 193-216, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050899ar>.

³¹⁰ Roderick MacLeod, “Dougall, John Redpath,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021).

rhetoric.³¹¹ The *Witness* was consequently of little influence in this period, while simultaneously demonstrating the level of censorship that pervaded colonial press communities.

Meanwhile, the politically opposite *Gazette* and *Herald* united in refusing to report on the Mohawk-Seminary conflict. Three particularly important incidents were brushed over. In May 1875, provincial police marched into Kanesatake to arrest several Mohawk men for cutting down trees without the consent of the Seminary. The *Gazette* merely stated that there were arguments both for the Seminary's property rights and for the Mohawk's rights as wards of the state, and that "we offer no opinion upon these different views."³¹² The *Herald* made no mention of the arrests at all.³¹³ The following month, the Mohawk organized a picnic to raise funds for their reserve, hiring a boat to bring supporters from Montreal to Kanesatake, but the Seminary tried to stop the boat from disembarking and then tried to evict the picnickers.³¹⁴ The *Gazette* did not report any of this, instead reporting only on the games and food enjoyed at the picnic, while the *Herald* avoided commenting and only hoped that the issue would "soon be settled."³¹⁵ Most importantly, when the Seminary tore down the Mohawk church in December 1875, the *Gazette* insisted that the Seminary had a legal right to do so as the owner of the land and that their actions had been sanctioned by the courts.³¹⁶ The *Gazette* further denounced all who attempted "to make political capital out of the unfortunate events," and argued that it was not the Seminary but the Mohawk's lawyers who were to blame - for failing to establish a legal right to the land.³¹⁷ The

³¹¹ MacLeod, "Dougall, John Redpath."

³¹² "The Oka Indians," *The Montreal Gazette*, 9 June 1875.

³¹³ "Leader," *The Montreal Herald*, 31 May 1875.

³¹⁴ "The Oka Picnic," *The Daily Witness* (Montreal), 15 June 1875.

³¹⁵ "The Pic-Nic to Oka," *The Montreal Herald*, 21 June 1875; "Pic-Nic at Oka," *The Montreal Gazette*, 21 June 1875.

³¹⁶ "Leader," *The Montreal Gazette*, 10 December 1875.

³¹⁷ "The Oka Indians," *The Montreal Gazette*, 20 December 1875.

Herald concurred that “in the dispute between the Oka Indians and the Seminary, the law was with the Seminary,” and that the Mohawk had no grounds for disputing the destruction of their church since “the Indians have no property in the soil of the seigniori which can be enforced in a Court of Law.”³¹⁸ The mainstream Montreal press, therefore, represented the Seminary’s persecutions against the Mohawk as unfortunate, but just and proper for the protection of settler property rights. By depoliticising Indigenous land rights as a predetermined legal issue, the Montreal press constructed a representation of Indigenous-settler relations that absolved settlers of responsibility for Indigenous rights and prioritized settler property rights. That this depoliticization was supported by organs of both the Conservative and Liberal parties is indicative of the cross-partisan appeal of marginalizing Indigenous issues.

British papers contained an entirely different narrative. Montreal made the British news many times throughout 1875, but not once were settler relations with the Mohawk reported. Instead, British papers were fixated on the prevalence of rioting and mob violence in Montreal. When riots broke out in August 1875 in defiance of a mandatory smallpox vaccination program, *The Times* lambasted the spinelessness of British Montrealers for failing to control the riot and questioned the capacity of Canadians for self-government. “Is it true that among 50,000 men of British blood in Montreal there are not enough to stamp out mob tyranny, and to administer with cool resolution the policy which the majority of the people approves?”³¹⁹ Further riots broke out in September between Roman Catholics and Protestants over the attempted burial of an excommunicated bishop on consecrated land, and the *Telegraph* again challenged the British of Montreal for “lack of nerve not only to quell the riots, but to prohibit the conduct which is

³¹⁸ “The Oka Indians,” *The Montreal Herald*, 16 December 1875.

³¹⁹ Leader, *The Times*, 1 September 1875.

provocative of them.”³²⁰ Finally, when bread riots erupted in December 1875, *The Times* concluded that Montreal’s rioting problem proved that Canada “is wanting in so elementary a quality of self-governing States as the capacity of keeping the ordinary peace of the country and of meeting with stern promptitude the dictation of riotous mobs.”³²¹ It was somewhat hypocritical of the British press to be so critical of rioting in Montreal: with food riots across southwest England in 1867,³²² the anti-Catholic Murphy Riots of 1867-69,³²³ and violent demonstrations against the Compulsory Vaccination Act of 1871,³²⁴ England had experienced very similar riots within the past decade, and at least 452 riots in total between 1865-1914.³²⁵ To understand British critiques of rioting in Montreal, we must contextualize them within contemporary British politics.

There were three factors in particular that coloured British interpretations of Montreal’s riots: anxieties over the Irish Home Rule movement, the imperial federation movement, and British anti-Catholicism. The Home Rule movement was first articulated as a formal and coherent political agenda with the creation of the Home Rule League in 1873, and the first major House of Commons debate on Home Rule took place in 1874.³²⁶ Concerns about Home Rule combined with a series of Irish riots in 1875 of which British newspapers observed that “the

³²⁰ Leader, *The Telegraph*, 9 October 1875.

³²¹ Leader, *The Times*, 3 January 1875.

³²² Robert Storch, “Popular Festivity and Consumer Protest: Food Price Disturbances in the Southwest and Oxfordshire in 1867,” *Albion* 14, no. 3 (1982): 209–34, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4048513>.

³²³ Walter L. Arnstein, “The Murphy Riots: A Victorian Dilemma,” *Victorian Studies* 19, no. 1 (1975): 51–71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3826732>.

³²⁴ Nadja Durbach, “‘They Might As Well Brand Us’: Working-Class Resistance to Compulsory Vaccination in Victorian England,” *Social History of Medicine* 13, no. 1 (2000): 45–63, <https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/13.1.45>.

³²⁵ See Donald Richter, *Riotous Victorians* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981).

³²⁶ “Parliamentary Relations (Great Britain and Ireland) - Home Rule,” HC Deb 30 June 1874 vol 220 cc700-92, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1874/jun/30/committee>.

local constabulary are utterly powerless to prevent the mob doing what they please,”³²⁷ so that debates over the capacity of self-governing colonies to control rioting were top of mind in the British public sphere. Moreover, Home Rule was heavily influenced by Canadian Confederation in 1867,³²⁸ so there was a clear link between the apparent inability of Canada to maintain law and order and the potential of Ireland to do the same. At the same time, increasing anxiety over imperial competition from America and Germany prompted fears that the settler colonies were drifting too far from the British sphere of influence, and the 1870s saw some of the first articulations of imperial federation.³²⁹ Consequently, interpreting riots in Montreal as evidence of Canada’s immaturity for self-government was likely connected to a desire to support the necessity of imperial governance as a tutor and mentor to the settler colonies. And finally, anti-Catholicism experienced a resurgence in Britain following the union of the British and Irish parliaments in 1800, Catholic emancipation in 1829, and the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850. The latter was interpreted by many in Britain as an act of “papal aggression” and an attack on the Queen’s sovereignty and sparked virulent “anti-popery” movements built upon fears that the Catholic hierarchy was attempting to interfere in British politics.³³⁰ The inability of Protestants to control Catholics in a British colony thus likely resonated Britons’ concerns about their ability to control Catholics in Britain itself, and motivated an interpretation

³²⁷ “Ireland,” *The Morning Post*, 29 March 1875; See also “Leader,” *The Telegraph*, 20 October 1875, TeDA.

³²⁸ Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 28.

³²⁹ Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 31–62.

³³⁰ Saho Matsumoto-Best, *Britain and the Papacy in the Age of Revolution* (London: The Boydell Press, 2003), 143-154.

of Montreal riots in which Montrealers were seen as a liability in an empire-wide contest with the papacy.

The British press was therefore engaged in discourses that equated Britishness with a capacity to maintain “the Queen’s peace” in line with British concerns about Home Rule, imperial federation, and papal aggression at the same time that the Montreal press was praising their capacity to protect property rights in line with settler concerns about ongoing Indigenous claims to land and sovereignty. This adds credence to Lester’s, Storey’s, and Hutchinson’s arguments that colonial newspapers fashioned local identities against critique from metropolitan observers, as Montreal editors reformulated metropolitan critiques of their inability to maintain law and order in relation to rioting into assertions of their success that maintaining law and order in relation to Indigenous violations of settler property rights. Philip Carpenter, in turn, challenged both of these representations through reader letters.

Carpenter put forward two formulations of settler identity to contest those from local and metropolitan papers. First, he pointed to his belief that “whatever treatment the Indians may have met with south of the lines, they were honourably and kindly treated under British rule.”³³¹ This statement implicitly established British settlers as humanitarian in contradistinction to violent American settlers “south of the lines.” But Carpenter more explicitly differentiated his understanding of humanitarianism in English Ontario – evidenced by the provision of industrial schools and progress made in civilization – against Indigenous experiences in French Quebec, where “the unfortunate Indians have been subjected to a series of petty persecutions, in which the police and county magistrates have acted as the tools of the priests.”³³² His vision of English

³³¹ Philip Carpenter, “Priestly Outrage on the Protestant Indians of Lower Canada,” *The Daily News*, 4 January 1875.

³³² Carpenter, “Priestly Outrage on the Protestant Indians of Lower Canada.”

“native policy” as beneficial and French native policy as harmful was part of a broader culture of anti-Catholicism in Canada that perceived Catholic missionaries as detrimental to Indigenous civilization by reinforcing pagan idolatry (e.g. the veneration of holy relics) and cannibalism (via transubstantiation).³³³ Carpenter continued this tradition, calling out a pattern of blatant disregard for Indigenous land rights that he coded as uniquely American and French (Catholic). In doing so, he dismissed local press representations of settler society as defenders of private property and contended that prioritizing property rights over humanitarianism detracted from their Britishness.

Carpenter also challenged the metropolitan critique of Anglo-Montrealers as unBritish. Acknowledging a laundry list of recent public disturbances, including “our two riots here in one month,” Carpenter argued that it was not a lack of British nerve to quell the riots but the political structure of the recently confederated Canada that prevented British Montrealers from controlling the French rioters. With confederation in 1867, the province of Quebec had been given its own provincial government separate from that of Anglophones in Ontario, so that the English minority in Quebec were rendered significantly less powerful compared to the French majority.³³⁴ Carpenter cited this as the reason why the British of Montreal could do nothing to stop lawlessness: “the Confederation Act has practically destroyed what little political power they once possessed.”³³⁵ Carpenter sought to disprove metropolitan insinuations of spinelessness by reminding Britain that Anglo-Quebecers had negligible political power thanks to the confederation act ratified by the British government itself. Because of Anglo-Quebecer powerlessness, he argued that it was Britain’s responsibility to intervene and take direct control

³³³ J. R. Miller, “Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 66, no. 4 (1985): 486–89, <https://doi.org/10.3138/CHR-066-04-03>.

³³⁴ Garth Stevenson, *Community Besieged: The Anglophone Minority and the Politics of Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 26–30.

³³⁵ Carpenter, “Priestly Outrage on the Protestant Indians of Lower Canada.”

of the Kanesatake village. “The Queen has power to call these Stewards to account for their stewardship; and if unfaithful, she can deprive them, and give it to others.”³³⁶ His reader letters, therefore, conformed to the triangular model of settler identity proposed by settler colonial studies scholars: he defined settlers as protectors of Indigenous welfare and dependent on British political intervention.

Too much emphasis should not be placed on Carpenter’s suggestion that Queen Victoria could intervene. Throughout his letters he switched synonymously between references to the British monarchy, the British government, and the British public, suggesting that he had no expectation that any one body would be able to intervene, but was following the common colonial practice of referring to various imperial bodies “as short-hand or synonym for the Crown, for the British government and for the Empire – or some approximation or amalgam of all three.”³³⁷ Moreover, Carpenter had little real expectation that the British government would get involved in local politics, and expected that any answer to such a petition would be that “this is a matter of Canadian policy.”³³⁸ Instead, Carpenter intended for the British press to pressure the Canadian government by reminding them of their Britishness. He strongly believed that “they do care here, from Govt downwards, for strong expulsions of opinion from Brit. papers; they care nothing for what is said here. That is why I address you.”³³⁹ He hoped that “a strong expression of opinion for the Indians through the English press” would remind Canadian politicians of British liberties and responsibilities.³⁴⁰ “If British Connection means anything, let

³³⁶ Philip Carpenter to Frederick Chesson, 1 January 1876, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G83b Volume 1 - 9, BodL.

³³⁷ Carter and Nugent, *Mistress of Everything Queen Victoria in Indigenous Worlds*, 2.

³³⁸ Carpenter to Chesson, 17 March 1875.

³³⁹ Carpenter to Chesson, 17 December 1875.

³⁴⁰ Carpenter to Chesson, 1 January 1876.

our Govt understand that they are bound to maintain civil and religious liberty in general, and that in particular they are bound to take the part of the Indians.”³⁴¹ Carpenter approached the fourth estate not so much as a direct political power, but as a cultural power that could “shame our own men” with British disappointment.³⁴²

Nevertheless, the mere suggestion that the Mohawk-Seminary dispute was deserving of imperial attention displays a formulation of settler identity very different from those espoused in both local and metropolitan newspapers, and this is significant for two reasons. First, in terms of settler colonial scholarship on settlerness as an identity formed in relation to perceived Indigenous inferiority and metropolitan tyranny, Carpenter’s differentiation between British humanity and French/American inhumanity indicates that a triangular Indigenous-settler-metropolitan model of settlerness is too simple. To be sure, Carpenter did locate settler identity in relation to the Mohawk nation, whom he believed to be immature wards of the state requiring government management, as well as the metropole, which he saw as overly critical of Quebecois capacity for self-government. This lends some support to the triangular model of settlerness.

However, Carpenter also located British humanitarian settlerness in relation to French and American oppressive settlerness, indicating the lack of a unifying settler identity as well as the importance of Britishness as a marker of social difference within fragmented settler communities. Such fragmentation is not visible within the Montreal press, where competing newspapers presented a united interpretation of the Kanesatake land dispute. This may explain why historians such as Alan Lester, Kenton Storey, and Sam Hutchinson argue that the imperial press fostered the formation of unified settler identities, as they rely on colonial newspapers. On

³⁴¹ Carpenter to Chesson, 28 July 1875.

³⁴² Carpenter to Chesson, 17 March 1875.

the contrary, by attending to colonial letters published in British papers, Carpenter's case study reveals that the participatory nature of the imperial press fostered the differentiation of settler identities by affording settlers with divergent understandings of their relationship with Indigeneity and empire to express themselves outside the bounds of local discourses.

More importantly, Carpenter's formation of settlerness was not only *divergent* from those in his local papers, but it was also *suppressed* by Montreal's Catholic authorities. To be sure, Carpenter's perception of a Catholic conspiracy was coloured by his own anti-Catholic prejudices. He was a member of the Protestant Defence Alliance, a local society founded to resist "all efforts on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to violate the principles of civil and religious rights and liberties; and the guidance and protection of Protestants and others who may be exposed to the persecution of the Romish priesthood."³⁴³ Having resurged in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, anti-Catholicism had spread to all of the settler colonies via mass emigration throughout the nineteenth century. Anti-Catholicism was exported to the Australasian and South African colonies as a paranoia about papal aggression, and anti-Catholic rhetoric was common amongst Protestant settlers who perceived small and relatively insignificant Catholic communities as conspirators attempting to bring about a new Catholic empire.³⁴⁴

Anti-Catholicism took a different shape in Canada and particularly in Quebec because of the French Catholic population. Protestantism was associated with British identities across the empire, but in the context of Quebec's French majority, it became a highly polarizing identifier of Britishness in opposition to Catholic Frenchness. Quebec Catholicism closely adhered to the

³⁴³ Protestant Defence Alliance of Canada, *Constitution, &c.* (Montreal: Witness Printing House, 1876), 4.

³⁴⁴ John Wolffe, "Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire, 1815-1914," in *Empires of Religion*, ed. Hilary Carey (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 46–49.

Ultramontane ideology articulated by the First Vatican Council in 1870 and in Pope Pius IX's 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*, which codified papal infallibility and denounced rationalism and liberalism.³⁴⁵ The Catholic Bishop of Montreal was very closely involved in provincial governance and exerted his influence to maintain the primacy of French Catholic culture in the face of an increasingly Anglicized Canada. The grievances most commonly cited by Protestants against the Quebec hierarchy were nepotism, the overrepresentation of Catholic clergy in public offices, the funnelling of public money into Catholic schools and churches, and most egregious of all, executive interference in legal proceedings against Catholic priests.³⁴⁶ In response, English Quebecois frequently interpreted the Catholic hierarchy as tyrannical and freedom-hating in opposition to narratives of modern, industrial, progressive, and Protestant Britishness.³⁴⁷

Carpenter's perception of the Catholic church was very much informed by this broader context, and he connected local discourses of anti-Catholicism to the suppression of the Mohawk-Seminary dispute. He resented the Catholic Church for threatening to excommunicate anyone who voted for English politicians likely to stand up for the Mohawk, as well as for banning the pro-Protestant *Montreal Witness* newspaper which reported on the dispute.³⁴⁸ Moreover, he believed that the Quebec government was "the obedient slave of the Cath[olic] hierarchy," and that the Canadian government was unwilling to intervene in the dispute and

³⁴⁵ Miller, "Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada," 476.

³⁴⁶ For examples, see: "Protestant Defence Alliance," *The Montreal Star*, 5 February 1876; "The Archambault Case," *The Montreal Star*, 1 October 1874.

³⁴⁷ Géraldine Vaughan, "'Britishers and Protestants': Protestantism and Imperial British Identities in Britain, Canada and Australia from the 1880s to the 1920s," *Studies in Church History* 54 (2018): 359–73, <https://doi.org/10.1017/stc.2017.20>.

³⁴⁸ Philip Carpenter to Frederick Chesson, 28 July 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G83b Volume 1 - 7, BodL.

thereby risk jeopardizing the hierarchy's goodwill.³⁴⁹ Carpenter concluded that this obsequiousness to the Catholic Church had made "the whole body of Canadian politicians...dumb dogs in the matter,"³⁵⁰ and he looked to the British press as a means of breaking the enforced silence around Mohawk land rights. By doing so, Carpenter's case study reveals that not only was settlerness a far more fractured and internally incoherent identifier than colonial newspapers indicate, but that colonial newspapers were also liable to be purposefully manipulated by local power structures to disseminate propaganda supporting certain versions of settlerness. The participatory imperial press, therefore, represented both an opportunity to dissent from local interpretations of settler-Indigenous relations as well as a means of challenging local propaganda regimes.

Carpenter's strategy of spurring local action through the APS and the imperial press was shared by many across the empire. Writing from the other end of Canada, settler Arthur McCallum sent the APS his account of depredations by the British Columbian government on Tsimshian First Nations land for publication in Britain. McCallum knew that the imperial government was unlikely to get involved, and so placed his faith in the power of British public opinion to convince his government to change its policy, writing: "I have hope that now this transaction is exposed to the light of public opinion that this ill faith with the Indians will not be done."³⁵¹ Meanwhile, a settler in the Cape Colony named David Smith sent the APS for publication his account of the Orange Free State's persecution of the Seleke-Rolong chief Samuel Moroka. Like both McCallum and Carpenter, Smith saw little hope in asking for

³⁴⁹ Philip Carpenter to Frederick Chesson, 17 December 1875, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G83b Volume 1 - 8, BodL.

³⁵⁰ Carpenter to Chesson, 1 January 1876.

³⁵¹ McCallum to Chesson, 26 October 1886.

imperial intervention, and instead sought the influence of British public opinion on local politics, insisting that “still the British Colonies with the two adjoining republics are capable of being influenced by the expression of English opinion, and President Brand as much as any one.”³⁵²

These efforts illustrate the profound political connotations of Britishness in the settler colonies. Whereas Britishness is most often approached as a cultural signifier, these cases show that settlers could also leverage it politically through the threat of denouncing government policies as unBritish. Most importantly, these cases demonstrate how settlers could use the participatory nature of the British press to fashion and dispute the meaning of Britishness to set their own parameters of the proper relations between settlers, Indigenous peoples, and empire.

³⁵² Smith to Chesson, 4 December 1883.

Petitioning for imperial intervention: Harold Stephens and the Bechuanaland wars, 1882-1885

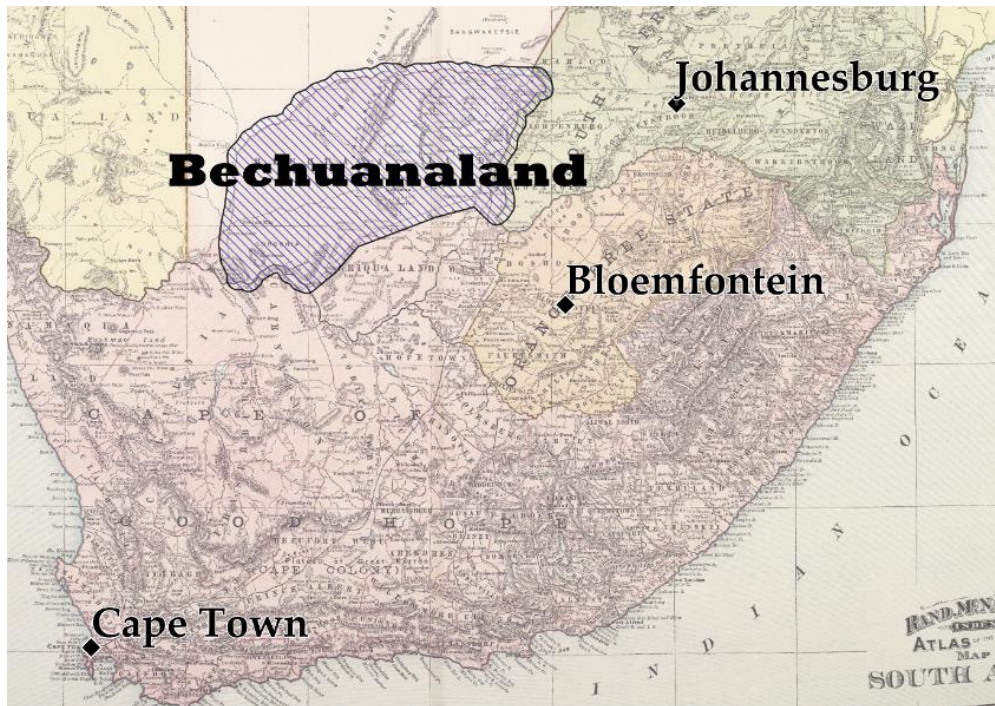


Figure 6: 1892 map of South Africa showing Bechuanaland in relation to Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, and Cape Town. Rand McNally and Company, “Map of South Africa,” in Rand McNally and Company’s Indexed Atlas of the World (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1897).

Philip Carpenter refrained from directly calling for imperial action because he did not believe this was a realistic expectation, but not all settlers were so pessimistic, especially those from colonies which shared borders with Crown colonies, protectorates, and other territories that fell within imperial jurisdiction. Harold Stephens (c.1840-1896) represents the body of correspondents from such borderland regions who used the British press as an indirect method of petitioning the British government for imperial intervention. Harold was born to the wealthy Stephens family of Finchley in north London. His father, Dr Henry Stephens, was a successful physician who patented a new type of ink (“Stephens Ink”) in 1837 that he turned into a global

stationery supplies empire.³⁵³ It is not clear what Harold did for the first thirty years of his life, but from 1870 he worked for the family business in North America, travelling throughout the eastern United States and Canada to promote Stephens Ink. In 1875 he settled in South Africa, originally investing in sheep farming in the Cape Colony, then in diamond mining in Griqualand West, then working as a government clerk in the Transvaal, and finally training as a lawyer and working for a law firm in Kimberley. All the while he continued to sell his family's ink in the South African market. He witnessed and read news about countless conflicts between the Afrikaners of the Transvaal and the Zulu Kingdom as well as the Anglo-Zulu War and became highly critical of settler encroachments on African land, writing often to his family of the horrors he had seen during colonial warfare.³⁵⁴ Harold Stephens was a very different sort of settler than Dr Carpenter. He was on a constant search for better opportunities, moving from business to business and city to city in the wake of South Africa's turbulent nineteenth-century economy. And yet he too turned to the APS for help in publishing letters in the British press, further illustrating the pervasiveness of the APS's reputation as a publishing agent.

Stephens' previous experiences of Afrikaner-Zulu warfare pushed him to action when he witnessed new hostilities brewing between the Transvaal and the Tswana of Bechuanaland in the early 1880s. These hostilities, which I term for convenience the Bechuanaland wars, began following the 1881 Convention of London when Britain retroceded the Transvaal to the Afrikaner government. Land was scarce and few in the Transvaal were content with the strict

³⁵³ Martha Walsh, *The Life of Henry Stephens, F.R.C.S., 1796-1864*, 1925.

³⁵⁴ Harold Stephens to Henry Stephens, 21 December 1875, 1340 - 58, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (WSHC); Harold Stephens to Henry Stephens, 25 January 1876, 1340 - 58, WSHC; Harold Stephens to Henry Stephens, 18 March 1876, 1340 - 58, WSHC; Harold Stephens to Henry Stephens, 15 November 1876, 1340 - 113, WSHC; Harold Stephens to Henry Stephens, 14 May 1878, 1340 - 58, WSHC; Harold Stephens to Henry Stephens, 28 November 1878, 1340 - 58, WSHC; Harold Stephens to Henry Stephens, 16 April 1879, 1340 - 58, WSHC.

western boundaries that the Convention had placed upon them, and yet to have broken the Convention was to have risked further conflict with Britain. As a consequence, the Transvaal government encouraged “volunteers” to invade Tswana territory to the west and establish their own “independent” farms. Britain and the Cape Colony repeatedly called for the Transvaal to constrain its citizens but refused to get involved in events outside British territory, so the Transvaal continued the Bechuanaland wars for three years before Britain finally intervened in 1885.³⁵⁵ Stephens wrote a series of reader letters to the *Standard* and *The Times* to convince the British government and people to aid the Tswana, and he turned to the APS when he found British papers reluctant to publish his letters.



Figure 7: Drawing of a team of zebra in the Transvaal. Stephens sent this image to a British periodical called The Field along with an article entitled “The Utilization of the Zebra” on 11 March 1893. It is the only image I have found connected to Harold Stephens.

³⁵⁵ Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate*, 40–55.

There are important differences between Stephens's letters and those from Carpenter. Unlike Carpenter, Stephens did not write about a conflict within his colony. Bechuanaland and the Transvaal were both outside of Cape Colony jurisdiction and therefore undeniably matters of imperial rather than colonial policy. Stephens's letters, therefore, do not provide the same insight into experiences of overlapping imperial and colonial subjectivity as Carpenter's. Stephens also wrote during a period of increasing imperial activity now referred to as New Imperialism which, in South Africa, manifested itself in competition between Germany, Portugal, and the Transvaal over economic interests such as diamond and gold mines, outlets to international shipping routes, and trade routes into central Africa. This important context bled into Stephens's letters, which revolved around geopolitical concerns that do not appear in the letters from Canada. Yet, as will be seen, both settlers used the British press to reject local representations of settler identity. There was not much difference between Stephens's concern about Afrikanerness and Carpenter's concern about Frenchness, and both correspondents responded to those concerns through articulations of Britishness. The differences between these correspondents highlight the variety of ways that settlerness and Britishness were interpreted across the empire, but they also support my argument regarding settler uses of imperial networks by demonstrating continuities despite important differences.

Harold Stephens wrote his reader letters primarily in response to portrayals of Afrikaner involvement in the Bechuanaland wars. The two main Kimberley newspapers at the time, the *Daily Independent* and the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, were both controlled by mining magnates and politicians.³⁵⁶ The *Independent* was owned by Sir Joseph Robinson, the Mayor of

³⁵⁶ For an overview of the Kimberley press, see L.J. Picton, "Being Some Account of the History of the Printing, Packaging and Newspaper Industry of South Africa, and of the National

Kimberley, representative of Griqualand West in the Cape parliament, and good friend of President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal.³⁵⁷ The *Advertiser* was edited by Henry Tucker, ex-member of the Cape legislative assembly, strong supporter of Afrikaner republicanism, and leader of the Committee of Public Safety which rebelled against the imperial administration of Griqualand West (the short-lived Crown Colony formed around Kimberley) in 1875.³⁵⁸ Both of these parties had close ties with the Afrikaner republics and were actively interested in preventing imperial interference, and their newspapers reflected this, consistently absolving the Transvaal government of responsibility for the hostilities and downplaying the need for imperial assistance.

On 22 March 1882, upon news of fresh Afrikaner hostilities in Bechuanaland, the *Advertiser* reported that it was perpetrated by a “lawless” class of “scum” from the Transvaal that did not “reflect on our Dutch fellow-colonists generally,” and declared “our firm conviction that the majority of the Transvaal people and the Government are opposed to the filibustering.”³⁵⁹ The *Independent* concurred, reporting that it was only a small minority of “freebooters” who were attacking Bechuanaland, and assured its readers that “the Boer Government had nothing to do with the attack.”³⁶⁰ The following year, when the Transvaal government had defeated and impoverished the tribes of two Tswana chiefs, Mampoer and Mapoch, the *Advertiser* absolved the Transvaal of guilt by avowing that Mampoer “richly

Industrial Council for Printing, Prepared to Mark the Jubilee of the Council 1919-1969” (MA thesis, Cape Town, University of Cape Town, 1969).

³⁵⁷ Robert Turrell, *Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields, 1871-1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 114–22.

³⁵⁸ Rob Turrell, “The 1875 Black Flag Revolt on the Kimberley Diamond Fields,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, no. 2 (1981): 194–235.

³⁵⁹ “Leader,” *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 22 March 1882.

³⁶⁰ “Transvaal and the Natives,” *The Daily Independent*, 1 April 1882.

deserved it” and that Mapoch’s tribe was destroyed “through their chief’s folly,” while the *Independent* agreed that “the evidence found against [Mampoer] was conclusive.”³⁶¹ Although both papers regretted the suffering inflicted on the Tswana, neither supported interference. The *Advertiser* simply stated that “we disclaim any wish to force on hostilities,”³⁶² and the *Independent* elaborated that “it will be most deplorable if this petty squabble between two native chiefs is made into a peg upon which to hang a serious quarrel between the Boers and ourselves...it is time the hatchet were buried and the country had a chance to develop into something more than a bear-garden.”³⁶³

The Kimberley press’s reluctance to exacerbate Anglo-Afrikaner tensions stemmed from the close relationships and inter-connections that the two groups had developed while sharing a border, a relationship that manifested into a fear of any “scheme which would bring internal strife and civil war amongst the English and the Dutch who have to live together in this country.”³⁶⁴ This fear resulted in a dominant local press narrative that blamed the Tswana for the violence done to them and absolved the Transvaal of any responsibility for the actions of its subjects. Within this narrative are parameters of a settler identity in which violence against Indigenous peoples is natural, inevitable, and uncontrollable, reflecting the common argument that settler consciousness was founded upon variations of fatal impact theory.³⁶⁵ Hutchinson in particular highlights the importance of the perceived inevitability of Indigenous peoples’

³⁶¹ “The Commando,” *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 28 July 1883; “The Commando,” *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 4 August 1883; “The Trial of Mampoer and Niabel,” *The Daily Independent*, 29 September 1883.

³⁶² “Leader,” *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 22 March 1882.

³⁶³ “Leader,” *The Daily Independent*, 4 March 1882.

³⁶⁴ “South Western Border,” *The Daily Independent*, 11 November 1882.

³⁶⁵ For an overview of fatal impact theory, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Cornell University Press, 2003).

disappearance in the formation of settler identity. “Regret and anticipation were co-dependent. To regret indigenous demise in the face of sustained resistance to British force, one first had to fantasise the demise to be regretted.”³⁶⁶

At the same time, Kimberley newspapers were defining settler identity in relation to metropolitan disdain for settler warmongering and land hunger. *The Times* openly recognized that the Transvaal government was “beyond a doubt” involved in Bechuanaland hostilities.³⁶⁷ Receiving early reports that Boer “freebooters” had invaded Bechuanaland with three pieces of artillery, *The Times* concluded that

it is quite evident that more than local Boers are engaged in the struggle... Cannon form no part of the farm implements of a Transvaal Boer, and the cannon... can hardly be other than the Krupp guns taken over by the British Government at the annexation and returned by them to the Transvaal State.³⁶⁸

Nevertheless, *The Times* expressed exhaustion at the thought of another South African war and interpreted the Bechuanaland hostilities as proof that settlers possessed an insatiable appetite for conquest at Britain’s expense.

To bring the Caffre race... under the direct authority of the Crown, is the dream of every colonist, who would like nothing better than to live as lord among an inferior race, whose submission was secured to him by the help of British bayonets and by the contributions of British taxpayers.³⁶⁹

The decade of non-stop warfare – including the first Anglo-Boer War of 1877, the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, the Basuto Gun War of 1880, and more – had “put the English people thoroughly out of love with South Africa,”³⁷⁰ and *The Times* insisted that getting involved in Bechuanaland would only perpetuate the never-ending violence. “A tranquil Bechuanaland would be made the

³⁶⁶ Hutchinson, *Settlers, War, and Empire*, 63–64.

³⁶⁷ “Leader,” *The Times*, 9 October 1882.

³⁶⁸ “The Chief Montsive and the Transvaal Boers,” *The Times*, 13 March 1882.

³⁶⁹ “Leader,” *The Times*, 13 April 1883.

³⁷⁰ “Leader,” *The Times*, 30 August 1882.

safe basis for filibustering further afield. So long as human nature remains what it is the white races of South Africa will covet the fertile lands of the natives, and dare everything in order to possess themselves of them.”³⁷¹ Similar notions appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Daily News*.³⁷²

The Kimberley press was very aware of these critiques and defended settlers by denouncing a desire for military involvement. The *Independent* was explicit about this, which is unsurprising since its owner, Sir John Robinson, was a member of the Cape parliament that refused to get involved in the conflict. To explain its supportive stance of the Transvaal government, the *Independent* wrote that

it is extremely desirable to disabuse our countrymen at Home of the prejudice they entertain against their countrymen in this land as to our delight in war – and as to our hope of gain from conflicts which we can carry on only by sacrificing valuable lives and millions of treasure that we sorely need for infinitely better purposes.³⁷³

The local press therefore not only defined settlerness as inevitably dispossession of Indigenous peoples but also as militarily neutral and unburdensome to imperial expenses. Contextualized by fear of civil war with the Afrikaner population, the Kimberley press’s stance against imperial military involvement aligns with Lester’s and Hutchinson’s model of settler society manipulating connections with the metropole in the interests of local security.

Stephens refuted the pro-Transvaal discourses within local papers with a scathing indictment of the Transvaal government’s complicity in outrages performed against the Tswana. In his first letter to the *Standard*, he explained that the Transvaal government only appeared uninvolved because it was hiding its involvement from England. “The Boers, while doing all

³⁷¹ “Leader,” *The Times*, 29 March 1883.

³⁷² “Not Another War?,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 March 1883; “Leader,” *The Daily News*, 14 October 1882.

³⁷³ “Transvaal and the Natives,” *The Daily Independent*, 1 April 1882.

they can to crush Montsiou...are careful not to do it in an official way, because that might cause trouble with England, whereas, by aiding and assisting it privately, they could do quite as much without incurring responsibility.”³⁷⁴ Stephens rejected claims that independent freebooters were responsible for the hostilities, insisting that it only “suits the Boer Government to make out that they have nothing to do with the war,” and backing this up by pointing to offers made by the Transvaal government to recruit “volunteers” from its army and compensate them with paid leave.³⁷⁵ Stephens also challenged local non-interference rhetoric, writing that the best course of action was for an army of volunteers to be formed, “nearly all of whom could be raised within a hundred miles or so of the scene of operations,” and the Afrikaners to be forcibly ejected from Bechuanaland.³⁷⁶ Finally, Stephens contrasted local representations of peaceable and hardworking Afrikaners with images of “rapacious,” “cruel,” “duplicitous,” and “ruthless tyrants.”³⁷⁷

Some of Stephens’ claims aligned with the representations found in the metropolitan press. His assertion of Transvaal complicity agrees with the *Standard*’s line that the Transvaal government “openly, deliberately, and grossly” violated the terms of the Convention of London.³⁷⁸ But Stephens’s call for military interference and his derogatory comments about Afrikaners flew in the face of metropolitan exhaustion with warfare and increasingly favourable attitudes towards Afrikaner society, informed by prominent commentators like James Froude and Anthony Trollope who had written popular monographs in the 1870s in favour of Afrikaners and

³⁷⁴ Harold Stephens, “Boer Revenge,” *The Standard*, 31 May 1882.

³⁷⁵ Stephens, “Boer Revenge.”

³⁷⁶ Harold Stephens, “State of the Transvaal,” *The Standard*, 15 May 1883.

³⁷⁷ Stephens, “Boer Revenge”; Harold Stephens, “The Boers and Montsoia,” *The Standard*, 16 October 1884.

³⁷⁸ “Leader,” *The Standard*, 14 March 1883.

critical of British settlers.³⁷⁹ Thus, just like Carpenter, Stephens used reader letters to fashion an alternative settler identity. Unlike representations in the local press absolving settlers for the inevitable clash with Indigenous peoples, Stephens represented settler society as responsible for justice towards Indigenous peoples. And unlike representations in the British press that settlers cared only about conquest and plunder, Stephens represented settler society as the protector of Indigenous peoples and watchdog against Afrikaner tyranny. Stephens tied this together with rhetoric about British honour, decrying Britain's non-interference as "a standing disgrace to England" and "a disgrace to the white inhabitants of S Africa and to civilization (so called) in general."³⁸⁰

Stephens's deployment of Britishness to differentiate his notion of settlerness from that of Afrikaners recalls Carpenter's use of Britishness against Frenchness and Americanness, and yet it runs counter to how many British World historians have applied Britishness to South Africa. Andrew Thompson, Christopher Saunders, and Saul Dubow each argue for an inclusive, non-racial understanding of South African Britishness as "a field of cultural, political, and symbolic attachments" that could be claimed by Africans as well as Afrikaners who aspired to the rights of British subjecthood.³⁸¹ In doing so, they continue the tradition of conflating Britishness with whiteness which Dane Kennedy exemplifies through his assertion that "to speak of Britishness in

³⁷⁹ Saul Dubow, "South Africa and South Africans: Nationality, Belonging, Citizenship," in *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, ed. Anne Kelk Mager, Bill Nasson, and Robert Ross, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19–21; Arthur Davey, *The British Pro-Boers, 1877-1902* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1978), 15–30.

³⁸⁰ Harold Stephens to Frederick Chesson, 5 August 1882, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C148/74, BodL; Harold Stephens to Frederick Chesson, 8 December 1885, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C148/83, BodL.

³⁸¹ Saul Dubow, "How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa," 3; Andrew Thompson, "The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa," 617–50; Christopher Saunders, "Britishness in South Africa: Some Reflections," *Humanities Research* 13, no. 1 (2006): 61–69, <https://search.informit.org/doi/epdf/10.3316/informit.616091952687845>.

the British World was in large measure to mean whiteness.”³⁸² John Lambert takes a different stance, arguing that despite Britishness discourses pervading all parts of South African society, “British South African identities were also constructed in relation to those identities with which they came into contact, particularly Afrikaner and African.”³⁸³ Lambert contends that negative definitions of Britishness as “being neither Afrikaner nor black” prevented the sort of racialized cohesion/hierarchy articulated by the concept of whiteness and became a contingent factor for the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the twentieth century.³⁸⁴ Stephens’s letters lend support to this argument. His articulation of Britishness to clarify his identity as one type of settler rather than another problematizes British World conceptualizations of Britishness as well as settler colonial studies conceptualizations of settlerness as unifying identifiers synonymous with whiteness. Instead, Stephens and Carpenter demonstrate how reader letters to the British press were used to articulate alternative and hybridized identities as British-settlers in opposition to French-settlers or Afrikaner-settlers in rejection of their shared whiteness/settlerness.

Stephens’s use of the British press as a fourth estate also shared similarities with Carpenter’s experience of information suppression. Throughout his letters, Stephens expressed strong concerns about the trustworthiness of the British Resident (an imperial official deployed to regions of indirect or limited sovereignty) in the Transvaal, George Hudson. Stephens was fairly guarded in how he wrote about Hudson. He acknowledged that Hudson was a British official in a state recently at war with Britain, and that “were he to represent matters unfavourably as against the Boers he would, unsupported and isolated as he is, place himself in a

³⁸² Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 77.

³⁸³ John Lambert, “‘An Unknown People’: Reconstructing British South African Identity,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 4 (2009): 602, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530903327101>.

³⁸⁴ Lambert, “An Unknown People,” 606–7.

very difficult position.”³⁸⁵ Because of this, Stephens considered that “it would not be wise to trust altogether to his report,”³⁸⁶ and he wrote to the *Standard* that the English community in South Africa “have little confidence in him officially.”³⁸⁷ But Stephens did not merely advocate for a healthy scepticism towards Hudson’s reports. He believed that Hudson was deliberately “endeavouring to hoodwink the British government,”³⁸⁸ “shutting his eyes to everything that is going on in the hopes of cultivating friendly relations with the Boers and making his position more comfortable.”³⁸⁹ Angry that the Bechuanaland wars continued with no action from the British government, Stephens blamed Hudson’s dishonest reports to the Colonial Office, reasoning that “Sir H R [Hercules Robinson, High Commissioner for South Africa] has taken the British Resident (Mr Hudson’s) version of them and in that case it will account for nothing having been done.”³⁹⁰ Just like Carpenter, Stephens attempted to use the imperial press as a publicly accessible means of challenging disinformation disseminated by local authorities.

Stephens and Carpenter thus both envisioned the British press as a check on what they perceived to be unBritish discourses of settler identity in their local press, and they used reader letters as a forum for the articulation of alternative identities. They also both envisioned the British press as a check on censorship in their local information regimes, whether that be the British Resident in Transvaal’s cover-up of Afrikaner hostility or the Catholic Church’s suppression of pro-Protestant voices in Quebec, and they used reader letters to access imperial

³⁸⁵ Harold Stephens to Frederick Chesson, 6 February 1882, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C148/68, BodL.

³⁸⁶ Stephens to Chesson, 6 February 1882.

³⁸⁷ Stephens, “Boer Revenge.”

³⁸⁸ Harold Stephens to Frederick Chesson, 22 May 1882, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C148/69, BodL.

³⁸⁹ Harold Stephens to Frederick Chesson, 11 November 1882, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C148/76, BodL.

³⁹⁰ Harold Stephens to Frederick Chesson, 16 July 1882, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C148/73, BodL.

authority and side-step the jurisdiction of their immediate surroundings. And, of course, they both worked through the APS to do this. These cases provide a window into the lived experiences of empire, where events as different as colonial wars and a church being pulled down were seen through the lens of imperial networks. Settlers constantly evaluated how their local environments related to imperial power, how they could tap into that power through various networks, and how they could navigate the strengths and limitations of different networks by combining them in different ways.

Alongside these similarities, Stephens' use of the British press as a venue for indirectly petitioning the British government distinguishes him from Carpenter and places him in a special category of correspondents writing from regions on the border between settler and imperial territories. Also in this category are people like Alfred Davidson, a potter from Queensland who campaigned throughout the 1870s against the Pacific labour trade that brought kidnapped labourers to work in the Queensland sugar industry.³⁹¹ Davidson, like Carpenter and Stephens, found that his local newspapers censored any criticism of the labour trade since they were "principally supported by employers of Polynesians."³⁹² Having found that the local government was unwilling to establish protective labour laws, Davidson asked the APS to publish his letters in the British press to pressure the British government to crack down on kidnapping in the Pacific islands. There was also Alfred Roche, a clerk in the Canadian government who in 1857 asked the APS to publish his papers in the hope that the British government would be pressured to annex the Hudson's Bay Company territories. Britain had allowed the Hudson's Bay

³⁹¹ For an overview of the Pacific labour trade, see Tracey Banivanua-Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indentured Labor Trade* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

³⁹² Alfred Davidson to Frederick Chesson, 1 October 1870, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C132/90, BodL.

Company to sign a treaty with the Russian Fur Company to guarantee that the Crimean War would not spill over into Russian America, and Roche saw influencing British public opinion through the press as the best means of punishing what many saw as an unpatriotic and corrupt company.³⁹³ This category of correspondents shares many similarities with those from Chapter Two who used the APS as a medium for performing imperial citizenship, only in this chapter, citizenship was performed indirectly through the fourth estate rather than directly petitioning the House of Commons. Their reader letters illustrate the imperial scale of the fourth estate as a concept, binding distant and technically self-governing colonies into an interconnected public sphere, as well as the multiplicity of ways that imperial citizenship was enacted in the late nineteenth century.

Conclusion

For Philip Carpenter and Harold Stephens, writing to the APS was a strategy for navigating the complex and overlapping currents of the imperial press system. Caught within colonial press communities conflating settler identity with the subjection of Indigenous peoples, the dispossession of Indigenous lands, and independence from imperial oversight, these settlers found that their local newspapers were incapable of representing their own notions of settlerness. They coped with this by writing letters to British newspapers, circumventing local editorial control over representations of settler society. With variations according to local context, each correspondent articulated a vision of settlerness based on conciliation and solidarity with Indigenous peoples as well as submission to imperial authority. For Philip Carpenter, this meant prioritizing the protection of Mohawk religious freedom over the protection of Roman Catholic

³⁹³ Roche to Chesson, 7 February 1857; “Notes from the Seat of Government,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 12 March 1857.

property rights. For Harold Stephens, it meant refusing to absolve Afrikaner settlers of responsibility for Tswana welfare and honouring Tswana loyalty by providing military support. In addition to the unrepresentative propaganda of their local press, these settlers also found themselves under the thumb of authorities they believed were suppressing the truth and spreading disinformation about Indigenous-settler relations. Each of them looked to the publication of their letters in British newspapers as a means of circumventing government control over official communication with the Colonial Office. Stephens's letters contested the honesty and reliability of the British Resident of the Transvaal, while Carpenter's letters subverted the Quebec Government's and the Roman Catholic Hierarchy's censorship of Protestant grievances. Publishing letters in British newspapers thus represented a chance to redefine settler identities and dissent from settler government policies, but it was very difficult to secure publication in the highly competitive metropolitan press. The APS's secretary, Frederick Chesson, was both well-known and well-connected, and by working through him, both successfully published their letters.

My findings hold significant implications for British World and settler colonial studies historiographies. First, I challenge historians who use colonial newspapers alone as proxies for settler identities. To be fair, I do recognize that such historians qualify their methodologies in various ways. Charles Reed, for instance, acknowledges that colonial newspapers often served social elites more than middling and working classes, that not all settlers read newspapers, and that "even when settlers did read, it is extremely difficult to gauge how they interpreted and responded to what they read."³⁹⁴ Yet Reed quickly dismisses these qualifications, asserting that

despite these limitations, it is clear that newspapers were important sites of political and cultural discourse in colonial civil societies...They were the means of

³⁹⁴ Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 83.

establishing a local story of what it meant to be British, a Capetonian, a New Zealander, a loyal citizen-subject of the Queen, or any other number of identities.³⁹⁵

I agree that colonial newspapers are useful for assessing the information that settlers were presented with on a daily basis, yet this chapter suggests that colonial newspapers actively suppressed the articulation of competing identities and so need to be placed in their proper context as one of many competing imperial networks that colonial subjects moved between. The reader letters examined here rejected the identities that local editors were attempting to fashion, showing that settlers articulated new discourses which did not appear in local papers.

Further, these correspondents explicitly indicated that writing to British papers was intended to address limitations and misrepresentations in their local papers. Such intentionality is sometimes explicated within the actual reader letters, as when Carpenter complained to the *Daily News* that “the two morning papers, organs of the two political parties, barely chronicled the events as matters of fact.”³⁹⁶ More often, however, these intentions are only revealed by the way Carpenter and Stephens wrote of their reader letters to the APS. For example, Stephens denigrated his local papers for failing to report events from Tswana perspectives, who were at a disadvantage since they “have no newspapers or other means of influencing public opinion in their favour.”³⁹⁷ He also accused his local papers of spreading imprecise information “especially as the news that we obtain here is generally from Boer sources.”³⁹⁸ According to Stephens, local reporting on Bechuanaland hostilities was so bad that “no one knows the villainy being practised except those who are eyewitnesses.”³⁹⁹ Carpenter also complained that when local papers

³⁹⁵ Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 83.

³⁹⁶ Carpenter, “Priestly Outrage on the Protestant Indians of Lower Canada.”

³⁹⁷ Stephens to Chesson, 6 February 1882.

³⁹⁸ Stephens to Chesson, 6 February 1882.

³⁹⁹ Stephens to Chesson, 22 May 1882.

mentioned Mohawk persecutions they “‘drew it mild’ all through.”⁴⁰⁰ This demonstrates that some settlers utilized the interconnectedness of the imperial press system as theorized by British World scholars to distance themselves from settler discourses and fashion their identities more in line with the viewpoints espoused in metropolitan papers. And yet, Carpenter and Stephens were not merely consuming images of Britishness from the metropole, as suggested by Simon Potter’s interpretation of Benedict Anderson’s theory. Their letters certainly shared similar elements as metropolitan papers, but there were fundamental differences that reveal local interpretations and adaptations to metropolitan discourses. These differences showcase the value of studying reader letters separately from professional journalist content, as they reveal the extent to which newspaper readers were able to fashion new identities beyond the parameters set by editors.

Finally, the internal fractures identified in this chapter between White settler communities in Quebec and the Cape Colony challenge historians who too easily conflate Britishness with Whiteness in the settler colonies. Whiteness as a concept emerged out of American labour history, where a multi-ethnic white identity became a unifying marker for the working and middling classes as well as historically marginalized groups such as Irish and Jewish people, in addition to a marker of difference from African Americans and other peoples of colour.⁴⁰¹ Whiteness was then adopted by historians of the British empire to explain the racialization of settler societies, and in many instances has been used synonymously with Britishness. Bill Schwarz, for instance, argues that Whiteness as a discourse of racial superiority was formed on colonial frontiers, where “‘becoming white entailed the immediate activity of rendering others – generic ‘natives’ – subordinate: not on occasion, but incessantly.”⁴⁰² And Schwarz contends that

⁴⁰⁰ Carpenter to Chesson, 28 July 1875.

⁴⁰¹ Woollacott, “Whiteness and ‘the Imperial Turn,’” 18–20.

⁴⁰² Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume 1: The White Man’s World*, 120.

the racialized “white” category was legitimized through notions of Britishness: “The British inheritance could work, in part, because it was white...Britishness, once invoking a set of liberties, came through the course of his political career to be overlaid by faith in the singular race patriotism of its bearers.”⁴⁰³ But such conflations of Whiteness and Britishness would not have made much sense to Carpenter and Stephens, who both understood Britishness as a signifier against other White groups like the French and the Afrikaners. This chapter, therefore, indicates that Whiteness was not the homogenizing identifier in the settler colonies that it is too often assumed to have been, but was instead riven by competing visions of British, French, Afrikaner, and other Whiteness.

There are two important limitations to this chapter. The first limitation is the extent to which individual case studies can be used to study transnational patterns. In terms of attitudes towards Indigenous peoples and empire, this chapter presents two individual stories that cannot be assumed to reflect the values and attitudes of their wider communities. After all, if the majority of settlers in Canada or South Africa worked as hard as Carpenter or Stephens to support Indigenous rights in the late nineteenth century, it would be hard to explain why we are still in the “settler colonial situation” over a century later. These two case studies were part of a larger group of twenty-four APS correspondents referenced throughout this chapter, but even twenty-four case studies would not be able to represent the millions of settlers living in the settler colonies by this period. Yet the research question behind this dissertation asks what correspondence with the APS reveals about *how* people in the colonies interacted with empire, not *what* they thought about empire. Consequently, what matters is whether Carpenter’s and Stephens’ experiences of writing to the British press – experiences of local censorship and

⁴⁰³ Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*, 143.

clashing perspectives on settlerness – are part of a wider culture of being imperial subjects. And although much more research is needed to determine how widespread these experiences were, there are some indications that these APS correspondents were not alone. I have found over 200 reader letters from the settler colonies in British newspapers like the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily News*, the *Standard*, and *The Times*, many of them signed anonymously as variants on “A New Zealand Colonist,” “A Resident of Canada,” and “A Cape Colonist of Twenty Years.” I do not have the space to analyse all of these letters here, but their existence suggests that the individual case studies used in this chapter are indeed part of a larger formation.

The second limitation is that of impact: while the strategy of publishing letters in the British press by working through the APS was successful, it is hard to say that these publications had any real-world influence. The Seminary of St. Sulpice continued to assert its property rights over the Kanesatake village and reject any obligations towards the Mohawk, despite multiple armed conflicts and legal disputes culminating in a Privy Council decision in 1912 that the Seminary possessed the duties of a charitable trust towards the Mohawk.⁴⁰⁴ The dispute between the Seminary and the Mohawk was not resolved until 1945, when the Canadian government purchased the land from the Seminary, but the land was never given to the Mohawk and title remains disputed to this day.⁴⁰⁵ Stephens’s case is harder to judge. His wish for military intervention in Bechuanaland was granted in 1884 when the British government proclaimed a

⁴⁰⁴ Thompson, “A Brief History of the Land Dispute at Kanesatake [Oka] from Contact to 1961,” 31–39.

⁴⁰⁵ Tom Fennario, “Mohawk Land Dispute Unresolved Three Decades after Siege of Kanehsatake,” *APTN News*, 11 July 2020, <https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/siegekanehsatake30th/>; Thompson, “A Brief History of the Land Dispute at Kanesatake [Oka] from Contact to 1961,” 43–47.

protectorate over Bechuanaland. Significant credit for this development is often given to John Mackenzie, the prominent missionary whose lectures across England from 1882-1884 generated widespread public support for the Tswana,⁴⁰⁶ but Stephens's published letters undoubtedly contributed. Yet his articulation of a settler identity that stressed responsibility for justice towards the Tswana did not take root either, and by 1896 the Tswana were in rebellion against the Cape Colony in opposition to a decade of land loss, forced labour, and interference in Tswana politics.⁴⁰⁷ So Carpenter's and Stephens' efforts appear to have been entirely in vain.

Nevertheless, failure is itself significant, as every success is contingent on failure. As Antoinette Burton argues, "the very character of imperial power was shaped by its challengers and by the trouble they made for its stewards. Empire arguably has no history outside these struggles."⁴⁰⁸ Moreover, the failures in this chapter reveal new aspects of the lived experience of empire in the settler colonies during the late nineteenth century. The use of the fourth estate to counter settler government disinformation challenges assumptions that the political function of the newspapers in this period was limited to representing public opinion.⁴⁰⁹ This approach has particularly been applied to reader letters, which Aled Jones argues were a means of "feelings the national pulse," and Sigelman and Walkosz go so far as to term reader letters a "public opinion thermometer."⁴¹⁰ Some references to public opinion certainly pervade the letters under study. For

⁴⁰⁶ A. Sillery, *The Founding of a Protectorate: History of Bechuanaland, 1885-1895.*, 1965, 39.

⁴⁰⁷ Harry Saker and J. Aldridge, "The Origins of the Langeberg Rebellion," *The Journal of African History* 12, no. 2 (1971): 300–305, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700010690>.

⁴⁰⁸ Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1.

⁴⁰⁹ Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 106.

⁴¹⁰ Jones, *Powers of the Press*, 187–88; Christopher Cooper, H. Gibbs Knotts, and Moshe Haspel, "The Content of Political Participation: Letters to the Editor and the People Who Write Them," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42, no. 1 (2009): 938, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20452387>.

example, Stephens often wrote to the APS along the lines that he hoped his reader letters “would stir up public opinion in England and thus force the government to do something promptly.”⁴¹¹ But the way these correspondents used their reader letters to subvert local disinformation indicates that the fourth estate was not just about public opinion, but, following Allison Cavanaugh’s concept of the reader letters as a court-of-appeal, was also about the availability of an “empowered space” for the articulation of suppressed voices. Modern critiques of the fourth estate as unrepresentative of public opinion are still relevant. George Boyce, for instance, argues that the concept of the fourth estate was a political myth invented by newspaper proprietors in the mid-nineteenth century to justify their existence.⁴¹² Pointing to widespread political investment and infiltration into the press industry, Boyce contends that “the press was an extension of the political system, not a check or balance to Parliament and the Executive.”⁴¹³ Boyce’s argument implies that the openness of such empowered spaces was subject to a correspondent’s alignment with a newspaper’s political ideology. Andrew Hobbs has further demonstrated that Victorian newspaper editors carefully selected which letters to publish based on ideological alignment.⁴¹⁴ Regardless, the important point here is that British newspapers were in the pocket of different political interests than colonial newspapers, and so offered an empowered space that, while not free from political bias, was at least subject to a different political bias than settlers were subject to in their local press environments.

⁴¹¹ Stephens to Chesson, 22 May 1882.

⁴¹² George Boyce, “The Fourth Estate: The Reappraisal of a Concept,” in *Newspaper History: From the 17th Century to the Present Day* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1978), 20–21.

⁴¹³ Boyce, “The Fourth Estate,” 29.

⁴¹⁴ Andrew Hobbs, “Readers’ Letters to Victorian Local Newspapers as Journalistic Genre,” in *Letters to the Editor: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Allison Cavanaugh and John Steel (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan., 2019), 129.

Writing to British papers was therefore a means for settlers critical of their societies to challenge the settler colonial information order. Concepts like political censorship and disinformation have been articulated in reference to British newspaper coverage of India,⁴¹⁵ but are seldom applied to the settler colonies beyond the silencing and erasure of Indigenous voices. Studies of information orders in the settler colonies typically revolve around what Lorenzo Veracini refers to as disavowal and Richard Price calls the regime of silence, in which settler society as a collective denies and erases knowledge about colonial violence.⁴¹⁶ Jane Lydon, for instance, argues that the vast majority of Queensland settlers in the late nineteenth century denied the existence of slavery on the basis that accounts of slavery lacked convincing evidence.⁴¹⁷ Yet the extent to which Carpenter and Stephens perceived themselves as victims of disinformation and their use of the fourth estate as a space of dissent opens the possibility that disavowal and silence were not as collective as we think, but could have been manufactured by influential people like newspaper editors to suppress dissenting voices. If this is true, then historians need to modify our current theories of settler colonialism as a structure that persists not just through the erasure of Indigenous voices, but the suppression of settler humanitarian efforts as well.

⁴¹⁵ Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c. 1880-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴¹⁶ Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 76–86; Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 191–96.

⁴¹⁷ Jane Lydon, “The Bloody Skirt of Settlement: Arthur Vogan and Anti-Slavery in 1890s Australia,” *Australian Historical Studies* 45, no. 1 (2014): 50–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2013.877503>.

4. Indigenous Petitions and Settler Disinformation in New Zealand and the Cape Colony

In the decades after Britain conceded responsible government to its settler colonies in North America, Southern Africa, and Australasia in the mid to late nineteenth century, many Indigenous nations continued to send petitions to the metropole in the hope that Britain could override colonial government policies (see Figures 8 and 9 below). Very few of these petitions achieved tangible results, prompting historians to conclude that settler self-government rendered Indigenous petitions to Britain futile carryovers from a by-gone era. However, these petitions are only legible as futile from the teleological viewpoint of the present. For settler governments, these petitions provoked significant anxiety because their constitutions allowed Britain to intervene in their affairs in certain situations. And the imperial government seriously considered acting upon these petitions, conducting investigations into their veracity, debating them in parliament, and working with the Law Officers of the Crown to determine appropriate responses. Settler governments mobilized disinformation campaigns against Indigenous petitioners to prevent imperial interference, and in response, Indigenous petitioners turned to the Aborigines' Protection Society (APS) to verify and defend their claims. Attending to these disinformation and verification campaigns provides a new perspective on the operation of empire in the late nineteenth century.

This chapter presents a close reading of Indigenous correspondence with the APS in relation to disinformation campaigns launched against their petitions, and in doing so offers two significant historiographical contributions. My first contribution is that by placing the act of petitioning within a broader context of related activities, I show that Indigenous petitions were far more complicated and drawn-out processes of political activity than previously

acknowledged. Historians have rightfully identified petitioning as a powerful strategy for resisting settler colonization, whether by asserting demands for self-determination in rejection of colonial hegemony,⁴¹⁸ or else by proposing “transcendent moral orders” encompassing new and less violent relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers.⁴¹⁹ Petitioning was all the more important because it was accessible. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has been held up by contemporaries as well as some historians as the empire’s judicial watchdog that marginalized groups could look to for justice, and it should have been an important resource for Indigenous groups.⁴²⁰ On the contrary, due to a combination of exorbitant legal costs, discriminatory evidentiary requirements, and settler legislatures rendering many Indigenous issues non-justiciable, the Privy Council received no Indigenous rights appeals until the twentieth century.⁴²¹ Petitioning, on the other hand, could be practised for as little as the cost of paper and postage, and it was the well-established right of all British subjects since the seventeenth century,⁴²² making petitions an accessible tool for marginalized groups to express their political voices. However, historiographical analyses of Indigenous petitions stop at the moment of presentation to the petitioned authority and fail to observe the extended process of defending and validating petitions during Colonial Office investigations.

⁴¹⁸ Karen O’Brien, *Petitioning for Land: The Petitions of First Peoples of Modern British Colonies* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 15; Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 3.

⁴¹⁹ De Costa, “Identity, Authority, and the Moral Worlds of Indigenous Petitions,” 670.

⁴²⁰ Thomas Mohr, “A British Empire Court: A Brief Appraisal of the History of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council,” in *Power in History: From Medieval to the Post-Modern World*, ed. Anthony McElligott et al. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011), 5–9.

⁴²¹ McHugh and Ford, “Settler Sovereignty and the Shapeshifting Crown,” 29–33; Sidney Haring, *White Man’s Law: Native People in Nineteenth-Century Canadian Jurisprudence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 94–105.

⁴²² Mark Knights, “‘The Lowest Degree of Freedom’: The Right to Petition Parliament, 1640–1800,” *Parliamentary History* 37, no. S1 (2018): 18–34, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1750-0206.12327>.

To Her Majesty Victoria, THE GOOD QUEEN OF ENGLAND, AND THE EMPRESS OF INDIA,

Greeting :

Go forth, O our messenger, on the soft airs of affection, to remote lands, across the ocean that was trodden by Tawhaki* to VICTORIA, the Queen of England, whose fame for graciousness has extended to all the kingdoms of the world, including New Zealand : O Mother, the receiver of the sentiments of the great peoples and the small peoples under the shade of your authority—Salutations ! May the Almighty preserve you on your throne, and may men applaud you for your goodness to your peoples living in these islands, who are continually directing their eyes towards you—the Mother who is venerated by them.

O Mother, the Queen ! on account of the desire to protect these islands, your father sent hither, in 1840, Captain Hobson. At that time the enlightened administration of England was discovered by us, and the Maori chiefs came to the conclusion that England, in preference to other countries, should be the protector of New Zealand—to protect and cherish the Maori tribes of New Zealand. The conclusion brought about the Treaty of Waitangi, and the appointment of the first Governor, Captain Hobson.

In consequence of the ignorance of some tribes, including Hone Heke, the flag-staff was cut down at Maiki, Bay of Islands, for the tribes in question imagined that the flag was the symbol of land confiscation. Nevertheless, there was no blood in the flag-staff which had been cut down making it needful to raise armies to fight the Maoris. If the native chiefs had been summoned to a conference at that time, and matters had been explained to them, there would have been no war ; but the Europeans flew as birds to make war against Heke, which brought about the blood-shedding of both Europeans and Maoris.

In the year 1866, another evil was brought upon the Maori tribes by the Governor himself, who, without any grounds, drove Wiremu Kingi from his own lands at Waitara, and this war about land renewed the shedding of both European and Maori blood. On this occasion, O Mother, the Queen ! the grievous lamentation of this Island was raised, and you recalled, in consequence, Governor Gore Brown, whose administration closed here. It was said by the Europeans that William King did wrong in opposing the Governor ; that if William King and party had appealed to the Supreme Court the Government act in that case would have been condemned. Hence the knowledge of the Taranaki tribes taking up that opinion, and retaining it up to the capture of Te Whiti and others, who did not oppose in fight the Government when it went with an army to Parihaka to enkindle Maori strife, thereby endeavouring to find a basis to make the Maoris do wrong, and then confiscate their lands.

In the year 1862 you, O Queen, sent hither Governor Grey to calm down the rain† and the wind so that the sea of both races should be still. Governor Grey possessed much wisdom ; he understands the Maori language, also the Maori customs. Notwithstanding, when he came the second time as Governor of these Islands he rushed hastily away to Taranaki, and gave instructions for road-making on Maori territory, thereby bringing about a war and the slaying of many of both races. In the year 1863 the war was carried into Waikato, and the Maoris throughout the Island were unaware as to the reason why war had been made on the Waikato. Now, O Queen, the Waikatos had formed a Land League, in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi, to preserve their native authority over the land, which principle is embodied in the Treaty.

O, the Queen ! you do not consider that act of retaining their land to be unjust, but the Government of New Zealand held it to be wrong, inasmuch as war was declared against the Waikatos, and the confiscation of their land followed, although the Waikatos had no desire to fight—the desire came from the Governor and his council. When the Waikatos were overpowered, armies of soldiers went forth to engender strife against the Maoris at Taranaki, at Te Awa-te Atua, at Whakatane, at Ohewa, at Oropiki, at Turanganui, at Ahuriri, at Whangamui, at Waimate, and various other places. The motive impelling the projectors of these deeds to execute this work was a desire to confiscate the Maori lands, and to trample under the soles of their feet the Treaty of Waitangi. While these proceedings were being carried out, the weeping people wept, the lamenting people lamented, the agonized people were in agony, the saddened people were in sadness, while they held the Treaty of Waitangi as a basis on which the voice of the Maoris could be made known to you, O Queen !

But the people of New Zealand declared that the fighting and the confiscation of land which brought calamity, and made your Maori children orphans, were sanctioned by you, O Queen. We did not believe the utterances of the Europeans as to the wrongs we suffered, that they were brought upon us by your Queenly authority ; but our decision was that such acts were not sanctioned by you, O Queen, whose benevolence towards the Maori people is well known. The disorderly work referred to has been carried into practice, so that a path might be opened up to Europeans to seize Maori Lands.

In the year 1881 a new plan was devised by the Government to enkindle strife in respect to the Maoris. Armies were sent to Parihaka to capture innocent men that they might be lodged in prison ; to seize their property and their money, to destroy their growing crops, to break down their houses, and commit other deeds of injustice. We pointed over the Treaty of Waitangi to find the grounds on which these evil proceedings of the Government of New Zealand rested, but we could find none. Some of the European inhabitants of this Island disapproved of these injurious doings to Maori men ; and it was vigorously remonstrated that Sir Arthur Gordon, the Governor, refused to approve of these acts. Many other evils have been discovered by our hearts, therefore have we considered right, O Mother, the Queen, to pray that you will not permit increased evils to come upon your Maori children in New Zealand, but to graciously sanction the appointment of a Royal English Commission to abrogate the evil laws affecting the Maori people, and to establish a Maori Parliament which shall check the European authorities who are endeavouring to set aside the Treaty of Waitangi ; to put a bridle also in the mouth of Ministers for Native Affairs who may act as Ministers have done at Parihaka, so that all may be brought back to obey your Laws, and to prevent the continued wrongs of land matters which are troubling the Maori people through days and years ; and to restore to the Maoris those lands which have been wrongfully confiscated according to the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi, and to draw forth from beneath the many unauthorized Acts of the New Zealand Parliament the concealed Treaty, that it may now assert its own dignity.

In this year, 1881, we, O the Queen, built a House of Assembly at the Bay of Islands, and the great Symbol therein is a stone memorial, on which has been engraved the Articles of the Treaty of Waitangi, so that eyes may look thereon from year to year. Two invitations were sent to the Governor, requesting him to unveil the Stone Treaty Memorial. He did not accede to the request. Perhaps his disinclination arose from the fact that the Europeans had disregarded the principles embodied in the Treaty, because in you, O Queen, is vested the sole authority affecting the New Zealand Treaty. Should you authorise, O Mother, the Queen, the appointment in England of a Royal English Commission under your Queenly Seal, to investigate the wrong-doings of both races, then will you rightly be informed, O Mother, as to what is just and what is false.

It is believed by us, O Queen, that you have no knowledge as to the deeds of wrong that gave us so much pain, and which create lamentation among the tribes ; but if, in your Graciousness, a Maori Parliament is set up, you will, O Queen, be enabled clearly to determine what is right and what is wrong, what is evil and what is good, in the administrations of the two races in these Islands.

O Mother, the Queen, there are no expressions of disaffection towards you by the Maori tribes, including the tribes of the King ; but they revere, only revere your Majesty ; and the search after you, O Queen, has induced us to send this Petition to England by the hands of the persons appointed by our committee, who will see your very countenance and hear your words.

O Mother, the Queen, do not suppose that the sufferings under which we labour are light. Many wrongs are felt by various tribes, but the following are some which have come under our own notice :—

- (1.) The fighting between the Maoris and the New Zealand Company in the year 1842 was brought about by land disputes, and Mr. Wakefield fell in the strife.
- (2.) The war against Te Rangihaeata in the year 1843, a land dispute also was the origin, and some of Rangihaeata's people were wrongly executed, their deaths being opposed to the English law, and contrary to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- (3.) The war against Heke and Kawiti in 1845, caused by land sales and the withholding of the anchorage money† at Bay of Islands, was contrary to the second article of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- (4.) The fighting between the chiefs Te Hapuku and Te Moananui in 1848-9, brought about by land purchasing on behalf of the Government.
- (5.) The war against Wiremu Kingi on account of the block of land named Waitara, at Taranaki.
- (6.) The war against the Waikatos in 1863, extending to the year 1870.
- (7.) The fight among the Ngaitautahi tribe in 1879, four natives killed, the strife being occasioned by the land purchases of Government, a portion of £700,000 having been scattered over our lands by Government agents in 1875.
- (8.) The capture of 200 innocent men of Te Whiti in 1879-81.
- (9.) The incarceration of Te Whiti and his people in 1881-2, who were guiltless of any crime.

The following, O Queen, are references to New Zealand ordinances put forth and said to be against the principles contained in the Treaty of Waitangi :—

- (1.) The making of unauthorised laws relating to Maori lands—namely, the Land Acts of 1862, 1865, 1873, 1880—which Acts were not assented to by the native chiefs in all parts of the Island. Nor is there any basis in the Treaty of Waitangi for these laws, which continuously bring upon our lands and upon our persons great wrongs.
- (2.) The "Immigration and Public Works Act," and the borrowing of £700,000, expended here and there to confuse the Maoris and their titles to land.

O Mother the Queen, these other things, and many of the laws that are being carried into effect, are, according to Maori ideas, very unjust, creating disorder amongst us, giving us heart-pangs, and sadness of spirit to your Maori children, who are ever looking towards you, Most Gracious Queen ; and it is averred by men of wisdom that these matters which weigh so heavily upon us are in opposition to the great and excellent principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

May you be in health, O Mother, the Queen ! May the Almighty bring down upon you, upon your family, and upon the whole of your people the exalted goodness of Heaven, even up to the termination of your sojourn in this world, and in your inheritance in the home of sacred rest !

May you live, is the prayer of your children in the Island of New Zealand.

(Signed)

PARORE TE AWHA
HARE HONGI HIKI
MAHI PARAOE KAWITI
KINGI HORI KIRA

MANGONUI REWA
HIRINI TAIWHANGA
WIREMU PUHI TE HIHI
HAKENA PARORE.

[TRANSLATION.]

For the Native People of New Zealand.

* Tawhaki, the God-man, whose name frequently occurs in all the ancient mythology of the Maori race.

† Rain and wind—figurative expressions denoting war and trouble.

‡ The anchorage money referred to here was paid by Government officials to Hone Heke and party for two successive years, but when an application was made for payment by Heke the officials failed to recognise the Maoris, and stated that the money ever afterwards would be paid to the Custom-house authorities, although it had been arranged, it is averred, at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, that Heke's party should be the recipients of the money in question.

Figure 8: 1882 petition from the Ngāpuhi Māori to Queen Victoria, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 82/1247, Archives New Zealand

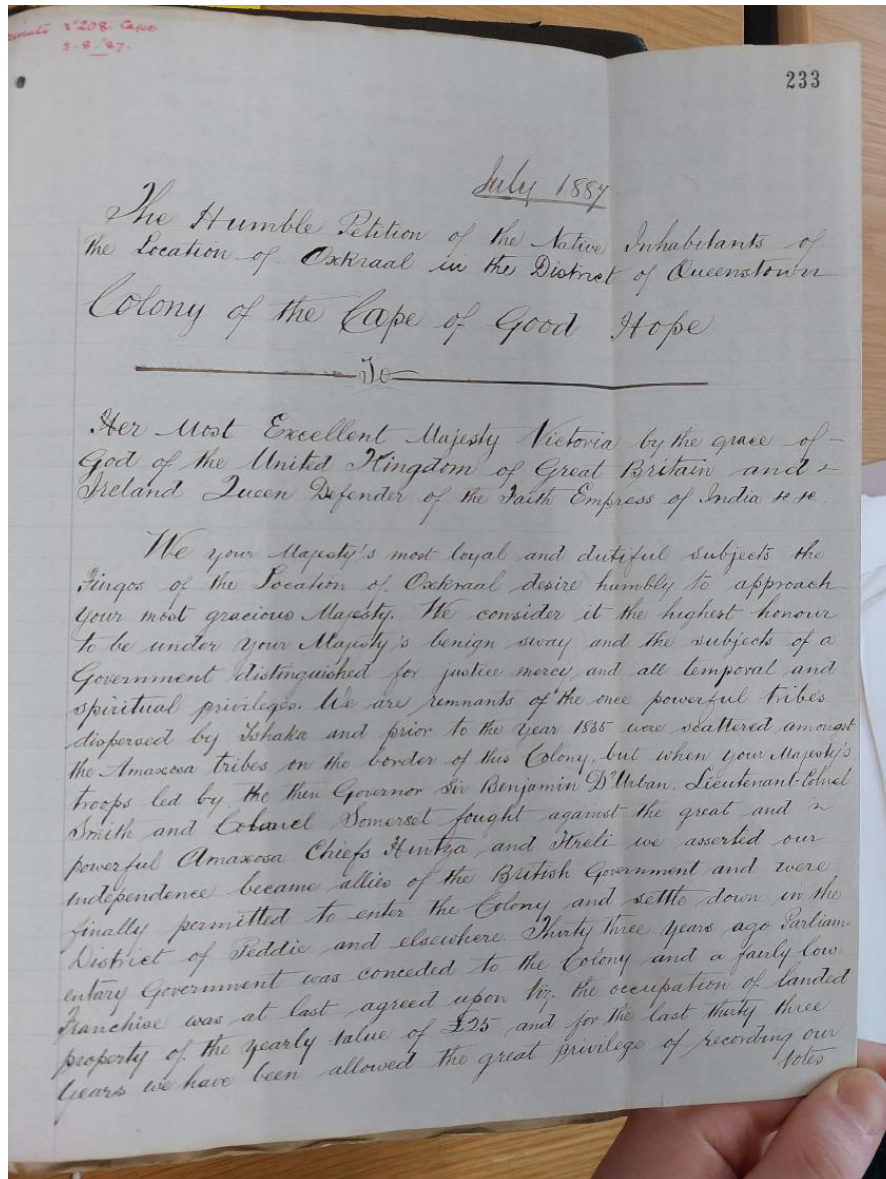


Figure 9: 1887 petition from the Xhosa of Oxkraal, Cape Colony, to Queen Victoria, CO 48-514 no. 18553, The National Archives

To be sure, the moment of presenting a petition to the imperial government was itself a difficult and complex process. Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller demonstrate that colonial governments employed a variety of tactics to obstruct Indigenous petitions, from discouraging the act of petitioning to simply refusing to forward petitions home.⁴²³ And Indigenous petitioners

⁴²³ Huzzey and Miller, "Colonial Petitions," 278–79.

were not the only ones who faced obstruction: British petitions were frequently undermined by claims of fraudulent signatures (particularly if a signature was believed to belong to women or children),⁴²⁴ while Indian petitions faced an ever-growing list of arbitrary rules that would result in immediate rejection if broken.⁴²⁵ Indigenous petitions to the imperial government were not subject to the same tactics, as there were no official rules to follow and they rarely took the form of mass petitions dependent on quantity of signatures for authority. But Indigenous petitions were particularly vulnerable to disinformation because the distance between colonial and metropolitan spaces made it very difficult for the Colonial Office to assess accuracy. As such, many historians using diverse case studies have identified settler disinformation as a recurring problem.⁴²⁶

Yet none of these historians observes the actions that Indigenous petitioners took in response to settler government interference, depicting petitioners as largely helpless supplicants who “waited in vain for a response to their submission.”⁴²⁷ On the contrary, rather than representing the final “culmination of political disputes,”⁴²⁸ I demonstrate that the process of petitioning British authorities lasted well beyond the presentation of the petition and

⁴²⁴ Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller, “The Politics of Petitioning: Parliament, Government, and Subscriptional Cultures in the United Kingdom, 1780–1918,” *History* 106, no. 370 (2021): 238–39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-229X.13103>; Daniel Carpenter and Doris Brossard, “L’*éruption* Patriote: The Revolt against Dalhousie and the Petitioning Explosion in Nineteenth-Century French Canada,” *Social Science History* 43, no. 3 (2019): 471–73, <https://doi.org/10.1017/ssh.2019.23>.

⁴²⁵ Julia Stephens, “A Bureaucracy of Rejection: Petitioning and the Impoverished Paternalism of the British-Indian Raj,” *Modern Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (2019): 181–82, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17001160>.

⁴²⁶ Celia Haig-Brown, “Seeking Honest Justice in a Land of Strangers: Nahnebahwequa’s Struggle for Land,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36, no. 4 (2002): 157, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.36.4.143>; Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 163–74.

⁴²⁷ Haig-Brown, “Seeking Honest Justice in a Land of Strangers,” 157.

⁴²⁸ Karen O’Brien, *Petitioning for Land*, 15.

encompassed dedicated efforts to counter settler government disinformation by leveraging the credibility of parallel networks like the APS. Attending to this extended process reveals that petitioning was not just a means of performing Indigenous self-determination, but was also a process of contesting the ability of settler governments to suppress and manipulate Indigenous voices.

My second significant contribution is that, by attending to Indigenous and settler truth claims during Colonial Office investigations, I challenge historiographical assumptions about the division of authority between imperial and settler governments in the late nineteenth century. John Miller calls Indigenous petitions to British authorities “futile and quixotic” for the same reason that Sarah Carter and Maria Nugent call them “invariably (and perhaps inevitably)...failures” and Michael Belgrave refers to them as “undertaken in ignorance of the constitutional conventions”: because self-government supposedly precluded imperial intervention.⁴²⁹ Ann Curthoys similarly maintains that “after the granting of responsible government, any thought of the British government retaining the power to intervene on behalf of Indigenous people was quite illusory.”⁴³⁰ Historical evidence does seem at first to vindicate assumptions of futility, as there appear to be only two instances of imperial intervention in settler politics in the late nineteenth century – the alteration of Natal’s executive committee in 1875 and the creation of Western Australia’s Aborigines Protection Board in 1887 - and both occurred in colonies that only had representative rather than responsible government.⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ Carter and Nugent, *Mistress of Everything Queen Victoria in Indigenous Worlds*, 10; Miller, “Petitioning the Great White Mother,” 223; Michael Belgrave, *Dancing with the King: The Rise and Fall of the King Country, 1864-1885* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), 306.

⁴³⁰ Curthoys, “The Dog That Didn’t Bark,” 39–40.

⁴³¹ Ann Curthoys and Jeremy Martens, “Serious Collisions: Settlers, Indigenous People, and Imperial Policy in Western Australia and Natal,” *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 15 (2013): 124–39, <http://hdl.handle.net/1885/22613>.

Of course, just because historians assume Indigenous petitions to have been futile does not mean that they lacked historical significance. Nearly all historians agree that failed petitions played an important part in the development of Indigenous political mobilization. This “stepping-stone thesis,” as I call it, holds that late nineteenth-century petitioning provided Indigenous groups with the experience, knowledge, and motivation to launch increasingly sophisticated political campaigns throughout the twentieth century.⁴³² Petitioners typically interpreted failure as evidence that more vigorous political efforts were required, and the case studies in this chapter were no exception. The failure of Hirini Taiwhanga’s 1882 petition contributed to the unification of Māori iwis into an unofficial representative parliament in the 1890s,⁴³³ while the failure of John Tengo Jabavu’s 1887 petition sparked the foundation of Native Vigilance Associations that would later coalesce into the South African Native Congress.⁴³⁴ But while this stepping-stone thesis provides important insights into the impact of petitions on Indigenous political formation, it erroneously assumes that petitions had little impact outside of local Indigenous communities because imperial intervention was impossible.

My analysis of Colonial Office investigations into Indigenous petitions substantiates the plausibility of imperial intervention in responsible governments. These Colonial Office investigations in the late nineteenth-century were nowhere near as extensive or reformatory as the commissions of inquiry that the Colonial Office sent to the colonies between 1802-1840 to

⁴³² For examples of this argument, see: Amanda Nettelbeck, “‘We Are Sure of Your Sympathy’: Indigenous Uses of the Politics of Protection in Nineteenth-Century Australia and Canada,” *Journal of Colonialism & Colonial History* 17, no. 1 (2016): 9–10, <https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2016.0009>; Miller, “Petitioning the Great White Mother: First Nations’ Organizations and Lobbying in London,” 223; Costa, “Identity, Authority, and the Moral Worlds of Indigenous Petitions,” 694.

⁴³³ Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Bridget Williams, 1997), 219–25.

⁴³⁴ André Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2012), 121–28.

oversee and manipulate colonial legal systems.⁴³⁵ Yet whereas Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford interpret the cessation of commissions of inquiry as evidence of the imperial government's retreat from active involvement in settler politics, the smaller Colonial Office investigations studied in this chapter signify some level of continuing imperial involvement. If the failure of Indigenous petitions was not a predetermined result of imperial withdrawal but rather contingent on the ability of either petitioners or settler governments to establish the validity of their claims, then the impact of self-government as a dividing line between imperial and settler governance was much more liminal than has been previously believed. This chapter emphasizes that the lack of significant imperial intervention should not be confused with the lack of potential to intervene, and I argue that in the course of investigating Indigenous petitions, the Colonial Office seriously contemplated taking action and had the formal authority to do so, and both petitioners and settler governments knew this.

The real possibility of imperial intervention rendered the control of information flows to be of vital importance, as whomever was able to convince the Colonial Office of their version of events was able to sway the outcome of the investigations. Settler governments often did win these battles, but this was not inevitable, and Indigenous-imperial relationships could have developed in a very different direction than they have. This is the deeper significance of colonial correspondence with the APS in the late nineteenth century, including but not limited to Indigenous petitions. If we accept that self-government was a causal factor leading to the failure of Indigenous petitions, then we are forced by the logic of historical causation to also accept that the outcome of all Indigenous petitions made after self-government were pre-determined (i.e.

⁴³⁵ Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, *Rage for Order: The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800–1850* (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 2016), 56–84.

“futile and quixotic”). Yet, as Audra Simpson and Antoinette Burton argue, the continuation of imperial power was never pre-determined. On the contrary, it was constantly challenged from one side and continually buttressed from another, given shape as much by its critics as by its proponents.⁴³⁶ To reconcile the history of petitioning with the reality that empire and settler colonialism were inherently unstable structures, we must entertain the possibility that self-government was only a contingent factor intersecting with a host of other contingent factors such as settler disinformation and Colonial Office disinterest. By doing so, we come closer to grasping the complexities and contingencies of precarious historical structures like settler colonialism which are too easily assumed to be monolithic and inevitable.

I present these arguments through an analysis of two case studies: a petition by Ngāpuhi Māori leader Hirini Taiwhanga (pronounced “Tai-fung-ah”) from New Zealand in 1882, and a petition by Xhosa activist John Tengo Jabavu from the Cape Colony in 1887. The APS worked with too many Indigenous petitioners in the late nineteenth century to include in a single chapter. The APS archive contains eighty-three letters about petitions written by nineteen Indigenous correspondents from Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa between 1870-1890 (no letters from Indigenous Australians survive in the archive). I chose my case studies from this large group of potential subjects based on two criteria: data availability and cohort representativeness. I measured data availability in terms of quantity of primary sources. Taiwhanga and Jabavu are the two most prolific Indigenous correspondents of the cohort, both writing twelve letters to the APS as well as multiple letters to newspaper editors and government offices, so they offered the most material to work with. I also aimed to include the perspectives of subjects from different socio-economic backgrounds to represent the diversity of the APS’s Indigenous correspondents.

⁴³⁶ Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 7–8; Burton, *The Trouble with Empire*, 8–11.

The APS's Indigenous informants largely came from only two social backgrounds: one half came from royalty and political elites, and the other half came from the educated intelligentsia. Taiwhanga was the son and son-in-law of two important chiefs, was well connected to Māori royalty, and in 1882 used these connections to fund a journey to England to present his petition. His background positions him as a fair representative of those highly connected Indigenous chiefs and political leaders who often worked with the APS. Jabavu was the opposite: he was born to a poor family, was distrusted by many traditional leaders for being too supportive of European modernity, and in 1887 failed to attract enough funding to secure passage to England, yet he was also the first Black South African to matriculate from the University of Cape Town. He can therefore represent the APS's working-class Indigenous intelligentsia. These two case studies afford an opportunity for examining how APS support was requested in different forms and held different meanings for correspondents from divergent class backgrounds, while also capturing shared experiences of settler disinformation against imperial petitions.

Utilizing Colonial Office records of the investigations carried out to verify Taiwhanga's and Jabavu's petitions, this chapter contends that settler government disinformation campaigns played a key role in shutting down Indigenous petitions. By interpreting Taiwhanga's and Jabavu's APS correspondence within the context of these investigations, I argue that a major motivation for writing to the APS was to rally their support against settler government disinformation. From this lens, the function of the APS was not merely to forge contacts between petitioners and authorities, but to mediate between Indigenous and settler truth claims. They were certainly a problematic mediator in many ways: Gwilym Colenso argues that the APS often failed to be present at important political interviews when such mediation was most needed, and Brian Willan demonstrates that the APS sometimes took the side of settler governments and

worked to discredit Indigenous petitions that did not align with the Society’s interests.⁴³⁷ But the detrimental impact of poor or antagonistic mediation are the exceptions that prove the rule, demonstrating the importance of the APS as fact-checker and validator of either settler or Indigenous claims.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section traces Hirini Taiwhanga’s 1882 petition to Queen Victoria and his fight against the New Zealand government, which alleged that Taiwhanga did not represent Māori opinion and that his petition was deliberately falsified. The second section traces John Tengo Jabavu’s 1887 petition to the Colonial Office and his fight against Cape government propaganda about the nature of African land tenure and its protection under the Cape constitution. The concluding section connects these two case studies to the larger body of Indigenous correspondence with the APS and reflects on implications and limitations, particularly locating disinformation within the larger contexts of British imperial policy and racialized understandings of rationality that characterize this period.

“A scheming unprincipled native”: Defaming Hirini Taiwhanga’s 1882 Petition to Uphold the Treaty of Waitangi

Hirini “Sydney” Taiwhanga (c.1832-1890) become involved with the APS late in his political career. Son of an important chief and missionary, Taiwhanga studied in mission and theological schools and worked for the first forty years of his life variously as a carpenter, sailor, surveyor, and teacher around the Bay of Islands, New Zealand (see Figure 10 below).⁴³⁸

Throughout these years Taiwhanga gained experience in petitioning for redress of personal

⁴³⁷ Gwilym Colenso, “Breaking With the Old Pattern of Control: African Deputations to Britain from Southern Africa in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *South African Historical Journal* 69, no. 4 (2017): 530–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2017.1398777>; Willan, “The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines’ Protection Society.”

⁴³⁸ Claudia Orange, “Taiwhanga, Hirini Rāwiri,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, 1993, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t4/taiwhanga-hirini-rawiri>.

grievances against the New Zealand government, and this experience in addition to his fluency in English led him to become a frequent amanuensis and lobbyist for the Ngāpuhi iwi of northern New Zealand in the 1870s and 1880s.⁴³⁹ In 1882 seven rangatira (hereditary political leaders) deputed Taiwhanga to present a petition on the behalf of the Ngāpuhi to Queen Victoria.

While in London, Taiwhanga became acquainted with the APS and went on to write twelve letters to them over the next few years. Taiwhanga's letters revolved around countering disinformation spread by his colonial government, which made a concerted effort to discredit him as a trustworthy person, his petition as representative of Ngāpuhi thought, and his grievances as factual statements. Following the 1882 delegation, Taiwhanga planned to visit England again with a second petition and knew that he would face the same disinformation all over again, and so his correspondence with the APS between 1882-1885 aimed to leverage the APS's influence in support of his character, representativeness, and facticity in anticipation of another mission. Such support was of critical importance to Taiwhanga's potential success because, as I will demonstrate, the British government's decision not to intervene in New Zealand was directly informed by perceptions of his character, representativeness, and facticity.

⁴³⁹ For examples of Taiwhanga's early petitions, see: Hirini Taiwhanga to Donald McLean, 28 May 1873, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 83/102, Archives New Zealand (ANZ); "Petition Regarding Native Schools Act, 1867," 29 June 1876, Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1876, Session 1, J-04; "Petition of Hirini Taiwhanga," 17 September 1878, Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1878, I-3; Hirini Taiwhanga to William Rolleston, 23 March 1881, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 81/934, ANZ.

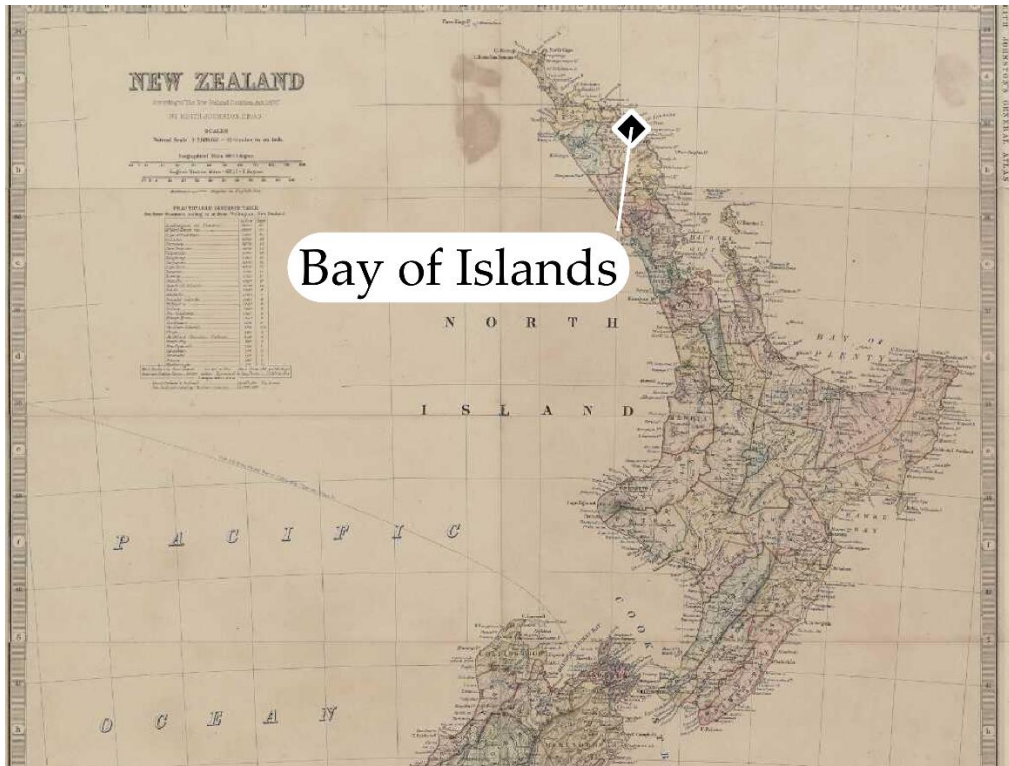


Figure 10: 1876 map of New Zealand showing the Bay of Islands. Base map from A.K. Johnston, *The Royal Atlas of Modern Geography, Exhibiting, in a Series of Entirely Original and Authentic Maps, the Present Condition of Geographical Discovery and Research in the Several Countries, Empires, and States of the World* (London: W. and A.K. Johnston, 1882), 38.

Taiwhanga’s petition to Queen Victoria contained three requests, each corresponding to long-standing Māori grievances against the New Zealand government, and each rooted in the Treaty of Waitangi. Signed in 1840 between the British government and over 500 rangatira from across New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi has been interpreted variously over the past two centuries as both the founding document of pakeha (White New Zealander) sovereignty and also of Britain’s guarantee of Māori independence. It has been assumed since Ruth Ross’s seminal work in the 1970s that these contradictory interpretations are the result of manipulative

discrepancies between English and Māori translations of the Treaty,⁴⁴⁰ although it is also important to recognize that the Colonial Office's understanding of sovereignty in 1840 was not mutually exclusive with sovereign pluralism and both translations of the Treaty could have been equally valid at the time of its signing.⁴⁴¹ Regardless, the Māori version of the Treaty guaranteed the continuation of “te tino rangatiratanga,” variously translated as sovereignty, self-determination, or chiefly autonomy, as well as the unqualified possession of their lands and establishing the Crown's right to pre-emption.⁴⁴² The Ngāpuhi in the 1870s and 1880s determined that the New Zealand government had violated these guarantees.

A Ngāpuhi mass meeting in 1881 outlined three specific grievances: land rights, fishing rights, and dog taxes.⁴⁴³ Land was the foremost issue: the Native Land Courts established in 1865 had facilitated a massive alienation of Māori land amounting to over three million acres, and Public Work Acts of 1864 and 1876 had empowered the New Zealand government to take land for public development without Māori consent. Fishing rights were the second issue, with an 1877 Fisheries Act downgrading Māori rights to foreshores from possession to usage. The third issue was the imposition of a dog tax in 1880 against the protests of Māori political leaders. Dogs are *tapu* (of sacred significance) within Māori societies. Economically they were central to hunting practices and their meat was also a key source of protein, while culturally dogs play an important role in Māori cosmology. For settlers, on the other hand, Māori dogs were pests that

⁴⁴⁰ See Rachael Bell, “‘Texts and Translations’: Ruth Ross and the Treaty of Waitangi,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 43, no. 1 (2009): 39–58, https://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/2009/NZJH_43_1_03.pdf.

⁴⁴¹ Andrew McIndoe, “A Pluralistic Imperialism? Britain's Understanding of Sovereignty at the Signing of Treaty of Waitangi,” *Auckland University Law Review* 21 (2015): 60–85, <http://www.nzlii.org/nz/journals/AukULawRw/2015/5.pdf>.

⁴⁴² Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Bridget Williams, 1997), 40–42.

⁴⁴³ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 185–200.

preyed upon sheep herds. Imposing a tax to reduce the dog population thus signified the prioritization of settler capitalism over Māori subsistence and culture and would eventually lead to the Dog Tax Rebellion of 1898.⁴⁴⁴ Observing that the confiscation of land, the rejection of fishing rights, and the attack on Māori culture constituted violations of the Treaty of Waitangi's guarantee of Māori self-determination, the Ngāpuhi drafted three demands which became the three requests of their petition. First, they asked that a separate Māori parliament be established for Māori to govern themselves. Second, they asked for the repeal of all laws contrary to the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi. And third, they asked for the return of all land confiscated against the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi.⁴⁴⁵

Taiwhanga was elected at a public meeting to present this petition to Queen Victoria on the behalf of the Ngāpuhi and, with funds provided by senior Ngāpuhi chief Parore Te Āwha, travelled to England along with two fellow delegates in June 1882.⁴⁴⁶ However, the New Zealand government had mobilized to sabotage his mission before he even arrived in London. On 4 May an officer from the New Zealand native department reported to the Minister of Native Affairs that Taiwhanga had been chosen to bring a petition to England, and suggested that a report should be sent to the New Zealand Agent-General in London, Sir Francis Dillon Bell, detailing how Taiwhanga was a “thoroughly imprincipled [*sic*] man.”⁴⁴⁷ Consequently, the government solicited reports from two witnesses who were certain to denigrate Taiwhanga's character: James

⁴⁴⁴ Catherine Cumming, “The Hokianga Dog Tax Uprising,” *Counterfutures* 11 (2021): 19–23, <https://doi.org/10.26686/cf.v11.7351>.

⁴⁴⁵ Māori petition to Queen Victoria, in Earl of Kimberley to Arthur Gordon, 8 August 1882, in British House of Commons, *Correspondence respecting Native Affairs in New Zealand, and Imprisonment of Certain Maories, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty August 1882* (London: George E.B. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1882), 287-289.

⁴⁴⁶ “Bay of Islands,” *Thames Advertiser*, 29 March 1882.

⁴⁴⁷ Thomas William Lewis to John Bryce, 4 May 1882, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 82/1586, ANZ.

Clendon and Edward Williams, a magistrate and a judge of the Native Land Court who had confiscated Taiwhanga's land in 1876 (in contradiction to the Treaty of Waitangi) and forcibly evicted him and his family.⁴⁴⁸

Williams refused to write such a report because he "could not give an unbiased one,"⁴⁴⁹ but Clendon happily wrote in length that Taiwhanga was the son of a "fourth-rate" chief who conducted "nefarious transactions" as a surveyor, was "the principal cause of all the disturbances at Kaikohe," and was "a perfect exemplification of education wasted."⁴⁵⁰ Such personal attacks on Taiwhanga's character were bigoted, to be sure, but they were nonetheless honest from Clendon's perspective. Clendon had encountered Taiwhanga several times previously as a magistrate, often in contexts in which Taiwhanga was resisting settler encroachment on Maori land. For example, in 1881 Clendon had arrested Taiwhanga because the latter had refused to be illegally evicted from his house.⁴⁵¹ It is therefore unsurprising that Clendon, an important cog in the wheel of the settler colonial project, should think so little of an Indigenous person devoted to resisting settler colonialism.

However, Clendon went beyond personal defamation to spread unsubstantiated allegations about the validity of Taiwhanga's petition that he certainly knew were false. In particular, Clendon claimed that the petition brought to England was a forgery compiled by Taiwhanga alone and did not represent wider Māori opinion,⁴⁵² which was demonstrably untrue. Māori mass meetings at Orakei, Waitangi, and Waimate in 1881 and 1882 discussed in detail the

⁴⁴⁸ Hirini Taiwhanga to James Clendon, 10 August 1880, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 81/502, ANZ; Taiwhanga to Rolleston, 23 March 1881.

⁴⁴⁹ Edward Williams to W. Morpeth, 31 May 1882, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 82/1654, ANZ.

⁴⁵⁰ James Clendon to W. Morpeth, 31 May 1882, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 82/1586, ANZ.

⁴⁵¹ Taiwhanga to Rolleston, March 23, 1881.

⁴⁵² Clendon to Morpeth, 31 May 1882.

very same grievances outlined in the petition and passed resolutions mirroring the demands of the petition, disproving the claim that the petition was a forgery or was in any way not supported by the Ngāpuhi.⁴⁵³ Some concern about the sending of a representative to England did surface at these meetings, but only because of the cost associated with such a mission, not because of disagreement over Taiwhanga's character or the validity of his grievances. Moreover, minutes from the 1882 meeting at Waimate explicitly state that

after a lengthy korero [discussion] a resolution was brought before the runauga nui [great council] to raise subscriptions with a view to send home a delegate to Her Imperial Majesty Queen Victoria, with a petition showing the grievances under which the natives are labouring, and to urge Her Majesty to hear and grant its prayer. A ballot for delegates was then taken, and it resulted in the choice of the irrepressible Sydney [Hirini] Taiwhanga.⁴⁵⁴

By showing that there was a consensus vote to send Taiwhanga to England, this excerpt disproves Clendon claim that Taiwhanga was acting on his own behalf and did not represent wider Māori grievances. Moreover, Clendon was certainly aware of these facts. These mass meetings were well attended by government officials who took careful notes of proceedings, and they were also widely reported on in New Zealand newspapers. Images of these mass meetings were so popular as to reach British newspapers as well (see Figure 11 below). It is inconceivable that a magistrate and judge on the Native Lands Court would have been ignorant of these meetings, and the blatantly false claims made in his report on

⁴⁵³ “The Native Meeting at Waitangi,” *New Zealand Herald*, 25 March 1881; “The Opening of the Great Native Meeting at Waitangi,” *New Zealand Herald*, 24 March 1881; “The Orakei Parliament,” *New Zealand Herald*, 23 March 1881; “The Orakei Parliament,” *New Zealand Herald*, 22 March 1881; “The Orakei Parliament,” *New Zealand Herald*, 21 March 1881; “The Orakei Parliament,” *New Zealand Herald*, 14 March 1881; “The Māori Parliament,” *New Zealand Herald*, 12 March 1881.

⁴⁵⁴ “Bay of Islands,” *Thames Advertiser*, 29 March 1882.

Taiwhanga are more convincingly construed as deliberate attempts to thwart the Colonial Office's investigation through libel.



Figure 11: Image of Māori mass meetings in The Illustrated London News, 4 December 1880. Shows two government officials taking notes at the front of the room.

In London, Sir Francis Dillon Bell used Clendon's report "to belittle the appeal and discredit the petitioners,"⁴⁵⁵ but without effect. The Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Kimberley agreed to hear the petition on 17 July, and he made no reference to Taiwhanga's character or representativeness of Ngāpuhi opinion. Indeed, when Taiwhanga told Lord Kimberley that he "came on behalf of the natives generally, and not on account of a special grievance," Kimberley accepted the claim without comment.⁴⁵⁶ Claudia Orange argues that

⁴⁵⁵ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 207.

⁴⁵⁶ "The Māori Land Question," *The Standard*, 18 July 1882.

Taiwhanga's petition "failed completely" at the 17 July meeting since Lord Kimberley "firmly denied any responsibility on the part of the British Crown or government,"⁴⁵⁷ but that is not entirely accurate. What Lord Kimberley actually said was that "without communication with the New Zealand Government he could say nothing in the matter," and that "full information will be obtained here of the state of affairs in New Zealand."⁴⁵⁸ Far from signalling a failure or a repudiation of responsibility, this interview marked the beginning of an imperial investigation into the validity of Taiwhanga's petition and a protracted battle over the representation of Taiwhanga's character and trustworthiness. There is indication that Bell's propaganda against Taiwhanga had already convinced some members of the Colonial Office to ignore the petition. Evelyn Ashley, Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, opined in a private memo that "these Māories should not be treated as representative men but as private individuals. I think it is clear that they have come 'on their own work' to use a vulgar but expressive sentence. And they are not men of importance."⁴⁵⁹ This statement was clearly influenced by the propaganda emanating from Bell. Nevertheless, a week later Lord Kimberley wrote to the New Zealand government asking for full reports on the matter,⁴⁶⁰ showing the Colonial Office's willingness to investigate Taiwhanga's grievances and contemplate further action.

The New Zealand government's attacks on Taiwhanga's character did not result in Kimberley immediately rejecting the petition, but Kimberley did refuse to allow Taiwhanga to meet Queen Victoria. Internal memos reveal that the Colonial Office itself was at first amenable

⁴⁵⁷ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 207.

⁴⁵⁸ "The Māori Land Question," *The Standard*, 18 July 1882.

⁴⁵⁹ Colonial Office minutes, "The Māori Presents to the Queen," 1 August 1882, CO 209-241 no. 13567, The National Archives, Kew (TNA).

⁴⁶⁰ Earl of Kimberley to Arthur Gordon, 8 August 1882, in British House of Commons, *Correspondence respecting Native Affairs in New Zealand...August 1882*, 287.

to setting up a royal interview, and proposed to send the delegation to Osbourne House via the public ferry at Southampton.⁴⁶¹ But Sir Francis Dillon Bell's lobbying led the Colonial Office to change its mind, with Undersecretary Ashley relaying to Lord Kimberley that "in conversation with me here he [Bell] was very decidedly against the Queen receiving the Māories," and Lord Kimberley concluded that it would be too impolitic to ignore Bell's protests for a second time.⁴⁶² This decision greatly distressed the Māori delegates, who had come in person to Britain not just to present a petition but to exchange gifts with Queen Victoria, their treaty partner. When the APS had first forwarded the Māori petition to the Colonial Office they had not fully grasped the significance of these gifts, mentioning only in passing that "we may add besides the memorial to which we have referred, they have brought native presents for Her Majesty."⁴⁶³ But when the delegates learned that there would be no opportunity to present their gifts, they became "greatly exercised on this subject," and the APS relayed to the Colonial Office that the delegates "will not go until this question is settled."⁴⁶⁴

Taiwhanga's distress stemmed from the significance of gift-exchange within Māori culture, a significance that the Colonial Office did not seem to understand. Gift-exchange has, of course, been an integral element of global diplomatic cultures for centuries, and many historians point to the importance of gifts in forging and maintaining relationships in imperial and colonial spaces.⁴⁶⁵ An overarching theme within the historiography of gift diplomacy is the danger of

⁴⁶¹ Colonial Office minutes, "The Māori Mission," 14 August 1882, CO 209-241 no. 14376, TNA.

⁴⁶² Colonial Office minutes, "The Māori Mission," 14 August 1882.

⁴⁶³ Colonial Office minutes, "An Interview for a Deputation of Māories," 6 July 1882, CO 209-241 no. 12002, TNA.

⁴⁶⁴ Colonial Office minutes, "Presents Brought by the Māori Chiefs for the Queen," 23 July 1882, CO 209-241 no 13061, TNA.

⁴⁶⁵ For example, see: Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen, and Giorgio Riello, eds., *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, Studies in Comparative World

divergent cultural understandings of gift-exchange leading to misinterpretations of the meaning of cross-cultural gifts, and this was a particular problem for Māori-British diplomacy. British imperial officials engaged extensively in gift-exchange with many Indigenous groups around the world primarily as a means of securing loyalty and goodwill,⁴⁶⁶ but Māori cultures imbue gifting with additional spiritual and intimate sacredness that most British observers did not appreciate. Within Māori cosmology, all objects possess an energy or life force known as *hau* (pronounced “ho”) which is inherently reciprocal, and to gift an object is to establish a covenant to nurture its *hau* and reciprocate in the future. Ngāruahine scholar Amber Nicholson describes *hau* as “a spiritual force impelling behaviour – an ethic of reciprocity,” and this notion is a central element of Māori politics and diplomacy.⁴⁶⁷ Gifting between Māori iwis was the standard way of forging alliances and settling disputes, and the Treaty of Waitangi itself was conceptualized as a gift exchange by which Māori signatories gifted certain governance rights to the British Crown in return for the gift of recognizing Māori land and political rights as British subjects.⁴⁶⁸ The Colonial Office did not share the same perspective on the sacred political implications of gifts, and largely saw Taiwhanga’s offerings as trivial affirmations of loyalty that did not require the Queen’s presence. Consequently, Lord Kimberley’s refusal to allow the delegation an

History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 1991); Alison Bennett, “Diplomatic Gifts: Rethinking Colonial Politics in Uganda through Objects,” *History in Africa* 45 (2018): 193–220, <https://doi.org/10.1017/hia.2018.5>.

⁴⁶⁶ Amanda Nettelbeck, “Bracelets, Blankets and Badges of Distinction: Aboriginal Subjects and Queen Victoria’s Gifts in Canada and Australia,” in *Mistress of Everything: Queen Victoria in Indigenous Worlds*, ed. Sarah Carter and Maria Nugent (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 212–17.

⁴⁶⁷ Amber Nicholson, “Hau: Giving Voices to the Ancestors,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 128, no. 2 (2019): 138, <https://doi.org/10.15286/jps.128.2.137-162>.

⁴⁶⁸ Amiria Henare, “Taonga Māori: Encompassing Rights and Property in New Zealand,” in *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically*, ed. Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell (London: Routledge, 2006), 57–60.

opportunity to present their gifts was not likely meant to give offense, but represented a refusal to continue the reciprocal diplomatic relationship between Crown and Māori.

Moreover, the particular gifts brought to London represented specific political concepts within Māori culture. It is very difficult to determine the exact significance of the gifts, which is typically expressed through unique patterns or signatures on the objects themselves. I have been unable to find provenance connecting any Māori artefacts held in British or New Zealand collections to Taiwhanga's visit,⁴⁶⁹ so I have no information of the unique patterns or signatures on the objects. But Taiwhanga did provide a brief description of the gifts to the APS which provides some hints toward their basic significance. The gifts included two whalebone clubs (*patu parāroa*), two greenstone clubs (*mere pounamu*), four baskets of woven flax (*kete*), and three mats of woven flax and kiwi feathers (*whariki*). The delegates had also intended to give the Queen a tie and a pair of stockings that they had previously worn. Each of these objects carried cultural symbolism and political connotations which contextualize the significance of gifting them to the Crown. Whalebone clubs (*patu parāroa*) and greenstone clubs (*mere pounamu*) are both associated with chiefly power and authority.⁴⁷⁰ Flax (*harakeke*) is often used as a metaphor for relationships and interconnection, and flax baskets (*kete*) are associated with wisdom.⁴⁷¹ Flax

⁴⁶⁹ The Queen certainly possessed the gifts at some point since her secretary sent a thank-you note to the Colonial Office in confirmation of reception, and there are many Māori objects in the Royal Collections without provenance that are potential candidates. However, in private correspondence with the Royal Collection's assistant curator of non-European art, I was informed that it would be very difficult to say conclusively which objects are Taiwhanga's gifts.

⁴⁷⁰ Emily Cunliffe, "Whales and Whale Bone Technology in New Zealand Prehistory" (MA thesis, University of Otago, 2014), 40; Basil Keane, "Pounamu – Jade or Greenstone - Symbols of Chieftainship," *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand* (Ministry for Culture and Heritage Te Manatu Taonga, 12 June 2006), <https://teara.govt.nz/en/pounamu-jade-or-greenstone/page-5>.

⁴⁷¹ Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, *Māori Weaving* (Auckland: Pitman, 1989), 4; Lauren Fuka, "Object Monday: Māori Kete Baskets," Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, 10 May 2021, <https://maxwellmuseum.unm.edu/maxwell-at-home/objects/object-monday-m%C4%81ori-kete-baskets>.

and kiwi feather mats (*whariki*) are associated with diplomacy, communication, and politics.⁴⁷² And gifting personal clothing is a long-standing demonstration of respect in Māori culture, often performed for important visitors or chiefs on formal occasions.⁴⁷³ Taiwhanga referenced this practice by calling his gift of clothes a love token for the Queen, but one of Taiwhanga's British philanthropist friends secretly destroyed his pieces of clothing before handing the gifts over to the Colonial Office, believing them unfit royal presents.⁴⁷⁴ Thus, although it is impossible to identify the exact meaning of these particular gifts, their general context and connotations are quite clear. Gifting these items to the Crown was a recognition of Queen Victoria's chiefly authority, wisdom, and on-going diplomatic relations with the Māori, and an attempt to establish a *hau* obligation of reciprocity to recognize Māori self-determination.



Figure 12: A mere pounamu in the Royal Collections dating to the mid-nineteenth century with no provenance, possibly one of the two presented in 1882. RCIN 62811, Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022.

⁴⁷² Puketapu-Hetet, *Māori Weaving*, 55.

⁴⁷³ Serge Tcherkézoff, "On Cloth, Gifts and Nudity: Regarding Some European Misunderstandings During Early Encounters in Polynesia," in *Clothing the Pacific*, ed. Chloë Colchester (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 62–67.

⁴⁷⁴ Charlotte Weale to Frederick Chesson, 31 July 1882, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G98 vol 2 - 9, BodL.



Figure 13: A kete in the British Museum dating to the mid-nineteenth century with no provenance. May be similar to those presented in 1882. 1613800802, © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 14: A whariki in the British Museum dating to the mid-nineteenth century with no provenance. May be similar to those presented in 1882. 1613565856, © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Overturing Lord Kimberley's decision to refuse these gifts was one of the few successes of Taiwhanga's alliance with the APS. Taiwhanga explained to the APS that presenting the gifts to Queen Victoria was a critical element of his diplomatic strategy, and the APS relayed to Lord Kimberley that "if they take back the presents to New Zealand the natives will suppose that the Queen has rejected them, and much bad blood will ensue."⁴⁷⁵ There was some pushback from within the Colonial Office, with Undersecretary Ashley suggesting that the gifts should be refused "if the Queen's acceptance of these presents could imply a recognition of their having been sent by any large body of Māoris."⁴⁷⁶ But Lord Kimberley ultimately agreed to pass them on to Queen Victoria, who sent confirmation that she received the gifts and was "much pleased."⁴⁷⁷ This miniature episode over Māori presents to the Crown demonstrates on a small scale the indeterminacy of Indigenous petitions and the role of the APS in mediating outcomes. New Zealand's Agent-General at first succeeded at blocking the exchange of gifts, but rather than accepting this outcome, Taiwhanga continued to lobby through the APS and utilized their social capital to change Lord Kimberley's mind. This framework of contestation between New Zealand government officials and Taiwhanga via the APS continued throughout the Colonial Office's investigation of the petition.

The investigation was problematically biased from the outset, since the Colonial Office relied on the same government sources that had been responsible for initial disinformation about Taiwhanga's petition. When Lord Kimberley demanded a full report from the New Zealand government, Governor Prendergast delegated the task to Prime Minister Fred Whitaker, and

⁴⁷⁵ Colonial Office minutes, "Presents Brought by the Māori Chiefs for the Queen," 23 July 1882.

⁴⁷⁶ Colonial Office minutes, "The Māori Presents to the Queen," 1 August 1882.

⁴⁷⁷ Colonial Office minutes, "Māori Presents," 7 August 1882, CO 209-241 no. 14080, TNA.

Whitaker commissioned reports from none other than James Clendon and Edward Williams, the same people who had been approached to defame Taiwhanga prior to his arrival in England. Williams once again declined to comment due to lack of objectivity,⁴⁷⁸ but Clendon was happy to reiterate all he had already said. He recapitulated Taiwhanga's poor moral character and the false claim that "the petition Hirini represented as conveying the complaints of his countrymen was his own...and was totally different from the draft petition he had exhibited." This time Clendon went even further than his earlier defamation, and alleged that he had evidence proving Taiwhanga had not actually been elected by the Ngāpuhi.

I made some enquiries and was informed by 'Te Hatene', 'Maihi Rawiti' and several other chiefs that 'Hirini's' visit to England was entirely on his own account. That he had not been chosen by the natives as their 'delegate', neither had any subscription, whatever, been raised to defray his expenses, beyond a few pounds from his near relatives and friends, in fact they all stated that a person, or persons of more ability and position than 'Hirini Taiwhanga' would have been elected, had the native people desired to send 'representatives' to England.⁴⁷⁹

All of this was simply hearsay, as Clendon never provided any supporting evidence, but similar statements were made by Frederick Manning, the judge of the Native Lands Court responsible for stripping Taiwhanga of his surveying licence. Manning said of Taiwhanga that "I have only known him as a scheming unprincipled native and notorious mischief maker." Manning also claimed that "I do not think at present that the 'mission' can be said to represent seriously any well defined party having serious or determinately defined views," and "as to the Petition itself, the principle remark I have to make is that I am perfectly certain that Taiwhanga himself does

⁴⁷⁸ Edward Williams to Thomas William Lewis, 9 October 1882, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 82/3178, ANZ.

⁴⁷⁹ James Clendon to Thomas William Lewis, 27 September 1882, Taiwhanga's papers, N.O. 82/3036, ANZ.

not believe one word of the allegations made in it from beginning to end.”⁴⁸⁰ Just as with Clendon’s earlier defamations, however, these claims that Taiwhanga’s petition did not represent Ngāpuhi opinion and that he was not deputed to England with the consent of the Ngāpuhi community were demonstrably false. Widespread reporting of Ngāpuhi support for the petition and for Taiwhanga as delegate during mass meetings at Orakei, Waitangi, and Waimate in 1881 and 1882 rendered these claims groundless.

Of the twelve letters that Taiwhanga wrote to the APS between 1882-1885, eight set out to challenge the disinformation generated about his petition by the New Zealand government. Taiwhanga may not have had the exact details of the false claims expressed in the reports written by Clendon and Manning, but he was certainly aware of what was being alleged of his immoral character and non-representation of Māori opinion. For instance, a Royal Colonial Institute meeting on 23 January 1883 witnessed the Bishop of Nelson announcing “I know well, and others associated with me know well, that [Taiwhanga] represented only the minority; that at a large meeting of chiefs the majority had determined not to send a mission here.”⁴⁸¹ A New Zealand settler in attendance also joked that “it has been said that the deputation might have been taken to see the Queen; I think that if the character of [Taiwhanga] were fully known, that suggestion would hardly have been made...I think it is hardly to be wondered at that he was not introduced to the Queen. (Laughter).”⁴⁸² We know that Taiwhanga was aware of this exchange because he wrote a response to it in the *Wanganui Herald*, saying that “I have nothing whatever to answer for

⁴⁸⁰ Frederick Edward Manning to Thomas William Lewis, 2 October 1882, Taiwhanga’s papers, N.O. 82/3038, ANZ.

⁴⁸¹ “A Chapter in the History of New Zealand,” *The Colonies and India*, 2 February 1883.

⁴⁸² “A Chapter in the History of New Zealand,” *The Colonies and India*, 2 February 1883.

my character.”⁴⁸³ And while he defended his character in various similar letters to newspapers (particularly against charges of spousal abuse),⁴⁸⁴ his letters to the APS largely sought to prove the democratic process and broad-based support that went into his petitions and grievances.

Taiwhanga’s correspondence with the APS principally revolved around plans for a second petition in 1883, and he was particularly concerned with undercutting government disinformation about Māori consensus. On two different occasions he explained his intention by working through the APS to “give Sir D. Bell and others here no chance of passing any more remarks as they did to me last time,”⁴⁸⁵ and specifically “to prevent Sir D. Bell and Lady Martin stating I am no rank at all and I am also an antecedents character [*sic*].”⁴⁸⁶ To do this, Taiwhanga repeatedly emphasized to the APS how much support he had from Māori people across the colony. Sometimes this involved corroborating evidence from local newspapers, as when Taiwhanga wrote that “I enclose you five Whananui newspapers you will see all the Māoris greatly supporting me to revisit England with the Petition.”⁴⁸⁷ At other times, Taiwhanga pointed to the amount of money raised as evidence of wide-spread Māori support, highlighting that “all the chiefs and tribes up now as one man, greatly supporting the second visit to England...willing to sacrifice any money to send me.”⁴⁸⁸ More often, Taiwhanga attempted to establish his representativeness of Māori

⁴⁸³ “Sydney Taiwhanga,” *Wanganui Herald*, 11 April 1883.

⁴⁸⁴ *Auckland Star*, 21 July 1879; “Sydney Taiwhanga,” *Wanganui Herald*, 11 April 1883; “Sydney Taiwhanga,” *Marlborough Express*, 23 August 1883.

⁴⁸⁵ Hirini Taiwhanga to Frederick Chesson, 26 November 1883, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G99 Volume 1 - 6, BodL.

⁴⁸⁶ Hirini Taiwhanga to Frederick Chesson, 30 July 1883, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G98 - 74, BodL.

⁴⁸⁷ Hirini Taiwhanga to Frederick Chesson, 18 April 1883, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G98 - 68, BodL.

⁴⁸⁸ Taiwhanga to Chesson, 30 July 1883.

opinion by detailing the democratic processes behind his petitions. Just after arriving back in New Zealand, Taiwhanga informed the APS that

the whole of Ngāpuhi tribes collecting (£100) pounds to defray my expenses for travelling to each tribe of New Zealand to consult with them to sign a petition which our committee intends to present to the Queen...If I succeed with the signing of the petition, then we going to have a great meeting of all the head chiefs of each tribe, into one place to appoint one or more of our numbers for bearers of the petition to England.⁴⁸⁹

In so doing, Taiwhanga illustrated that any petition he would bring in the future would be based upon widespread consultation and consensus. Following this consultation process, Taiwhanga informed the APS that he had obtained 8500 signatures on his new petition,⁴⁹⁰ and that at a great meeting between rival iwis, the Ngāpuhi had secured a union in support of his's petition, for which "the whole meeting and the whole assembly all agreeable as one man, and there was a loud applause and claspings of hands."⁴⁹¹ Set within the context of the New Zealand government's disinformation against Taiwhanga's representativeness and his own intention to prevent such remarks being made again, these assertions of wide-spread Māori support can be understood as efforts to counter future disinformation through the APS's information network.

Unfortunately, Taiwhanga never did make it back to England and the APS never had another opportunity to mobilize the counterarguments Taiwhanga provided them. Two further Māori petitions were sent to the British government at the same time that Taiwhanga was preparing his second trip, one in 1883 from the four Māori members of the House of Representatives and one in 1884 from Tawhiao, king of the Waikato iwi. The

⁴⁸⁹ Hirini Taiwhanga to Frederick Chesson, 29 December 1882, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G98 - 62, BodL.

⁴⁹⁰ Taiwhanga to Chesson, 30 July 1883.

⁴⁹¹ Hirini Taiwhanga to Frederick Chesson, 6 May 1885, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C143/192, BodL.

New Zealand government played the exact same disinformation game in response to these petitions as well, claiming that the 1883 petition “bears ample internal evidence that it does not contain [Māori] sentiments and cannot really have emanated from them.”⁴⁹² It again argued that Tawhiao, the petitioner in 1884, should “only [be] received [by the] Imperial Government [as a] New Zealand subject [of the] Queen. [He] does not represent more than one thousand natives.”⁴⁹³ Neither of these claims was true, and the APS used some of the information provided by Taiwhanga to refute them. For instance, the APS pointed out that Tawhiao did have broad-based support since “the expenses of his mission have been defrayed by contribution from tribes living in all parts of the colony,”⁴⁹⁴ a detail previously emphasized by Taiwhanga. But the majority of Taiwhanga’s counterarguments were specific to himself and could not be leveraged against the disinformation targeting the 1883 and 1884 petitions, and both eventually fell victim to misrepresentation.

It is difficult to prove conclusive causation between this disinformation and the Colonial Office’s decision not to intervene in New Zealand. Lord Kimberley informed the New Zealand government on 17 February that after reading the above reports he was “unable to advise Her Majesty to give any directions for a compliance with the prayer of the memorialists,”⁴⁹⁵ and Claudia Orange concludes that this rejection was an inevitable

⁴⁹² Bryce to Jervois, 11 January 1884.

⁴⁹³ Colonial Office minutes, “Translation of the Memorial of Māori Chiefs,” 5 July 1884, CO 209-244 no. 11376, TNA.

⁴⁹⁴ Frederick Chesson to Earl of Derby, 30 May 1884, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G99 Volume 1 - 18, BodL.

⁴⁹⁵ Earl of Derby to James Prendergast, 17 February 1883, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence respecting Native Affairs in New Zealand, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, July 1883* (London: George E.B. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1883), 40.

result of the British government's grant of responsible government.⁴⁹⁶ Yet there are two reasons to believe that imperial neutrality was not inevitable and that the representation of Taiwhanga's petition was a deciding factor. Most immediately, it would not have made sense for the Colonial Office to demand reports from the New Zealand government if it had not been willing or able to act on the information it asked for. The Colonial Office brought up this very point in 1884 when another Māori delegation arrived in England and requested that the Native Lands Court be suspended until the British government responded to their petition. The Colonial Office refused to do so because "if this office cannot help them it wld be useless to telegraph to New Zealand as seems to be wished, for that wld only raise hopes doomed to disappointment."⁴⁹⁷ By the same logic, the Colonial Office would not have investigated Taiwhanga's claims if it was unable or unwilling to act upon his grievances if they turned out to be accurate.

Secondly, the Colonial Office *did* have the legal authority to fulfil Taiwhanga's demands through Section 71 of the New Zealand Constitution Act, which empowered the British government to install Māori self-government separate from settler government and to pass legislation for that purpose without the consent of the responsible government.⁴⁹⁸ The question therefore was not one of cognizance to intervene, but of whether relations between Māori and settlers had disintegrated to the point where the British government would be justified to intervene, and this placed the onus of intervention on the

⁴⁹⁶ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 202–7.

⁴⁹⁷ Colonial Office minutes, "Letter from Māori Chiefs," 24 July 1884, CO 209-244 no. 12581, TNA.

⁴⁹⁸ "Section 71," in New Zealand, *The New Zealand Constitution Act: Together with Correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor-in-Chief of New Zealand in Explanation Thereof* (Wellington: R. Stokes, 1853).

representations available to the Colonial Office of Māori-settler relations. We can observe that Taiwhanga himself recognized the inability of his petition to circumvent government disinformation and thus sought to operate through the APS over the years after 1882 to establish the credibility and representativeness that government networks had stripped from him.

The historiography of Māori petitions in the 1880s has recently begun to move past assumptions that petitions were hopeless. To be sure, Claudia Orange's 1997 *The Treaty of Waitangi* is still the most influential study of Taiwhanga's 1882 delegation, and reflects the wider treatment of Indigenous petitions as futile. Orange contends that "Britain had no right to intrude in the affairs of a self-governing colony and was unable to do so," and that even the APS believed Māori demands for rights under the Treaty of Waitangi were "worthless."⁴⁹⁹ The first claim is simply untrue, as Britain retained the right to veto and disallow colonial legislation and to create legislation in Māori affairs under Section 71 of the New Zealand constitution. And the second claim is counter-intuitive: why would the APS work so hard to support efforts it believed to be worthless? Moreover, Orange argues that Taiwhanga's mission "failed completely" during his 17 July 1882 meeting with Lord Kimberley.⁵⁰⁰ As this chapter has shown, however, this claim is also untenable. Kimberley did not "firmly deny responsibility," he merely said that he needed the colonial government's input and he consequently launched an investigation into the matter. Kimberley decided to stay out of New Zealand politics not because of the limits of imperial sovereignty, but because of representations received during his investigation discrediting

⁴⁹⁹ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 202–5.

⁵⁰⁰ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 207.

Māori claims. Orange adheres to a simplistic model of the settler transition in which settler sovereignty immediately replaced imperial sovereignty, but more recent work by Michael Belgrave on another Māori delegation contains a significantly more nuanced appreciation of the ambiguity and liminality of the settler transition.

Belgrave studies Tawhiao's 1884 petition rather than Taiwhanga's 1882 petition, but his observations can be applied to both contexts. Belgrave does not depart entirely from the notion of Indigenous petitions as futile. For instance, he questions why Tawhiao insisted on bringing his petition to London given the "inevitability" of rejection, and suggests that such petitions were made not for their "usefulness" but as a last resort when no other options were available.⁵⁰¹ Yet Belgrave also challenges the historiography for treating Indigenous petitions as "futile gestures," and instead argues that the Colonial Office's response was "far more than the sham washing of hands."⁵⁰² Pointing to a Colonial Office investigation into Tawhiao's petition similar to that made into Taiwhanga's petition, as well as to Section 71 of New Zealand's constitution, Belgrave suggests that "it did appear that there was a middle ground, a constitutional place where Māori demands for self-government could possibly be met."⁵⁰³ Where Belgrave stops short, however, is considering why this middle ground did not come to fruition. Belgrave notes that the New Zealand government repudiated Tawhiao's petition, but a closer look at the language used by the New Zealand government is striking.

Ministers have not deemed it necessary to go *seriatim* through the allegations of the petition and show their unsubstantiality. A former Premier, Sir Frederick

⁵⁰¹ Belgrave, *Dancing with the King*, 306.

⁵⁰² Belgrave, *Dancing with the King*, 339–42.

⁵⁰³ Belgrave, *Dancing with the King*, 340–42.

Whitaker, specially dealt with a petition very similar to the one now under consideration (see memo. 12th December 1882).⁵⁰⁴

The New Zealand government in 1885 therefore repudiated Tawhiao's petition by referencing its previous refutation of Taiwhanga's 1882 petition, a refutation which this chapter has demonstrated to have been deliberately falsified to discredit Taiwhanga.

Belgrave does not address the centrality of disinformation in the Colonial Office's decision to not intervene, even though he does refer to Sir Francis Dillon Bell's reaction to Tawhiao as one of "many pieces of misinformation spread by the Agent General in the cause of the colony's reputation and constitutional independence."⁵⁰⁵ Nor does Belgrave take account of Māori efforts to fight this disinformation, as demonstrated in this chapter's exploration of Taiwhanga's letters to the APS. Consequently, while he goes much farther than Orange in acknowledging the unsettled liminality of sovereignty during the settler transition, he nevertheless concludes that a non-binding reminder from the Colonial Office to protect Māori rights was "as close as the Imperial Government could get" to taking any action.⁵⁰⁶

My analysis contributes to this historiography in two ways. First, I push Belgrave's argument even farther, showing that the British government could have and indeed was willing to take further action, but was discouraged from doing so by settler disinformation. This supports my overarching contention that the form settler colonialism took by the end of the nineteenth century was not fixed at the moment of responsible government being granted, but was contingent upon imperial network impotency, in this case the impotency

⁵⁰⁴ Robert Stout to William Jervois, 12 March 1885, Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1885, Session 1, 1-01.

⁵⁰⁵ Belgrave, *Dancing with the King*, 314.

⁵⁰⁶ Belgrave, *Dancing with the King*, 242.

of petition and APS networks to overcome settler disinformation. Second, I move beyond Orange's and Belgrave's focus on petitions themselves and instead approach petitions as extended moments of Indigenous-settler contests over representation. For Taiwhanga, that moment extended over several years and involved engagement with imperial networks like the APS in order to defend his character and representativeness of Māori opinion. Such efforts are invisible in the text of petitions themselves, thus revealing the importance of embedding petitions within concomitant epistolary activity that constitute my concept of network fluidity.

Reinterpreting the Cape Constitution: John Tengo Jabavu 1887 Petition to Protect the African Franchise

My second case study explores a different form of settler disinformation, thereby pointing toward the variety of ways that colonial governments manipulated Indigenous petitions. John Tengo Jabavu (1859-1921) was already a prolific correspondent of the APS when the Cape Colony government struck a large swath of Black voters from the voter lists with the Parliamentary Registration Act of 1887. Jabavu is well known as an early champion of Black journalism and political organization. Mission educated in the Eastern Cape and only the second Black South African to have matriculated from the University of Cape Town, Jabavu went on to found the first Black-owned newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu* in 1884, headquartered in King William's Town, Cape Colony (see Figure 15 below).⁵⁰⁷ He first reached out to the APS in 1880 after obtaining a copy of *The Aborigines' Friend* and discovering a shared desire "to see that justice was extended to the natives in Her Majesty's colonial empire,"⁵⁰⁸ and from the beginning

⁵⁰⁷ Leonard Diniso Ngcongco, "John Tengo Jabavu 1859-1921," in Christopher C. Saunders, ed., *Black Leaders in Southern African History* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979), 143-6.

⁵⁰⁸ John Tengo Jabavu to Frederick Chesson, 6 May 1880, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C139/1, BodL.

of this correspondence demonstrated that he understood the APS to be a tool against settler disinformation.

Jabavu believed the APS to be “a spark to lighten up the darkness of disgust at misrepresentation in which we have been groaning.”⁵⁰⁹ And he saw this misinformation to have two sources. First, it came from Cape government officials in their reports to the Colonial Office, which “cannot form a judgement without resorting to dispatches which are nothing else than Sir Bartle’s and his ministry’s provictions [*sic*].”⁵¹⁰ Second, he pointed to “the misrepresentations of the majority of the press which has not been slow in contributing its quota to our oppressive burden by misrepresentation in England.”⁵¹¹ Both of these elements came to plague Jabavu in 1887 as he fought to resist disfranchisement, and he moved between editorials in his own newspaper, petitions to the British government, and letters to the APS to establish his credibility and convince the British government of the legitimacy of his grievance in the face of settler misrepresentation. I argue that the British government’s decision to intervene or not came down to a question of who they chose to believe.

⁵⁰⁹ Jabavu to Chesson, 6 May 1880.

⁵¹⁰ Jabavu to Chesson, 6 May 1880.

⁵¹¹ Jabavu to Chesson, 6 May 1880.

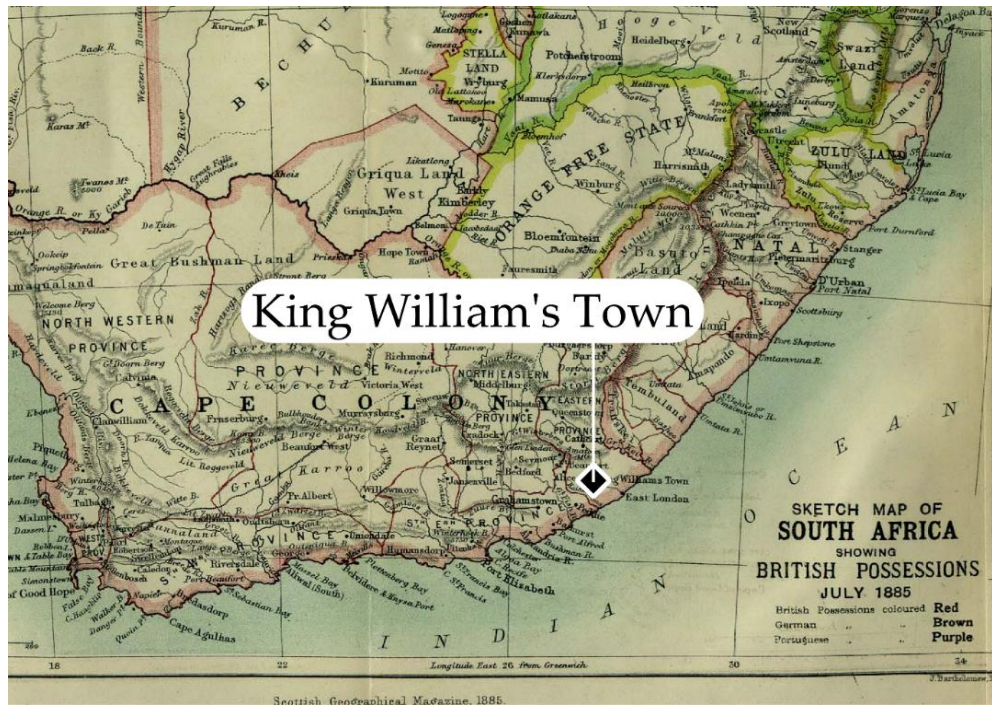


Figure 15: 1885 map of South Africa showing King William's Town. Base map from "Our South African Empire," *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 1, no. 8 (1885): 401.

The Cape Colony's transition from imperial administration to self-government was marked by a concerted effort to overturn the colour-blindness of what historians often refer to as "Cape liberalism" and replace it with racially restricted citizenship. The notion of Cape liberalism points to quasi-egalitarian legislation like Ordinance 50 of 1828's prohibition of racial discrimination against the Indigenous Khoikhoi and San peoples and the 1853 constitution's guarantee of a colour-blind franchise as evidence that the Cape Colony was significantly more egalitarian than the surrounding colonies of Natal, the Orange Free State, and the South African Republic.⁵¹² Yet it is important to recognize that the 1853 constitution's colour-blind franchise was an imperial intervention against settler wishes. The draft constitution written in the Cape in

⁵¹² Stanley Trapido, "The Friends of the Natives': Merchants, Peasants and the Political and Ideological Structure of Liberalism in the Cape, 1854–1910," in *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, ed. Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (London: Longman, 1980), 248.

1852 had set the franchise qualification at £50, while the constitution ratified by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1853 had amended the qualification to £25 in order to “promote the security and prosperity not only of those of British origin but of all the Queen’s subjects.”⁵¹³

In the 1850s the franchise qualification issue revolved more around Anglo-Dutch than White-Black tensions,⁵¹⁴ and when representative government evolved into responsible government in 1872 the colour-blind franchise was not a major concern for settler society since there were so few Black registered voters.⁵¹⁵ However, a series of annexations throughout the 1870s and 1880s drastically increased the Black population by incorporating several densely-populated African kingdoms into the Cape, and a century of missionary activity and trade relations meant that a significant number of this new population were educated and held enough property to qualify for the franchise. It was estimated by contemporary politicians that between 1882 and 1886 alone the percentage of Black voters had increased from 12% of the electorate to 42%,⁵¹⁶ and so the settler administration set about dismantling the colour-blind franchise with the Parliamentary Registration Act (PRA) of 1887.

As a responsible government, the Cape did not have the authority to alter its constitution to allow racially discriminatory policies, so the Cape government designed the PRA to

⁵¹³ J.L. McCracken, *The Cape Parliament, 1854-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 16–17.

⁵¹⁴ Stanley Trapido, “The Origins of the Cape Franchise Qualifications of 1853,” *The Journal of African History* 5, no. 1 (1964): 37–54, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700004497>.

⁵¹⁵ The 1875 Cape Colony census records zero non-White electors, although it qualifies this by stating that “the number of Electors other than European or White being small in comparison with the Whole, the Table given is sufficiently approximate to be instructive.” Cape of Good Hope, *Results of a Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope Taken on the Night of Sunday, the 7th March, 1875*, vol. Part 1: Population and Houses (Cape Town: Saul Solomon and Co., 1877), 10.

⁵¹⁶ Sir Gordon Sprigg in the Cape House of Assembly, 15 June 1887, quoted in D.R. Edgecombe, “The Non-Racial Franchise in Cape Politics, 1853–1910,” *African Historical Review* 10, no. 1–2 (1978): 23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00232087885310031>.

disenfranchise Black voters (“purify the register” as Prime Minister Sir Gordon Sprigg put it⁵¹⁷) without explicit racial discrimination. It did this largely through Clause 17: “No person shall be entitled to be registered as a voter by reason of his sharing in any communal or tribal occupation of lands.”⁵¹⁸ The significance of this clause lay in the ineligibility of land held under communal tenure, which was a common method of land ownership throughout Black communities and was virtually unheard of within White communities, thus targeting the Black franchise without explicit discrimination. The 1853 constitution had not specified any such restrictions, but it also did not specifically protect communal tenure either, and the settler administration was able to spin the PRA as a clarification rather than an amendment to the 1853 constitution. Regardless, observers in South Africa and Britain alike recognized that the PRA was designed to racialize the franchise. The *Cape Times*, for instance, deplored the government’s underhanded efforts “to deprive the natives of their votes,”⁵¹⁹ while the Colonial Office admitted that while “it is true the bill does not purport to make any distinction between white man and black men,” it did specifically target a form of land ownership that “happens to be the form in which most native hold their property, and no white men.”⁵²⁰ Jabavu strongly agreed, believing that the PRA fundamentally altered the meaning of the constitution, and further alleging that the Cape government was lying to the British government about the nature of the PRA to avoid the imperial veto.

⁵¹⁷ *Debates of the House of Assembly, Cape of Good Hope* (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1886), 95.

⁵¹⁸ *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope Passed by the Seventh Parliament during Sessions 1884-1888* (W.A. Richards and Sons, 1889), 394.

⁵¹⁹ “The Native Protest,” *Cape Times*, 30 July 1887.

⁵²⁰ Colonial Office minutes, “Parly Voters Registration Bill,” 2 August 1887, CO 48-515 no. 15297, TNA.

Jabavu used all of the communication tools at his disposal (petitions, his newspaper, and his connection with the APS) to counter the Cape government's disinformation and prove that imperial veto was warranted. Jabavu first took to writing editorials in *Imvo* to spread awareness of the PRA to his primarily Black readers, but the colonial press was not a major contributor to misinformation at this moment. Jabavu recognised that "never was the Press of the Colony so unanimous" in supporting his view and denouncing the PRA. The *Cape Times*, for instance, wrote that "both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution Ordinance have been violated"⁵²¹ while the *Grahamstown Journal* saw the PRA as "a new interpretation of the Constitution Ordinance."⁵²² It was, rather, in the direct correspondence between the Cape government and the British government that most of the misrepresentations of the PRA's purpose and operation travelled, and it was this official disinformation that Jabavu worked hardest to challenge.

On 28 March 1887, Jabavu wrote to the APS that a disfranchisement bill had just been introduced in the Cape parliament and asked them to raise a question in the House of Commons to elicit "whether the government here can of its own accord exclude the majority of the population from a say in the responsible government of the country."⁵²³ He enclosed copies of corroborating articles from the *Cape Times* and his own *Imvo*. Upon receiving these documents, the APS did raise this question through Alexander McArthur, MP for Leicester and a long-time member of the APS. On 7 July 1887 McArthur asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies Sir Henry Holland whether "the adoption of a measure which seems calculated to disfranchise large numbers of Her Majesty's colonial subjects... would constitute a violation of the conditions on

⁵²¹ "The Native Protest," *Cape Times*, 30 July 1887.

⁵²² *Graham's Town Journal*, 10 September 1887.

⁵²³ John Tengo Jabavu to Frederick Chesson, 28 March 1887, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C139/10, BodL.

which responsible government was granted to the Colony?”⁵²⁴ Holland’s response was that the PRA was entirely in line with the existing constitution, but internal Colonial Office records show that the only sources consulted to arrive at this conclusion were two members of the Cape government which had just passed the PRA: Agent-General Sir Charles Mills and Commissioner of Crown Lands Frederick Schermbrucker.⁵²⁵ These two men reiterated the Cape government’s stance that “thousands of naked savages without any qualification fixed by the constitution...have contrary to law been so registered, and that the new bill prevents such a thing being longer continued.”⁵²⁶ In other words, the PRA was a clarification of the constitution to fix a loop hole that had never been intended.

This was not the general consensus of the Cape press. The *Cape Times*, for instance, ran a series of articles on the question of whether the qualification rules of the 1853 constitution had intended to enfranchise Black Africans without access to individual tenure land. Quoting an explanatory minute on the 1853 franchise by then Attorney-General William Porter, the *Cape Times* demonstrated that the constitution had purposefully allowed occupation rather than ownership of land in order to enfranchise Black Africans. Porter had written that

If they [Black Africans] have in general little fixed property to protect, they have another sort of property which they should be enabled to protect. They have their labour to protect; they have to protect the right to carry their labour to their own market, and to sell it at their own price; they have to protect right of making the most of whatever powers of mind and body God has given them. They have to protect themselves from oppressive vagrant laws calculated to compel them to do forced work; and, having all this to protect, they have sense enough to know the

⁵²⁴ “The Cape Colony—The Colonial Registration Bill,” 7 July 1887, Hansard, <https://hansard.parliament.uk//Commons/1887-07-07/debates/a8a0d56b-7452-4a14-b234-1b078462806d/TheCapeColony—TheColonialRegistrationBill>.

⁵²⁵ Colonial Office minutes, “Registration Bill: Alleged Disfranchisement of Natives,” 5 July 1887, CO 48-515 no. 13210, TNA.

⁵²⁶ Colonial Office minutes, “Registration Bill: Alleged Disfranchisement of Natives,” 5 July 1887.

men who would oppose them if not checked, and the men who would stand up for them and take their part.⁵²⁷

Porter had clearly demonstrated that having no fixed property was not meant to be a barrier to voting rights. Since imperial intervention in a responsible government could only be warranted where a violation of the constitution occurred, the intentionality of the 1853 constitution to allow occupation in lieu of ownership became the key point of contention between the Cape government and those like Jabavu fighting to overturn the PRA. Sir Charles Mills and Frederick Schermbrucker had tried their best to prevent an imperial investigation and misrepresent the PRA as a clarification of the constitution, but Jabavu did not allow them to have the final word.

On 3 August 1887, the Colonial Office received a long letter from Jabavu enclosed in a note from Sir Robert Fowler, MP for the City of London and treasurer of the APS. This letter from Jabavu, dated 2 July, was largely the same as his first letter of 28 March: it contained a description of the PRA, a request to raise a question in the House of Commons, and enclosed newspapers as evidence that “the whole of the English Press in the Colony is against the Bill.”⁵²⁸ But the fact that the letter arrived after Sir Henry Holland had repudiated McArthur’s question in the House of Commons led the APS to contemplate that Holland was mistaken in dismissing the PRA so quickly. Fowler forwarded Jabavu’s letter to the Colonial Office with a note that “such legislation seems to me open to your objection. I hope you will give your consideration to the statements in the letter.”⁵²⁹ And Holland did just that, writing the next day to Governor Sir Hercules Robinson to “report

⁵²⁷ “The Native Vote,” *Cape Times*, 16 May 1887.

⁵²⁸ John Tengo Jabavu to Robert Fowler, 2 July 1887, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C153/154, BodL.

⁵²⁹ Colonial Office minutes, “Parliamentary Voters Registration Bill,” 3 August 1887, CO 48-515 no. 15420, TNA.

fully on the exact effect of this measure as regards native claimants of the franchise.”⁵³⁰

This investigation is precisely what Jabavu had hoped for, and it is striking how successful the strategy of writing to the APS was up to this point, netting both a question in the House of Commons by McArthur and pressure to start an investigation by Fowler. Unfortunately, Holland’s investigation only created further opportunity for the Cape government to mislead the Colonial Office, for just as in Taiwhanga’s case, the Colonial Office investigation relied on evidence provided by the original sources of disinformation.

In response to Holland’s investigation, Governor Sir Hercules Robinson submitted evidence testifying to the constitutionality of the PRA from Thomas Upington, the Attorney-General who had voted for and certified the PRA in the first place. Upington claimed that founders of the constitution did not intend communal occupation to count towards the franchise qualification because the then Attorney-General William Porter had defined the value of occupied property as “the sum which a fair appraiser would fix as the price which a fair purchaser who wanted to buy the occupied property, or similar property in the same neighbourhood would give for it.”⁵³¹ This definition, according to Upington, did not apply to the occupation of communal land because “it is impossible to affix a definite value” to communally occupied land which could not be sold from one individual to another.⁵³² This, however, was a lie. In 1883 the Cape government had conducted an investigation into the nature of land tenure in the newly annexed African districts, and the published report of this investigation determined that under communal tenure “the occupier

⁵³⁰ Colonial Office minutes, “Parliamentary Voters Registration Bill,” 3 August 1887.

⁵³¹ Colonial Office minutes, “Parly Voters Registration Act,” 31 August 1887, CO 48-515 no. 19036, TNA.

⁵³² Colonial Office minutes, “Parly Voters Registration Act,” 31 August 1887.

of any kraal, garden, or plot of land may lawfully sell his right of occupation.”⁵³³ The report also recognized that “the rights of occupation to any kraal, garden, or plot of land shall be heritable,” demonstrating the government’s awareness that occupation under communal tenure was not merely usufructuary but came with rights to perpetual use and occupation akin to ownership under individual tenure.⁵³⁴ The government absolutely knew that occupation under communal tenure came with rights of alienation akin to those held under individual tenure and that it was entirely possible and indeed commonplace to fix a value to occupied land. But Upington’s misrepresentation of communal tenure utterly convinced the Colonial Office, which concluded that the 1853 constitution “did not contemplate communal and tribal use, precarious and uncertain in its nature, as constituting a possible element in making up the value of a qualification” since “it is quite plain that Mr Porter believed that the occupied property must be property capable of being made subject to the incidence of purchase and alienation.”⁵³⁵ By relying on the same people who passed the PRA to investigate its constitutionality, the Colonial Office enabled the Cape government’s disinformation to influence whether or not the British government would intervene without due diligence to obtain other opinions.

⁵³³ Cape of Good Hope, *Report and Proceedings: With Appendices of the Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs. Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency the Governor, January, 1883* (Cape Town: W.A. Richards and Sons, 1883), 41.

⁵³⁴ Cape of Good Hope, *Report and Proceedings: With Appendices of the Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs*, 41. Recent studies of African communal tenure also demonstrate that occupation conferred ownership rights to families that could only be broken by severance of family ties to the community. See Willemien du Plessis and Juanita Pienaar, “The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: The Story of Communal Land Tenure in South Africa,” *Fundamina* 16, no. 1 (2010): 73-89, <https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC34404>.

⁵³⁵ Colonial Office minutes, “Parly Voters Registration Act,” 31 August 1887.

Jabavu had anticipated the Cape government's misrepresentations and sought to equip the APS with his own version of events. When Jabavu learned that the Colonial Office had asked Sir Hercules Robinson to report on the effects of the PRA, he congratulated the APS on securing this investigation but also warned them that "Sir Hercules Robinson's report will, I have no doubt, be that of his ministers, and they are past masters in duplicity."⁵³⁶ He therefore took it as his "bounded duty to briefly recapitulate the cardinal points of our case for your benefit so that you may be the better enabled to cope with the specious arguments that will be advanced."⁵³⁷ Chief among these cardinal points was the nature of communal tenure. Anticipating Upington's claim that communal occupancy does not have a fixed value, Jabavu explained that "it is argued that the white man's land is of money value; the black man's under the tribal or communal tenure, which is secure as any white man's holding, counts for nothing." On the contrary, he asserted that "it ought to be clearly understood that in these reserves each male adult has individual rights to the land on which his house stands, and also to the land he cultivates for his exclusive benefit, and the title, according to native practice, is as strong as the title of any citizen within the London Corporation."⁵³⁸ Alluding to the government's own knowledge of these facts as reported in 1883, Jabavu pointed out that the rights of communal occupancy were "even recognized in Colonial Law Courts either by the right of prescription or under the native law."⁵³⁹ The APS accepted Jabavu's arguments and on 6 September 1887

⁵³⁶ John Tengo Jabavu to Frederick Chesson, 29 August 1887, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C139/16, BodL.

⁵³⁷ Jabavu to Chesson, 29 August 1887.

⁵³⁸ Jabavu to Chesson, 29 August 1887.

⁵³⁹ Jabavu to Chesson, 29 August 1887.

forwarded to the Colonial Office further evidence of the suitability of communal tenure to make up the franchise qualification.⁵⁴⁰

The Colonial Office completely ignored this evidence, regurgitating the Cape government's propaganda that "as natives can neither give, sell, will, or partition their lands...the occupancy of native lands gives no better claim to the franchise than the right of commonage or the right of commons lands would give to the members of a village community in England."⁵⁴¹ There is some similarity between this language and that of the doctrine of *terra nullius*, which was partly justified by a belief that some Indigenous groups could hold no property rights because they participated in no transactions in which property rights could change hands.⁵⁴² It is therefore conceivable that the Colonial Office found the Cape Government's propaganda so convincing because it fit into one of the existing frameworks for thinking about Indigenous land rights. But it is important to remember that the Cape Government was talking about voting rights rather than land rights, and although voting rights were contingent on the ownership of land, there was never any question that Black Africans owned their land. The issue was determining whether or not the unique form of African land ownership that evolved in South Africa could be used as qualification for the franchise in the same way as European land ownership. The Cape Government's propaganda aimed to ensure that the British government based this determination upon false information, and the British government allowed this to happen by prioritizing official channels over the independent advice of the APS.

⁵⁴⁰ Colonial Office minutes, "Parly Voters Registration Act," 6 September 1887, CO 48-515 no. 18184, TNA.

⁵⁴¹ Colonial Office minutes, "Parly Voters Registration Act," 6 September 1887.

⁵⁴² Banner, *Possessing the Pacific*, 19.

Ultimately, it was not the Colonial Office but the Law Officers of the Crown – Attorney-General Richard Webster and Solicitor-General Edward Clarke – who rejected Jabavu’s request for imperial intervention. According to imperial regulations, the Colonial Office was responsible for scrutinizing colonial legislation, but if any legislation potentially required imperial intervention it had to be referred to the Law Officers of the Crown for a final verdict.⁵⁴³ The Colonial Office accordingly sent the PRA to the law officers on 4 October 1887, and on 17 October the law officers determined that “in our opinion the 17th section of the Act of 1887 is not at variance with the Constitution Ordinance.”⁵⁴⁴ Problematically, however, the law officers’ report shows that the Colonial Office only provided them with the text of the PRA and the memos defending the constitutionality of the PRA written by Cape government officials. They made no mention whatsoever of the reports submitted by Jabavu and the APS nor of the arguments they presented regarding the alienability of land occupied under communal tenure. Jabavu did not fail to notice this, and he fumed to the APS that “on the lone report of Sir Upington he [Sir Henry Holland] submits a garbled and one-sided statement of the question at issue to the Crown lawyers.”⁵⁴⁵ By so doing the imperial government made its final decision not to interfere with the PRA based entirely on misrepresentations by the Cape government.

Jabavu’s campaign against the PRA reveals two points of historical significance. Firstly, the extent to which the British government contemplated disallowing the PRA contrasts sharply with historiographical coverage of the PRA in particular, as well as of

⁵⁴³ Todd, *Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies*, 137–38.

⁵⁴⁴ Colonial Office minutes, “Parly Voters Registration Act,” 17 October 1887, CO 48-515 no. 21004, TNA.

⁵⁴⁵ John Tengo Jabavu to Frederick Chesson, 28 November 1887, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C139/19, BodL.

Indigenous petitions in general, both of which largely presume that imperial intervention was impossible. The PRA has received substantial historiographical analysis over the past century, but all such histories at most make passing reference to African petitions. D.R. Edgecombe's detailed survey of "The Non-Racial Franchise in Cape Politics" mentions Jabavu's petitions and correspondence with the APS but offers no further analysis of what these documents contained, what they were trying to achieve, or why they did not work.⁵⁴⁶ Farai Nyika and Johan Fourie's investigation into the number of Africans disfranchised by the PRA similarly moves from the statement that "Jabavu led a small delegation that entreated the British Crown to veto the Act" to the conclusion that "the Registration Bill was passed" with no consideration whatsoever of the content, impact, or significance of these petitions, not to mention the inaccuracy that Jabavu never actually brought a delegation to London.⁵⁴⁷ The most recent assessment of the PRA, which is entirely dedicated to Black African resistance efforts, does not mention Jabavu's petitions at all.⁵⁴⁸

When historians do take a closer look at Jabavu's petitions, they take for granted that such petitions would fail and instead attend to the discourse of imperial citizenship within the petitions. Evans *et al.* emphasize the rhetoric of loyalty to Britain that Jabavu and other petitioners used to defend Britain's protection of their political rights,⁵⁴⁹ while Khwezi Mkhize asserts that "in spite of the failure to get the act reversed, Jabavu mapped

⁵⁴⁶ Edgecombe, "The Non-Racial Franchise in Cape Politics, 1853–1910," 30–31.

⁵⁴⁷ Farai Nyika and Johan Fourie, "Black Disenfranchisement in the Cape Colony, c.1887–1909: Challenging the Numbers," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 46, no. 3 (2020): 461, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2020.1741177>.

⁵⁴⁸ Beurel Visser, "African Resistance to the 1887 Parliamentary Voters' Registration Act," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 48, no 6. (2022): 975-991, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2023.2167392>.

⁵⁴⁹ Julie Evans et al., *Equal Subjects, Unequal Rights: Indigenous People in British Settler Colonies, 1830-1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 162–63.

the terrain of empire as an overlapping geography of ethical and political responsibility” in which equal British subjecthood formed the basis of African political rights.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, the historiography of the PRA is informed by assumptions that petitioning the British government was either pointless and unworthy of closer inspection or, due to their hopelessness, significant only in their articulation of identities as imperial citizens. And the larger scholarship on Indigenous petitions shares these assumptions, from J.R. Miller’s suggestion that “quixotic and futile” petitions were “significant nonetheless” for training Indigenous groups in political lobbying,⁵⁵¹ to Ravi de Costa’s assertion that the “descriptions of moral worlds” and articulations of Indigenous identity within petitions imbue them with significance beyond the “straightforward story of failure, of appeals denied by the pure power of empires.”⁵⁵²

As this chapter has demonstrated, however, a closer examination of Jabavu’s petitions alongside his correspondence with the APS disproves the teleological assumption that petitions were “futile.” To be fair, many contemporaries of Jabavu were themselves unsure whether Britain retained the authority to interfere in the Cape Colony. For instance, when the *Cape Times* learned that Jabavu was planning to petition the British government against the PRA, it ran several articles proclaiming the futility of such an action. One such article explained that “the appeal to the Queen has its fascination for the helpless, and for those who suffer wrong; but there is no place for it in our institutions. The beautiful traditions of the Throne have long vanished from the region of practical politics.”⁵⁵³ But on

⁵⁵⁰ Mkhize, “To See Us As We See Ourselves,” 428–29.

⁵⁵¹ Miller, “Petitioning the Great White Mother,” 223.

⁵⁵² Costa, “Identity, Authority, and the Moral Worlds of Indigenous Petitions,” 694.

⁵⁵³ “The Native Protest,” *Cape Times*, 30 July 1887.

learning that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had not dismissed Jabavu's petition and was actively investigating the issue, the *Cape Times* wrote in panic and dismay that is worth quoting in full.

Sir Henry Holland might have said boldly that in matters of internal legislation he would not advise any interference with the discretion of the Cape Parliament. He might have explained to, the advocates of native rights that by an understanding with the representatives of the Cape Colony at the recent Conference the Imperial Government virtually abandoned its power of revising the decisions of the Colonial Parliament in strictly domestic questions...And under this theory the Royal veto would be as obsolete with reference to Colonial as it has long been with reference to Imperial legislation. It appears, however, that we have overestimated the extent and value of the new departure. Sir Henry Holland professes to adhere to the strict letter of the Constitution Ordinance; and upon that letter he will shape his course in the somewhat difficult strait now before him.⁵⁵⁴

This excerpt captures the moment that contemporaries in the Cape Colony realized that their self-government was not free from imperial interference and underscores the importance of appreciating the real possibility that Britain could have acted on Jabavu's petition.

The Colonial Office's investigation into the PRA was a tangible consequence of Jabavu's petition that carried a serious potential for intervention. The influence of Cape government disinformation on the Law Officers of the Crown's judgement that the 1853 constitution had not protected communal tenure reflects the significance of imperial networks and information flows for the period of transition from imperial to settler administration. The imperial government no longer possessed an untrammelled authority to dictate colonial policies, but neither was it "inconceivable," as Philip Buckner argues, that the British government would act against the decisions of a colonial parliament.⁵⁵⁵ Instead,

⁵⁵⁴ "The Registration Bill," *Cape Times*, 29 August 1887.

⁵⁵⁵ Buckner, "The Creation of the Dominion of Canada, 1860–1901," 70.

the exercise of imperial sovereignty was contingent upon imperial interpretations of colonial events. And those interpretations were themselves contingent upon who could communicate with the Colonial Office, how they represented colonial events, and how credible they were. Petitions were one method of communicating with the Colonial Office, but they were also subject to misrepresentation by colonial governments.

Obtaining the support of the APS was one method by which Jabavu sought to increase the credibility of his petition and overcome Cape misinformation. And although this strategy did not result in the desired imperial intervention, Jabavu's movement between petitions, his own newspaper, and the APS networks reveals elements of Indigenous politics that are not visible from petitions alone. The network fluidity demonstrated in moving between newspapers, petitions, and letters demonstrates how Indigenous peoples used overlapping networks to overcome weaknesses of individual networks and present the strongest case possible for imperial intervention. The network impotency of petitions, as well as the network impotency of the APS to overcome misrepresentations from colonial governments, suggests that the consolidation of the sovereign settler state in the late nineteenth century was contingent upon on the failure of alternative trajectories of continued imperial intervention. The Cape's disfranchisement of Black voters was not a direct result of responsible government nor did responsible government ensure the passage of the PRA. Instead, this chapter argues that the passing of the PRA was determined as much by the bestowal of self-government as by the availability and effectiveness of overlapping imperial networks in disseminating alternative representations of communal tenure and the 1853 constitution.

Conclusion

Together, Hirini Taiwhanga's and John Tengo Jabavu's correspondence with the APS reveals two fundamental elements of Indigenous lived experiences of empire during the settler transition of the late nineteenth century. First, it illustrates the extended process of petitioning beyond the crafting and presenting of petition documents themselves, a process that historians who focus on immediate outcomes often miss. Taiwhanga's petition has been judged a failure because Lord Kimberley did not immediately grant Māori self-government during their interview at the Colonial Office, and Jabavu's petition has been judged a failure because Sir Henry Holland did not immediately veto the Parliamentary Registration Act upon receiving the petition. However, this chapter demonstrates that this is not how these petitions worked. The Colonial Office did not have the power to interfere in colonial affairs without consulting colonial governments, but this does not mean that it had no power to interfere whatsoever. Instead, responding to petitions required a lengthy process of investigating claims and consulting colonial perspectives, and the act of petitioning also became a lengthy process of confronting any complications and challenges that could arise during the consultation period. For Taiwhanga, this process lasted for around three years from 1882-1885, during which time he worked through the APS to establish his representativeness of Māori opinion by highlighting the democratic processes underpinning his petition. For Jabavu, this process lasted throughout the year of 1887, when he worked through the APS to establish the accuracy of his depiction of the Parliamentary Registration Act and its impact on the Cape constitution.

The nature of the complications and challenges faced by petitioners illustrates the second fundamental element of Indigenous lived experiences during the settler transition: information wars with settler governments. The related concepts of misinformation and disinformation have

occupied generations of sociologists and communications scholars, yet imperial historians rarely engage with them. John Mackenzie's *Propaganda and Empire* is the closest study of imperial disinformation that I have found so far, but it is primarily concerned with British popular understandings of empire rather than the impact of propaganda on the development of colonial or imperial policies.⁵⁵⁶ Within Taiwhanga's and Jabavu's correspondence with the APS, however, there is solid historical evidence that disinformation shaped the outcome of Indigenous petitions. Taiwhanga and Jabavu laboured to assert the credibility of themselves as representatives of their communities as well as of their petitions as accurate representations of events against intentional disinformation campaigns conducted by settler governments. They point to the importance not only of imperial networks to facilitate petitioning during the extended process of investigations and consultations, but also the importance of the credibility of those imperial networks chosen by petitioners to represent them. I argue that Taiwhanga's and Jabavu's petitions failed partially because they and the APS did not have sufficient credibility in British society to counter settler government disinformation, and counterfactuals aside, this has significant implications for historiographical understandings of this period. If we stop approaching these failures as inevitable outcomes of settler self-government and instead approach them as contingent upon British authorities perceiving settler governments as more credible than Indigenous petitioners or the APS, we gain a deeper appreciation of the liminality of settler colonialism in the late nineteenth century and the multiple possibilities inherent within Indigenous petitions. This in some ways represents my desire to introduce John Darwin's vision of empire as "unfinished,

⁵⁵⁶ John Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

untidy, a mass of contradictions, aspirations and anomalies” into the study of settler colonialism.⁵⁵⁷

Of course, there were many concurrent historical processes and developments that also contextualized the failure of Taiwhanga’s and Jabavu’s petitions, some of which problematize my portrayal of Colonial Office investigations as open-ended and undetermined. Two developments in particular influenced the possible outcomes of Indigenous petitions. On one hand, changes in perceptions of race and rationality in the mid-nineteenth century may have rendered it highly unlikely that British administrators in the 1880s would attribute credibility to Indigenous petitioners over settler government officials. By the mid-nineteenth century, a range of factors including scientific debates over evolution, reactions to conflicts in India, America, and Jamaica, and political debates over democratization and Fenianism had facilitated a shift in British perceptions of race. Placement on the civilizational ladder was increasingly linked to inherent biological limitations that rendered racialized groups as less rational, untrustworthy, and generally deficiency in intelligence and character,⁵⁵⁸ although Hilary Carey shows that previous assumptions of a shared religious humanity was not so much abandoned as it was adapted to new scientific discourses.⁵⁵⁹ In this context, the failure of Indigenous petitions during the settler transition could be interpreted as a consequence of this larger process, where Indigenous voices were dismissed because of racialized perceptions of their innate lack of credibility and not as a direct result of settler disinformation.

⁵⁵⁷ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, xi.

⁵⁵⁸ Patrick Brantlinger, *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 111–35.

⁵⁵⁹ Carey, “Babylon, the Bible and the Australian Aborigines,” 67-69.

On the other hand, changes in the strategic importance of settler colonies to the empire's geopolitical interests may also have rendered it highly unlikely that British administrators in the 1880s would be willing to anger settler governments. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, metropolitan society often looked down on the settler colonies as a dumping ground for the "dregs of society": convicts, paupers, and those lacking capacity to make it in Britain. However, Duncan Bell demonstrates that by the mid-nineteenth century the systematic colonization movement reimagined the settler colonies as productive spaces for economic growth and nodes within an imperial security apparatus, so that during the intense inter-imperial competitions between 1870-1945 the settler colonies "assumed an unprecedented role in British political discourse."⁵⁶⁰ John Darwin agrees, arguing that "the dominions were a critical element in British world power" because "the remarkable loyalty of the 'overseas British' and their economic efficiency made them the most reliable overseas part of the whole British world-system."⁵⁶¹ It is again possible to view the failure of Indigenous petitions as a consequence of the larger context of British dependence on settler economic and military contributions during this period. After all, imperial federationists in the twentieth century aimed to foster settler commitment to the empire through the recognition of their governmental independence, and it is hard to imagine the Colonial Office risking settler animosity by acting upon Indigenous petitions for intervention.

Yet these broader developments in political and social thought were not determinative of British responses to Indigenous petitions, and the sheer scale of Colonial Office investigations into Indigenous petitions in this period challenges deterministic assumptions of their inevitable

⁵⁶⁰ Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 33–37.

⁵⁶¹ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 11.

failure. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, Taiwhanga and Jabavu are just two case studies of a much broader phenomenon. Their experiences are reflected in the case of Mqikela, an mPondo chief from southeastern South Africa who petitioned the British government in 1883 to return land stolen by the Cape government. The Colonial Office conducted an investigation into the matter, and the Cape government used the opportunity to defame Mqikela as “an imbecile drunkard” and to allege that he did not represent mPondo opinion.⁵⁶² Mqikela then challenged this disinformation through the APS, offering point-by-point refutations to the “very gross misrepresentations” made against him.⁵⁶³ Moreover, whereas Mqikela argued that the British had no right to interfere in his affairs since they had long broken their treaty obligations,⁵⁶⁴ the Cape government countered that it was Mqikela who broke treaty obligations and so their treaty was still enforceable.⁵⁶⁵ Despite the APS standing up for him, the Colonial Office denied Mqikela’s petition on account of believing the Cape government’s story over Mqikela’s.

Another example is Scobie Logan, a Munsee chief from southeastern Canada, who petitioned the British government in 1882 to furnish land deeds promised during the American

⁵⁶² John Oxley Oxland to Secretary for Native Affairs, 5 June 1883, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence respecting the Cape Colony and Adjacent Territories, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, February 1884* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1884), 2; John Merriman to Leicester Smyth, 14 November 1883, in British House of Commons, *Further correspondence respecting the Cape Colony and Adjacent Territories...February 1884*, 46-47; John Oxley Oxland to Secretary for Native Affairs, 4 February 1884, in British House of Commons, *Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Pondoland, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, August 1885* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1885), 1.

⁵⁶³ Mqikela to Frederick Chesson, 12 July 1884, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C149/105, BodL; Mqikela to Hercules Robinson, 12 July 1884, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C149/106, BodL.

⁵⁶⁴ Mqikela to Hercules Robinson, 9 August 1884, in British House of Commons, *Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Pondoland...August 1885*, 13.

⁵⁶⁵ Thomas Upington to Hercules Robinson, 11 September 1884, in British House of Commons, *Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Pondoland...August 1885*, 14-15.

Revolution that had never materialized. During the Colonial Office's investigation, the Canadian government falsely reported that Logan's petition was "totally without foundation" and that Logan was only using the petition as an excuse to tour England and distract himself from a recent divorce.⁵⁶⁶ Logan worked with the APS in order to shore up his credibility and obtain a meeting with the Colonial Office after the Earl of Derby declared him "a humbug" based on the Canadian government's claims.⁵⁶⁷ But the Colonial Office offered Logan no reconsideration, and when a question in the House of Commons the next year asked if anything had come of Logan's petition, the Colonial Office rattled off the Canadian government's lie that the petition "was totally without foundation."⁵⁶⁸

And there was David Leask, a Tsimshian man from northwestern Canada who petitioned the British government in 1887 to stop illegal surveying of his land. The Colonial Office investigated, and this time his claims were discredited both by the provincial government ("the charges...have not the least foundation in fact") as well as the Church Missionary Society (saying that Leask "can scarcely fail to subvert a regard for truth and foster hypocrisy") for reasons that I explore in Chapter Five on missionary humanitarianism.⁵⁶⁹ Leask, like the others, turned to the APS to establish himself as credible and his petition as accurate.⁵⁷⁰ And, once

⁵⁶⁶ Thomas Gordon to Lawrence Vankoughnet, 12 May 1882, CO 42-772 no. 18952, TNA; Lawrence Vankoughnet to Francis de Winton, 13 October 1882, CO 42-772 no. 18952, TNA.

⁵⁶⁷ Colonial Office minutes, "The Muncey Indians," 14 October 1882, CO 42-772 no. 18952, TNA; "A Redskin Warrior," *Graphic*, 15 July 1882.

⁵⁶⁸ House of Commons debate, "Dominion of Canada - Mission of the Red Indian Chief," 15 March 1883, vol 277 c552, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1883/mar/15/dominion-of-canada-mission-of-the-red>.

⁵⁶⁹ J. Touch and W. Blackett, *Report of the Deputation to Metlakatla* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1886), 16; Israel Powell to B. Blomfield, 14 November 1887, RG 10 Vol. 3606 file 2959 pt. 3, Library and Archives Canada.

⁵⁷⁰ Leask to Chesson, 29 May 1886; Leask to Chesson, 10 September 1886.

again, the Colonial Office conducted an investigation and subsequently believed the Canadian government instead of Leask.⁵⁷¹

The list goes on, and in every case the Colonial Office consistently investigated petitions and made its decisions based on settler disinformation. It is the consistency of the Colonial Office's determination to investigate petitions when it could very well have just ignored them, along with the persistence of settler governments in working to discredit petitions when they, too, could have just ignored them, which leads me to argue that the failure of these petitions cannot be entirely attributed to broad contextual developments like self-government, racialization, and imperial strategy. On the contrary, if we approach these investigations and disinformation campaigns seriously, we have to recognize that the Colonial Office conducted them for a reason and that their outcomes were not predetermined, and this requires a reassessment of the historiographical arguments that Indigenous petitions failed because settler self-government precluded their success.

Indeed, the findings of this chapter suggests that we must invert the link between failed petitions and self-government: it was not self-government that made petitions fail, it was the failure of petitions that confirmed and entrenched self-government. After all, failure is not a complete lack of impact. Antoinette Burton makes this point in relation to anti-imperial resistance more broadly, arguing that empire took shape in response to local disruptions and challenges,⁵⁷² and this idea can also be applied to petitioning. By forcing the British government to make hard choices about how it was going to govern the settler colonies after self-government, Indigenous petitions instigated the solidification of policies which were previously vague and

⁵⁷¹ Colonial Office minutes, "Indian Land Title in B. Columbia," December 20, 1886, CO 42-789 no. 22964, The National Archives, Kew.

⁵⁷² Burton, *The Trouble with Empire*, 1–3.

undetermined. So despite not obtaining the desired redress, these petitions did have an impact by calling on Britain to elaborate its future relationships with Indigenous nations. This impact snowballed through time as Indigenous groups refused to accept negative outcomes and continued petitioning authorities including, in the twentieth century, the Privy Council, the League of Nations, and the United Nations.

Petitioning was therefore a double-edged sword, at once taking advantage of the ambiguous and undefined relationship between imperial and colonial authorities while simultaneously destroying that ambiguity by forcing an answer. While in the introduction I emphasized the differences between Indigenous petitions to Britain from settler colonies and subaltern petitions in Crown colonies like India and Nigeria, this double-edged dynamic of petitioning is a significant parallel between both contexts. For while Robert Travers and Julia Stephens argue that Indian petitions to colonial authorities simultaneously afforded a space for Indian agency and consolidated authority within the petitioned authority (the colonial government),⁵⁷³ the Indigenous petitions examined here afforded a space for agency while consolidating authority within the *non-petitioned authority* (the settler government). By observing that the authority of the settler state was not consolidated at the time of petitioning, we are able to grasp the significance of petitioning in the late nineteenth-century settler colonies as a process of state-formation. Consequently, this chapter contributes to my overall exploration of continuity and change throughout the settler transition of the late nineteenth century by highlighting how Indigenous engagements with the Aborigines' Protection Society were not

⁵⁷³ Stephens, "A Bureaucracy of Rejection," 177-202; Robert Travers, "Indian Petitioning and Colonial State-Formation in Eighteenth-Century Bengal," *Modern Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (2019): 89-122, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000841>.

futile or anachronistic attempts to hold on to antiquated imperial system, but played an integral role in articulating the new settler colonial system.

5. Mission Society Capitalism versus Imperial Humanitarianism in British Columbia and Western Australia

Alan Lester and Fae Dussart rightfully observe that British imperial historians from Catherine Hall to Elizabeth Elbourne too frequently conflate imperial humanitarianism with missionaries.⁵⁷⁴ Michael Barnett, for his part, claims that missions “represented the only sustained humanitarian activity during the period of European expansion and colonialism [defined as 1792-1910],” while Susan Thorne approaches missionaries as largely differentiated from other religious groups in Britain by their dedication to foreign philanthropy.⁵⁷⁵ This is not to suggest that all missionaries are assumed to have been humanitarians or that being humanitarian means that missionaries opposed imperial expansion and settler rule, as imperial historiography of the past several decades has tended to represent missions as “a colonialist institution *par excellence*.”⁵⁷⁶ Rather, imperial historians generally assume most humanitarians from the nineteenth century to have been missionaries. Historians of the APS similarly represent it as a quasi-mission society, with James Heartfield contending that “missionaries were amongst the most important of its informants”⁵⁷⁷ and Kay Forrest even referring to the APS as a missionary society.⁵⁷⁸ Yet the APS was decidedly *not* a mission society, and differed both functionally and ideologically from such organisations. Although Andrew Porter argues that

⁵⁷⁴ Lester and Dussart, *Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, 4.

⁵⁷⁵ Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 64; Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 112-113.

⁵⁷⁶ Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Easter Cape, 1770-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 104.

⁵⁷⁷ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*, 181; Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*, 39–40.

⁵⁷⁸ Kay Forrest, *The Challenge and the Chance: The Colonisation and Settlement of North West Australia 1861-1914* (Victoria Park: Hesperian Press, 1996), 140.

missionaries themselves cannot be understood outside their deeply religious and theological worldviews,⁵⁷⁹ the voluntary societies that were formed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to provide financial and institutional support for missionaries were essentially fundraising enterprises designed to funnel domestic resources into training and maintaining foreign employees.⁵⁸⁰ The APS, on the other hand, was a political lobby group that operated upon voluntarily provided intelligence. Moreover, Zoë Laidlaw has long argued that historians should differentiate the APS from mission and anti-slavery work, and she demonstrates that contemporaries perceived significant animosity between APS's emphasis on material welfare and mission society emphasis on spiritual evangelism.⁵⁸¹ These differences had major implications for those missionaries in the late nineteenth century who became informants for the APS, work that often entailed going against mission society interests and sometimes even directly attacking one's employers. Yet, for reasons discussed below, historians have neglected missionary correspondence with the APS in favour of missionaries' correspondence with their employers, creating a skewed representation of missionary humanitarianism. To develop our understanding of how imperial subjects interacted with competing imperial networks in the late nineteenth century, this chapter examines why so many missionaries made the decision to work with the APS despite the conflicts that this created with their mission societies. I present two overarching arguments. First, that humanitarian activism was only acceptable to mission societies when it was compatible with contemporary fundraising efforts. This led mission

⁵⁷⁹ Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 10–13.

⁵⁸⁰ Bob Tennant, *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Societies, 1760-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–16; Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (London: Routledge, 2008), 94.

⁵⁸¹ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire's Humanity*, 9; Laidlaw, "Heathens, Slaves and Aborigines," 136–42.

societies to suppress humanitarianism and support settler oppression when doing so was financially necessary. Building on this finding, I secondly argue that missionaries utilized the APS to subvert their employers' capacity to control humanitarian activism, whether by seeking to replace mission funding with APS funding or else by short-circuiting mission society influence over imperial government officials.

A major difficulty in the study of mission history is the heterogeneity of nineteenth-century missionary beliefs and personalities, and the case studies included in this chapter were purposefully selected to control for some variables while remaining open to heterogeneity of experience. Denominations held contrasting opinions about evangelism, mission societies held contrasting opinions about institution-building, and individual missionaries held contrasting opinions about everything from race and gender norms to the value of secular education. The breadth of individuality and disagreement was so vast that theologian John W. de Gruchy is critical of any generalization about who missionaries were or what they believed in.⁵⁸² This heterogeneity holds true within the APS archives. Nearly all missionary correspondents were Protestant, but they were employed by a multitude of societies including the London Missionary Society (Congregational), the Church Missionary Society (Anglican), the Paris Evangelical Mission Society (Calvinist), the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (Methodist), and many more. An analysis including all of these correspondents would be either too long or too shallow, while only including correspondents from a single mission society would be overly specific and unrepresentative. As a compromise, I chose two case studies from within the same denomination

⁵⁸² John W. de Gruchy, "Who Did They Think They Were?' Some Reflections from a Theologian on Grand Narratives and Identity in the History of Missions," in *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914*, ed. Andrew Porter (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 219.

(Anglican) but different societies, different fields of operation, and different clerical positions. My first case study, William Duncan, was a lay missionary sent to British Columbia and later expelled and excoriated by the Church Missionary Society for supporting Indigenous claims to Native Land Title. My second case study, John Gribble, was an ordained missionary invited to Western Australia and later expelled and excoriated by the Church of England's Diocese of Perth for criticizing settler exploitation of Indigenous labour. The divergent experiences of Duncan's lay work in Canada and Gribble's ordained work in Australia enables attention to some level of individual nuance while controlling for denomination, and their relative positioning to Britain (with Duncan an employee of a voluntary British society and Gribble an employee of a colonial church) affords a valuable comparison of how imperial missionary networks operated in different contexts. Moreover, both missionaries have left behind many primary sources and received extensive historical analysis which has failed to address their relationships with the APS.

By identifying shared themes across these two case studies, this chapter makes two significant contributions to the historiography of missions and empire. First, my identification of a link between mission society fundraising and support for humanitarian activism contributes to ongoing debates over missionary humanitarian work in the late nineteenth century. One side of this debate emphasizes the ideological divergence of missionary and humanitarian agendas. Given that the purpose of mission societies was to save souls and convert heathens, the argument is that mission societies only supported humanitarian activism when it directly contributed to saving souls or converting heathens. Catherine Hall, for example, argues that early nineteenth-century Baptist missionaries in Jamaica were able to participate in the anti-slavery movement by convincing the Baptist Missionary Society that slave holders were preventing slaves from

visiting the mission station, thus slavery was standing in the way of evangelism.⁵⁸³ Conversely, Andrew Porter argues that late nineteenth-century Anglican missionaries in China refused to participate in humanitarian campaigns against coolie labour and the opium trade because “coolies, opium and spirits did not directly threaten missionaries’ work in the way that slavery and its institutions had done.”⁵⁸⁴ An interesting aspect of these arguments is the agency they place in particular missionaries, with Elizabeth Elbourne and Alan Lester both concluding that mission society support for humanitarianism ultimately depended on the rhetorical abilities of missionaries on-the-spot to connect the dots between humanitarian and missionary labour.⁵⁸⁵ However, overemphasizing the ideological divergence of missionary and humanitarian agendas without consideration of economic factors undermines the persuasiveness of this argument, as if mission societies had unlimited funds to spend on whatever projects they decided were important.

To correct this focus on ideological differences, the other side of the debate emphasizes the impact of funding allocation on missionary humanitarianism, particularly colonial government funding. Colonial governments often contributed funds to the operation of mission stations, both as an attempt to pacify and control Indigenous peoples as well as out of the expectation that colonization should provide the benefits of western civilization.⁵⁸⁶ However, in colonies where multiple mission societies operated (as was the case practically everywhere by the late nineteenth century), mission societies existed in a state of competition with one another

⁵⁸³ Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 106–14.

⁵⁸⁴ Porter, *Religion versus Empire?*, 205.

⁵⁸⁵ Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 243–45; Lester, “Humanitarians and White Settlers in the Nineteenth Century,” 74–75.

⁵⁸⁶ Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, 20–24.

for a limited amount of government funds. Because of this, John Milloy and Amanda Nettelbeck *et al.* argue that mission societies often sacrificed their willingness to challenge government policies in order to increase their chances at receiving funding, and that this dependence on government funds ultimately resulted in missionary collaboration with the child-removal programs of the twentieth century.⁵⁸⁷ Hilary Carey offers some supporting evidence for this thesis, albeit from the perspective of missions targeting settlers (“colonial missions”) rather than those targeting Indigenous peoples (“foreign missions”). Carey argues that declining government funding forced colonial missions to become increasingly dependent on settler contributions at the parish level.⁵⁸⁸ Thus, while Carey directs her analysis towards colonial rather than foreign missions and does not address humanitarianism itself, her findings support the idea that mission dependence on settler funding disincentivized critiques of settler practices. To be sure, Carey paints a contrasting picture of clerical responses to convict transportation, in which heavy dependence on government funding did not deter colonial ministers from humanitarian critique of the transportation system.⁵⁸⁹ Yet unlike Indigenous rights activism, the anti-transportation movement was supported by both government officials and settler lobbyists, so that it was possible for the clergy to challenge transportation without significantly risking financial support. This was not true for missionaries critical of settler colonial violence, hence the thesis that dependence on government and settler funding detracted from missionary humanitarianism.

⁵⁸⁷ John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 52–56; Amanda Nettelbeck, Russell Smandyh, Louis Knafla, and Robert Foster, *Fragile Settlements: Aboriginal Peoples, Law, and Resistance in South-West Australia and Prairie Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016), 160–71.

⁵⁸⁸ Carey, *God’s Empire*, 98–99.

⁵⁸⁹ Hilary Carey, *Empire of Hell: Religion and the Campaign to End Convict Transportation in the British Empire, 1788-1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 219-256.

Neither side of this debate is mutually exclusive, and mission society support for humanitarian work was likely based on a combination of both financial and ideological factors. However, arguments emphasizing the importance of financial factors assume that dependence on settler and government funding was the only financial barrier to missionary humanitarian activism, whereas this chapter finds that the demands of fundraising in Britain were also important considerations. Historians have long directed attention towards the fundraising activities of nineteenth-century mission societies from a domestic British perspective. Susan Thorne's work on the London Missionary Society's role as mediator of imperial knowledge found that, in the context of increasing competition for donations with home missions, foreign mission societies ramped up their fundraising machines in the late nineteenth century to convince the working classes of the religious and moral imperative to save heathens abroad.⁵⁹⁰ Similarly, Jeffrey Cox's history of the missionary enterprise found that mission societies pumped out highly racialized propaganda of degenerate heathenism to shock the public and convince people that the heathen masses "could only be conquered through a vast outpouring of money and voluntary support in Great Britain."⁵⁹¹ These massive fundraising efforts were going on at the same time that missionaries in the settler colonies were competing for government funding and parishioner donations. Although local sources of funding did slowly become more important, I demonstrate below that it was not until the twentieth century that local funding came close to matching metropolitan funding. Therefore, while competition for settler and government funds was a factor and local self-sufficiency was certainly a goal, missionaries in the 1880s were still heavily dependent on securing funding from metropolitan mission societies, and any analysis of

⁵⁹⁰ Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, 111–20.

⁵⁹¹ Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, 114–26.

their ability to perform humanitarian activism in the colonies must take account of the impact of humanitarianism on fundraising in Britain.

This chapter begins this work by locating William Duncan's and John Gribble's humanitarian efforts and their correspondence with the APS within the concurrent fundraising efforts of their employers, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Anglican Diocese of Perth Missions Committee (hereafter referred to as DMC, the Diocesan Missions Committee). These two bodies fundraised in markedly different ways. The CMS can be thought of as a primary fundraiser: it was on the ground in Britain directly soliciting money in churches, meeting halls, Sunday Schools, and even individual households. The DMC, on the other hand, can be thought of as a secondary fundraiser: it seldom made direct public appeals for money, and instead solicited grants from other mission societies, particularly the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), and the Colonial and Continental Church Society (CCCS). Despite these differences, both the CMS and the DMC found that their employees' humanitarian activities became barriers to collecting funds. This chapter argues that the CMS and DMC responded to Duncan and Gribble primarily on the basis of their impacts on fundraising, and consequently turned against and suppressed their humanitarian activities to protect financial interests. These findings do not invalidate the two existing arguments for the importance of rhetorical abilities to connect evangelical and humanitarian agendas and competition for colonial government and parishioner funding. But by pointing to the continuing dependence of missionaries on metropolitan fundraising, I demonstrate that there was a third significant factor to missionary activism and thereby deepen our understanding of the relationship between humanitarianism and mission work.

Diverging perceptions of race also contextualized mission society repudiation of humanitarian activism, although in different ways than racialization is typically understood to have undercut humanitarianism. Christine Bolt and Douglas Lorimer famously argue that Victorian understandings of race, which in the eighteenth century had perceived all races as equally human and thus afforded room for humanitarian activism, hardened over the nineteenth century in response to events like the Indian Rebellion in 1857 and the Jamaica Uprising in 1865, in addition to new developments in biological science.⁵⁹² Such hardened perspectives on race supposedly replaced a belief in the possibility to ameliorate Indigenous-settler relations with a resignation that Indigenous people were inherently inferior and therefore beyond humanitarian assistance.⁵⁹³ Porter suggests that these developments resulted in a “mid-century waning of missionary enthusiasm,”⁵⁹⁴ yet other scholars contend that the increased racialization of British society as a whole did not touch the missionary sector as strongly as it did other sectors. Susan Thorne and Jeffrey Cox, for instance, show that late nineteenth century mission communities tended to reject popular biological race theory because it was incompatible with the basic premise of mission work: that all people had the same capacity to be Christianized.⁵⁹⁵ Similarly, Carey argues that many missionaries simply used new scientific approaches to support their previous beliefs in shared humanity.⁵⁹⁶ Instead of perceiving inherent biological difference, missionary racism was founded upon earlier theories of stadial racial improvement that allowed

⁵⁹² Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971); Douglas Lorimer, *Colour, Class, and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978).

⁵⁹³ Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 68–93; Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 240.

⁵⁹⁴ Porter, *Empire versus Religion?*, 224.

⁵⁹⁵ Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, 177–80; Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, 112.

⁵⁹⁶ Carey, “Babylon, the Bible and the Australian Aborigines,” 67-69.

for mobility across a civilizational hierarchy.⁵⁹⁷ One major problem with theories of stadial improvement was that defining a “stage of civilization” was subjective, creating room for disagreements over determining a culture’s place in the civilizational hierarchy. Anna Johnson argues that such disagreements often arose between mission societies in Britain which judged civilizational advancement based on second-hand information about distant racialized groups and missionaries who developed their own estimations from personal interaction with racialized groups,⁵⁹⁸ and the same phenomenon occurs in the case studies chosen for this chapter.

As will be demonstrated, these disagreements over relative positioning within civilizational hierarchies contributed to mission society repudiation of missionary humanitarianism. In the case of British Columbia, William Duncan perceived the Tsimshian First Nations as sufficiently “advanced” as to deserve rights of self-determination, whereas the Church Missionary Society believed the Tsimshian to be “in so incipient a stage as to be incompetent for making their own choice.”⁵⁹⁹ Conversely, in Western Australia, John Gribble perceived the white settler population to be so racially degenerated as to require imperial superintendence, while the Church of England believed the white settlers to be overall a civilized community that Gribble had judged unfairly according to “a few exceptional instances.”⁶⁰⁰ These disagreements over the relative positioning of Indigenous peoples and settlers along a civilizational hierarchy informed mission society decisions to oppose humanitarian activism. It therefore appears that even though

⁵⁹⁷ Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, 177–80.

⁵⁹⁸ Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 204–5.

⁵⁹⁹ Christopher Fenn to William Duncan, 3 December 1881, British Columbia: Letter Book, 1881-1888, Missions to the Americas, Church Missionary Society Archive, Cadbury Research Library (CRL).

⁶⁰⁰ Henry Parry to Frederick Chesson, June 17, 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G98, Bodleian Libraries.

missionary perceptions of race did not necessarily harden over this period, mission society assessments of racial hierarchies provided justification for repudiating certain forms of humanitarianism. Nevertheless, it is important to differentiate between *justification* and *causation*. My analysis of missionary correspondence found references to financial considerations to be far more numerous and urgent than references to racial advancement, with the latter largely being made rhetorically to defend choices already made on a financial basis. Thus, although racialization certainly contextualized the case studies discussed below, this chapter suggests that concerns over fundraising were more immediately significant to mission society repudiations of humanitarian activism.

My second historiographical contribution builds on this context of mission societies suppressing humanitarian activism by tracing how missionaries responded to suppression by their employers. Historians have long pointed to friction between missionaries and employers as an everyday element of nineteenth-century missions. Jeffrey Cox and Brian Stanley both point to the mission society practice of editing and rewriting missionary reports that clashed with metropolitan perspectives.⁶⁰¹ Anna Johnston goes further, claiming that “almost every publication by a missionary with colonial experience was testimony to the obvious disjunction between metropolitan ideas and colonial practice.”⁶⁰² These disjunctions could lead to serious resentment on the part of missionaries who felt marginalized by their employers. Johnston points to one particularly disgruntled missionary who complained to the LMS for treating their agents “as an inferior order of beings” and adopting an attitude “more characteristic of lordly masters,

⁶⁰¹ Andrew Porter, “Introduction,” in *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914*, ed. Andrew Porter (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 6–7; Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, 116.

⁶⁰² Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire*, 202.

than of fellow labourers in the vineyard of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰³ However, while we know that missionaries were frequently at odds with their mission societies, historians have given little attention to what missionaries did about these disputes, and frequently assume that they simply put up with them. For Catherine Hall, this is because to fight with a mission society would have been too risky for missionaries for whom their employer was not just a source of money and resources, but also “an important lifeline” for emotional support.⁶⁰⁴

Yet mission societies were not the only sources of money and support that missionaries turned to. The nature of historical research, which needs to construct boundaries of some kind to be feasible, has meant that most mission historians have focused their analysis on mission society networks to the exclusion of other networks. For example, of the twenty archive collections cited in Hilary Carey’s *God’s Empire*, only one (the Royal Commonwealth Society) is not a missionary archive.⁶⁰⁵ Similar observations can be made of Andrew Porter’s *Religion versus Empire*, Anna Johnston’s *Missionary Writing*, and Bob Tennant’s *Corporate Holiness*.⁶⁰⁶ This practice enables historians to conduct nuanced and in-depth analyses, but in reality missionaries had no such boundaries, and limiting scholarship to mission networks limits our view of missionary agency. This chapter’s analysis of missionary correspondence with both the APS and their parent societies shows that missionaries moved between mission and humanitarian networks to maintain access to resources and to play mission and humanitarian societies against one another, so that a different picture of missionary activism arises when we look beyond their own professional networks. The nature of this movement between networks differed for each

⁶⁰³ Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire*, 196.

⁶⁰⁴ Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 230–32.

⁶⁰⁵ Carey, *God’s Empire*, 381–82.

⁶⁰⁶ Porter, *Religion versus Empire?*, 331–32; Johnston, *Missionary Writing*, 6; Tennant, *Corporate Holiness*, 297–310.

missionary. For Duncan, who was financially self-supporting and locally well-loved but facing a political alliance between the CMS and the Canadian government, working with the APS was primarily about countering mission society influence within government circles. Gribble, on the other hand, was very financially precarious and intensely despised in his local community, so that the APS represented both an alternative source of imperial funding as well as a replacement for the moral and legal support that he had previously depended on from the DMC. By identifying how these missionaries moved between and across imperial networks, I further elucidate the overlapping nature of imperial connectivity and the negotiation of colonial subjecthood within the various webs of imperial humanitarianism.

This chapter unfolds in three sections. The first section examines William Duncan's correspondence with the APS during his fight against the CMS. Emphasizing the influence of metropolitan religious controversies and claims of disloyalty to the Church of England on the CMS's hostile reaction to Duncan's humanitarian efforts in British Columbia, I argue that Duncan used the APS to counter the CMS's efforts to deny the existence of Indigenous land rights in collaboration with the Canadian government. The second section provides a similar examination of John Gribble's correspondence with the APS during his fight with the DMC. By drawing connections between his relationship with the APS on the one hand and DMC grant applications to metropolitan mission societies on the other, I demonstrate that Gribble used the APS to replace funding and support after being fired by the DMC for failing to attract metropolitan grants. The concluding section reflects on the representativeness and limitations of these case studies and considers the implications of my findings on wider debates over missionary complicity with settler government policies in Canada and Western Australia.

William Duncan in British Columbia

On 5 March 1886, the APS received a letter from William Duncan (1832-1918), a missionary who had been serving the Tsimshian (SIM-shee-an) Nation of Metlakahtla on the northern coast of British Columbia (see Figure 16 below for map) since being sent by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1856. Duncan's letter surveyed a long-standing land dispute between the Tsimshian and the Canadian government.⁶⁰⁷ Unlike the other Canadian provinces, British Columbia did not engage in treaty-making to extinguish Indigenous land rights, making it the only place in Canada where the doctrine of terra nullius was government policy.⁶⁰⁸ Consequently, the government reserved Tsimshian land in 1864 without their knowledge,⁶⁰⁹ and between 1882-1886 dispatched three gunboats to forcefully survey the land against Tsimshian protests. The Tsimshian rejected the Crown's claim to ownership of their own land and petitioned both provincial and federal governments for recognition of their title, asserting that "our land and our village is our property" and that "no surrender of these lands has been made by us."⁶¹⁰ Finally, in 1885, a Tsimshian delegation travelled to the federal capital at Ottawa to represent their case before the Prime Minister and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Sir John A. Macdonald, who promised to take immediate action. Yet after seven months nothing had come of it, leading Duncan, their missionary, to despair that "there is little prospect of any remedy being found" and to seek the assistance of the APS.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁷ William Duncan to Frederick Chesson, 5 March 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C133/50, Bodleian Libraries (BodL)

⁶⁰⁸ Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 195–230.

⁶⁰⁹ Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1974), 120.

⁶¹⁰ "Metlakahtla and the Indian Department," *The Daily Colonist*, 28 February 1884; "The Indians' Grievances," *The Daily Colonist*, 17 November 1886.

⁶¹¹ Duncan to Chesson, 5 March 1886.



Figure 16: 1893 map of British Columbia showing Metlakahtla in relation to Vancouver. James Harrison Brownlee, Map of the Province of British Columbia (1893) (*British Columbia. Dept. of Lands and Works., 1893*), CO700-BRITISH COLUMBIA21, The National Archives, Kew, retrieved from https://vault.library.uvic.ca/concern/generic_works/b26644b5-7de7-4b66-9c9e-afbe4a5209ce

Duncan’s letter summarized all of this in great detail to convince the APS “to aid [the Tsimshian] in vindicating their rights,”⁶¹² but whereas his letter placed all the responsibility for the land dispute on the Canadian and British Columbian governments, Duncan omitted that it was actually the CMS who were directly behind the dispute. The mission village of Metlakahtla had been a collaboration between the CMS and imperial and colonial governments since its very inception. The Tsimshian had been important trading partners for the Hudson’s Bay Company since Captain Vancouver had first visited the region in 1792. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Tsimshian labour became so integral to the economy that settler labourers complained

⁶¹² Duncan to Chesson, 5 March 1886.

of the downward pressure on wages caused by the oversupply of Indigenous workers.⁶¹³ However, by the 1850s settlers feared that alcoholism and internal conflict within Tsimshian society threatened the supply of Indigenous labour, and a Royal Navy officer passing through the region asked the CMS to send someone to pacify the region.⁶¹⁴ The CMS obliged and in 1858 sent William Duncan to the HBC town of Port Simpson on the northern British Columbian coast, but after four years of observing what he perceived to be the demoralizing influence of European traders on Indigenous peoples he moved twenty miles inland and founded his own model Christian village of Metlakahtla in 1862.⁶¹⁵

Duncan continued to collaborate with the local government as he built his mission village and directly contributed to the dispossession of Tsimshian land. The BC government had not reserved any land at Metlakahtla when Duncan first arrived, as it was not policy to reserve Indigenous land until the federal government forced BC to normalize its land policies with the rest of Canada when it belatedly joined confederation in 1871.⁶¹⁶ It was Duncan himself who requested the BC government reserve a two-acre plot of land encompassing his new village in the name of the CMS. This was a very small amount of land and was insignificant to the BC government at the time, but by the 1880s these two acres were incredibly valuable to the CMS as both an industrial capital rivalling the HBC's outpost at Port Simpson as well as a marketing tool showcasing the success of mission work. Consequently, from 1864 onwards Metlakahtla was

⁶¹³ John Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 176.

⁶¹⁴ Emily Madsen, "Dissolving Views: The Tsimshian Community of Metlakatla," *Material Religion* 16, no. 5 (2020): 543, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17432200.2020.1843956>.

⁶¹⁵ Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla*, 24.

⁶¹⁶ Kenneth Brealey, "Travels From Point Ellice: Peter O'Reilly and the Indian Reserve System in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 115/6 (1997): 222–23, <https://doi.org/10.14288/bcs.v0i115/6.1731>.

held in trust for the Tsimshian not by the state, as was usually the case on Canadian reserves, but by the CMS. Duncan believed that reserving the land would empower the CMS to evict uncooperative or disruptive characters from the mission,⁶¹⁷ but his plan backfired when the CMS dismissed him in 1881 for deviating from the ecclesiastical policy of the Church of England. Duncan was specifically censured for withholding Communion from converts whom he believed would interpret the receiving of Eucharist as an endorsement for cannibalism, as well as for withholding education in Anglican iconography in an attempt to combat what he perceived as pagan idolatry. The power that had for twenty years enabled him to run Metlakatla was stripped from him and granted to Bishop William Ridley, the new CMS missionary sent to replace Duncan.

Duncan responded to his expulsion from the CMS by adopting the language of “Indian Title,” a notion that directly contradicted the doctrine of terra nullius but was his best chance at maintaining control of his village. He wrote to the APS that “Indian title is not recognized, nor any treaties with Indians made; but an absolute control of all the lands of the province is assumed in the name of the Queen, as if the Aborigines were a conquered race, and all their ancient inheritances had been confiscated.”⁶¹⁸ By challenging the proclaimed authority of the provincial government to make reserves of Indigenous land without treaties, Duncan sought to undermine the CMS’s claim to Metlakatla based on the original 1864 reserve he himself had asked for. His strategic adoption of Indian Title was not immediate: on 7 December 1882, more than a year after his expulsion, he wrote to the CMS that “if I had not taken the steps I did, the land here

⁶¹⁷ Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla*, 120.

⁶¹⁸ Duncan to Chesson, 5 March 1886.

would not now have been your property,”⁶¹⁹ implicitly admitting that Metlakahtla was CMS property. And a government inquiry into the Metlakahtla land dispute in 1884 observed that “in no part of Mr. Duncan’s evidence did he advocate the Indian title.”⁶²⁰ However, after the CMS implored Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald to crush Tsimshian claims of Indian Title by enforcing “obedience to the Law,”⁶²¹ Duncan himself wrote to Macdonald to dispute the CMS’s land claims. He argued that the CMS reserve (made by himself) was invalid since the Tsimshian had never ceded ownership, “they having inherited it from their fathers and their nation having possessed it from time immemorial.”⁶²² He further insisted that the CMS had only been allowed in Metlakahtla upon Tsimshian sufferance, “but now that the Society having changed its mode of operations and is no longer working for and in harmony with the community it has forfeited all claim to the use of the land.”⁶²³ The CMS responded by inviting Macdonald to a meeting in London where they secured reassurances that the Canadian government would recognize their claims to Metlakahtla, and upon learning of this meeting Duncan retaliated by informing Macdonald that “the Aborigines’ Protection Society are now in possession of the facts of the case... Their assistance to bring matters to a right issue is already promised.”⁶²⁴ Thus, while

⁶¹⁹ William Duncan to the Seventy-Five Persons who Signed the Paper I Received Yesterday, 7 December 1882, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers: 1883, CRL.

⁶²⁰ Alexander Edmund Batson Davie, Henry Maynard Ball, and Andrew Charles Elliott, eds., *Metlakatlah Inquiry, 1884: Report of the Commissioners, Together with the Evidence* (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1885), 134.

⁶²¹ Church Missionary Society to John A. Macdonald, 27 February 1884, RG10, Volume number: 3605, Microfilm reel number: C-10105, File number: 2959, File part: 1, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

⁶²² William Duncan to John A. Macdonald, 19 June 1885, RG 10 Vol. 3605 File 2959 Part 1, LAC.

⁶²³ Duncan to Macdonald, 19 June 1885.

⁶²⁴ Church Missionary Society to John A. Macdonald, 4 March 1886, RG10, Volume number: 3606, Microfilm reel number: C-10105, File number: 2959, File part: 2, LAC; William Duncan to John A. Macdonald, 24 March 1886, RG10, Volume number: 3606, Microfilm reel number: C-10105, File number: 2959, File part: 2, LAC.

Duncan's letter to the APS of 5 March 1886 positioned the Canadian government as the sole aggressor in the Metlakahtla land dispute, the government was largely a tool deployed by the CMS, and Duncan was in turn seeking to use the APS as his own tool to challenge the CMS's governmental influence.

Duncan was not alone in seeking to use the APS to undermine CMS control over Metlakahtla. The APS received three similar requests for aid from a Tsimshian man named David Leask.⁶²⁵ Like Duncan, Leask avoided mentioning the CMS's role in the land dispute to the APS, while in correspondence with other parties he admitted that "the real source of our trouble and persecution is because we declined to change our mode of worship into the Church of England mode."⁶²⁶ A settler named Arthur McCallum also sought APS intervention, although settlers possessed a distinctly different perspective on the land dispute than Indigenous peoples and missionaries. Whereas Duncan and the Tsimshian stood behind the concept of Indian Title, settlers in the BC press were very uncomfortable with the notion that they lived on unceded land. The editor of the *Daily Colonist* mocked that "the distinct claim of the Indians...to what they call the 'land of their fathers', and so forth, reads like nonsense," and called on the Tsimshian "to abandon extravagant claims and accept existing facts as a basis of land adjustment."⁶²⁷ And John Helmcken – a prominent BC politician and HBC executive – declared that "the sooner they are taught the valueless nature of their roving title, and indeed, that they have no title whatever, the better."⁶²⁸ Arthur McCallum's correspondence with the APS shared these views on Indian Title,

⁶²⁵ David Leask to Frederick Chesson, 29 May 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C140/76, BodL; David Leask to Frederick Chesson, 10 September 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C140/77, BodL; David Leask to Frederick Chesson, 30 November 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G83b, BodL.

⁶²⁶ David Leask to J.W. Vaughan, 11 December 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G83b, BodL.

⁶²⁷ "A Difficulty Unveiled," *The Daily Colonist*, 2 March 1884.

⁶²⁸ John Helmcken, "Indian Title," *The Daily Colonist*, 5 November 1886.

but he nevertheless hoped that the APS could stop the CMS from harassing the Tsimshian by revoking CMS trusteeship of the Metlakahtla reserve, arguing that “these tribes should be the special wards of the imperial government.”⁶²⁹

That Duncan, Leask, and McCallum all turned to the APS to counterbalance the CMS’s influence in the land dispute emphasizes the divergence between missionary and humanitarian agendas in the late nineteenth century. Imperial historians have long attended to this divergence. Andrew Porter, for example, argues that missionary societies momentarily capitalized on the humanitarian fervour of the 1830s but then quickly severed ties.⁶³⁰ Zoë Laidlaw further argues that while Thomas Hodgkin, the secretary of the APS from 1837-1855, was certainly very religious, he was critical of missionary societies for prioritizing spiritual over material conditions, and she finds outright hostility between mission societies and the APS who saw each other as counter-productive.⁶³¹ But historiographical coverage of Metlakahtla fails to identify nuanced disagreements between missionaries and humanitarians. Susan Neylan’s study of Metlakahtla states that “the CMS can be placed among similar humanitarian movements...for example, anti-slavery and emancipation movements, the colonizing of Sierre Leone, and the Aborigines Protection Society,” lumping the CMS and the APS together under the umbrella of imperial humanitarianism.⁶³² Moreover, her analysis makes no mention of either the CMS’s nor the APS’s interest in Metlakahtla, and instead assume that both simply desired “the extension of

⁶²⁹ Arthur McCallum to Frederick Chesson, 26 October 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C141/137, BodL.

⁶³⁰ Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, 151–52.

⁶³¹ Laidlaw, “Heathens, Slaves and Aborigines,” 137–41; Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*, 181–183.

⁶³² Susan Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 69.

contemporary Christian social values.”⁶³³ Similarly, Jean Usher argues that Duncan’s perspective as a CMS missionary was that of “a nineteenth-century, Protestant Christianity, formed in the religious, humanitarian, and middle-class framework of mid-Victorian England,” and she suggests that Duncan turned to the APS because it aligned with CMS’s mid-Victorian humanitarian ideals “in which Duncan’s own ideas had been nourished.”⁶³⁴

On the contrary, my analysis shows that the same missionary-humanitarian divisions identified by Porter and Laidlaw in early nineteenth-century Britain continued into the 1880s and, most importantly, that colonial subjects in British Columbia used these divisions to play mission and humanitarian societies against each other. Laidlaw demonstrates that the APS was deliberately positioned as seeking civilization (i.e. education and industry) first and conversion second.⁶³⁵ For its part, the CMS very adamantly insisted that “civilize first and Christianize afterwards is one of those expressions in regard to missionary labour which shall all...utterly and distinctly disavow.”⁶³⁶ Duncan, Leask, and McCallum did not necessarily agree with the APS’s perspective any more than they agreed with the CMS’s, but this gap between mission and humanitarian perspectives afforded them space to pursue their own interests.

Leask was far more concerned about ownership of land than squabbles over civilization and Christianity. Brian Hosmer demonstrates some of the significant economic stakes at play in the land dispute which informed Leask’s perspective.⁶³⁷ At one level, the economic benefits of

⁶³³ Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing*, 69.

⁶³⁴ Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla*, 132.

⁶³⁵ Laidlaw, “Heathens, Slaves and Aborigines,” 137–41; Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*, 181–183.

⁶³⁶ “The Seventy-Seventh Anniversary of the Church Missionary Society,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1876, 321, CMSL.

⁶³⁷ Brian Hosmer, *American Indians in the Marketplace: Persistence and Innovation Among the Menominees and Metlakatlans, 1870-1920* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 149–98.

working in Duncan's cannery, blacksmith, and sawmill were some of the major reasons why many Indigenous people decided to live in Metlakahtla, so that there was significant material interest in supporting their employer. On another level, without legal protection of Tsimshian land rights, there was nothing stopping settlers from appropriating their land with impunity. Leask's letters therefore focus on his desire to negotiate a treaty so that "portions of land be made sure for our children."⁶³⁸

McCallum also cared little for ecclesiastical or humanitarian debates. He was a retired British Army officer who had pre-empted land around Vancouver Island and lived as a landlord and farmer,⁶³⁹ and he interpreted the land dispute in terms of its impact on his own safety and prosperity. The colonial press at the time interpreted the Metlakahtla land dispute as an omen of violence to come, warning that Tsimshian anger was "spreading and gathering adherents among the unregenerated tribes...and called forth threats of massacre and confiscation from the wild tribes hard by,"⁶⁴⁰ and that "a small spark once kindled in that large and inaccessible country may lead to immense evil - to the serious loss of life and to the waste of treasure."⁶⁴¹ McCallum bought into this rhetoric, and his primary concern was the looming threat of a race war. McCallum reiterated several times to the APS that "injustice will naturally in the Indian nature breed revenge,"⁶⁴² and that the Metlakatla affair "is to be the deliberate manufacture of another miserable little indian war."⁶⁴³

⁶³⁸ Leask to Chesson, 10 September 1886.

⁶³⁹ "Histories of the McCallum and Armstrong Families | Pier 21," accessed 30 September 2021, <https://pier21.ca/content/histories-of-the-mccallum-and-armstrong-families>.

⁶⁴⁰ "Metlakahtla," *The Daily Colonist*, 30 October 1884.

⁶⁴¹ "The Metlakahtla Difficulty," *The Daily Colonist*, 24 October 1886.

⁶⁴² Arthur McCallum to Frederick Chesson, 22 October 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C141/136, BodL.

⁶⁴³ McCallum to Chesson, 22 October 1886.

Duncan, meanwhile, seems to have been preoccupied with his own powerful status in Metlakahtla. Adele Perry argues that Metlakahtla was to be the actualization of Duncan's fantasy of a divinely ordered world under his own control,⁶⁴⁴ similar to Catherine Hall's analysis of Jamaican mission stations "where the chief benefactor was the missionary and the very structure of the town embodied his beliefs."⁶⁴⁵ Part of that fantasy encompassed building a Christian community completely under his own control, and Duncan wrote proudly that "I am everything to this settlement, and the Indians naturally and confidently look to me to be everything to them, and thus I have placed myself at the head of their trade, I am appointed their magistrate, they pay their taxes to me, I carry on their public works."⁶⁴⁶

It is unlikely that Duncan, Leask, and McCallum agreed completely with the APS's worldview, but the ideological difference between humanitarian and missionary societies provided enough space for Duncan, Leask, and McCallum to challenge the CMS's efforts to prioritize ecclesiastical policies over Indigenous land rights. Moving between the CMS and the APS was therefore a means of playing two sides of the civilize-Christianize debate against each other, and the APS responded exactly as Duncan, Leask, and McCallum had hoped. Memorials were sent to both the Colonial Office as well as the Canadian High Commissioner in London, resulting in an investigation conducted by the Canadian Privy Council which unsurprisingly

⁶⁴⁴ Adele Perry, "The Autocracy of Love and the Legitimacy of Empire: Intimacy, Power and Scandal in Nineteenth-Century Metlakahtlah," *Gender & History* 16, no. 2 (2004): 265, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0953-5233.2004.00341.x>.

⁶⁴⁵ Catherine Hall, *White, Male, and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 243.

⁶⁴⁶ William Duncan to Church Missionary Society, 23 January 1864, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers: Letters, Journals and Papers of missionaries and others: William Duncan, Fort Simpson and Metlakatla, 1856-1879, CRL.

decided that Indian Title “has never been recognized.”⁶⁴⁷ The APS also directly reprimanded the CMS, accusing them of being “a party to the compulsory survey of certain land which it claims at Metlakathla”⁶⁴⁸ and reminding them that “it is most undesirable that missionaries should meddle with politics.”⁶⁴⁹ To these critiques the CMS responded that they would only withdraw from the political dispute “when W. Duncan and his Indians shall have given up the impracticable claim to exclusive ownership of the soil,” indicating their determination to maintain ownership of the land at Metlakahtla.

The CMS’s determination to hold onto Metlakahtla is a telling indication of Metlakahtla’s value to that organization, for not only were they willing to defy humanitarian opinion to maintain it, but they were also contradicting their management strategy by doing so. Back in 1876 the CMS had entered a period of austerity after recording a budget deficit of £16,637, roughly 10% of its yearly income.⁶⁵⁰ Consequently, the CMS made a series of budget cuts throughout the 1870s and 1880s that included abandoning missions at Constantinople, Bombay, Allahabad, Lucknow, Fyzabad, Aligarh, Shanghai, and Peking.⁶⁵¹ The rationale for abandoning these specific missions was a simple calculus of saving money “where the results are smallest relative to the expenditure,” and the Metlakahtla station should have been a prime candidate. The North Pacific Mission (of which Metlakahtla was by far the biggest station) in

⁶⁴⁷ “Report of a Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council for Canada,” 10 November 1886, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers: 1886, CRL.

⁶⁴⁸ Frederick Chesson to Church Missionary Society, 28 November 1886, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers: 1886, CRL.

⁶⁴⁹ Frederick Chesson to Church Missionary Society, 1 January 1887, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers, 1887, CRL.

⁶⁵⁰ “The Seventy-Eighth Anniversary of the Society,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1877, 382, CMSL.

⁶⁵¹ “The Financial Resolutions,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1877, 563–64, CMSL; Eugene Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 3 (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 35-53.

1881 cost £2642, making it more expensive than the Persian (£973), Mauritius (£2252), and West African (£2393) missions.⁶⁵² And since Duncan had been preaching an “erroneous” form of Christianity that was an explicit rejection of Anglican principles, Metlakahtla was one of the CMS’s least successful missions of all time in terms of expanding the Church of England. After the CMS expelled Duncan and divided Metlakahtla into pro- and anti-CMS factions, they could claim only around twelve Anglican adherents for over two decades of work.⁶⁵³ It therefore would have made perfect sense for the CMS to leave Metlakahtla on a financial basis alone.

Compounding that with the political crisis around Indian Title, it appears very strange that the CMS fought so hard to maintain its hold on Metlakahtla.

The refusal to give up Metlakahtla only makes sense when contextualized within the CMS’s fundraising strategy at the time. The CMS issued demands for more subscribers to fund its missions every year between 1876-86. These ranged from the pious effort to have the 8th of October established as a day of prayer for God to provide more money,⁶⁵⁴ all the way to aggressively asking “Will our supporters employ the time between this and January 1886 in making great and persistent efforts to obtain a permanent increase in our income, or must a large reduction then be made?”⁶⁵⁵ And just as corporate executives have to appease stakeholders if they want to maintain their investments, the CMS had to appease its subscribers to maintain their regular donations, and this meant assuring subscribers that the CMS was strictly upholding the Church of England’s principles.

⁶⁵² Church Missionary Society Committee Meeting, 14 November 1881, CMS General Secretary’s Department, Committee Minutes Vol. 47: 28 June 1881-7 July 1882, CRL.

⁶⁵³ William Duncan to Church Missionary Society, 24 November 1885, British Columbia: Précis Book, 1881-1892, CRL.

⁶⁵⁴ “The Financial Resolutions,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1877, 564.

⁶⁵⁵ “A Call for More Means,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1885, 7, CMSL.

This became a particular issue in 1878 in the midst of controversies around schism in the Anglican Church. Tractarianism (the introduction of Roman Catholic elements into Anglican practices) was a particularly problematic controversy for the CMS at this time.⁶⁵⁶ Tractarians, or Ritualists, challenged Church of England policy towards rituals including the ritual of Communion that Duncan refused to adhere to, and the CMS was accused at Church Congresses between 1875-1878 of disloyalty to the Church of England by supporting Tractarian missionaries and hindering the growth of the Church.⁶⁵⁷ The CMS disputed such claims, complaining that “reckless insinuations were freely made that it was not faithful in its allegiance to the Church of England,” and fretting that “if, in the opinion of the subscribers, those evils [i.e. ecclesiastical errors] should find their way into the Committee Room, then doubtless the subscribers would speedily make their opinions felt.”⁶⁵⁸ Indeed, one donor explained his substantial donation of £5000 that year as influenced by the CMS’s firm rejection of “that laxity in regard to doctrine so popular nowadays,”⁶⁵⁹ illustrating that doctrinal purity was a powerful selling point for attracting donations. Some of these “reckless insinuations” likely derived from competition between the CMS and the older Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which marketed itself against the CMS as a guardian of “true Anglican principles.”⁶⁶⁰ But for the most part, the CMS was defending itself against claims that it was falling prey to contemporary religious movements. And so the CMS worked hard to market its close adherence to Anglican policies to maintain the goodwill of its subscribers. At annual meetings it emphasized “the body of spiritual doctrine

⁶⁵⁶ Carey, *God’s Empire*, 95.

⁶⁵⁷ Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 3, 13-14.

⁶⁵⁸ “The Seventy-Ninth Anniversary of the Society,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1878, 333–45, CMSL.

⁶⁵⁹ “The Seventy-Ninth Anniversary of the Society,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1878, 333–45.

⁶⁶⁰ Carey, *God’s Empire*, 95.

which we inherit from the very earliest days,” and fretted that “if we led any religious thinkers to believe that anywhere, under any circumstances, we could surrender or impair any portion of that inheritance...from that moment there would be an end to growth and of expansion for ourselves.”⁶⁶¹

In this context, Duncan’s deviation from Church of England doctrine was a direct threat to the CMS’s fundraising strategy and required firm suppression to maintain the CMS’s reputation. Adele Perry makes a similar observation from a gender rather than doctrinal perspective, arguing that the CMS tried throughout the 1860s-1870s to install a female missionary at Metlakahtla in order to protect the marketability of the mission as a suitably moral and decent venture.⁶⁶² Yet Perry’s focus was on the parameters of gendered norms in Metlakahtla and she does not attend directly to the connection between images of legitimacy and marketing to donors. The CMS admitted its concerns about the impact of Duncan’s heresies on public opinion when it wrote that “the Committee have been most anxious to refrain from public comment upon events [in Metlakahtla]...and we are thankful to observe that no ex parte statements reflecting on the Society have found their way into English newspapers, so that vindication of its action is not necessary.”⁶⁶³

CMS claims of fidelity to Anglican principles were also threatened by rivalry in British Columbia with Methodist missionaries. For the first two decades of intense colonization in British Columbia (roughly 1850-1870), the mission field had been fairly evenly divided between the CMS stationed at Metlakahtla in the north and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) stationed at Victoria in the south. But in 1876 the WMMS sent Thomas Crosby to Port

⁶⁶¹ “The Society’s Anniversary,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1886, CMSL.

⁶⁶² Perry, “The Autocracy of Love and the Legitimacy of Empire,” 261–88.

⁶⁶³ *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1883, 179, CMSL.

Simpson, just twenty miles away from Metlakahtla, and within a decade there were thirteen Methodist stations across north-western BC. It is important to recognize that while much of the twentieth-century historiography assumes that missionary expansionism drove the proliferation of missions in BC, Indigenous peoples themselves were often behind the creation of mission stations. For example, Thomas Crosby was sent to Port Simpson because the Tsimshian living there had requested a Methodist missionary. Peggy Brock argues that inviting multiple denominations to the region was a strategy for opposing factions within Tsimshian society to increase their prestige and authority,⁶⁶⁴ while Susan Neylan suggests that Indigenous groups encouraged rivalry so that denominational affiliation could be used as leverage to influence missionaries.⁶⁶⁵ But whereas significant attention has been given to Indigenous uses for the rivalry between the WMMS and the CMS, there has been no consideration of how this rivalry influenced the CMS's efforts to hold on to Metlakahtla.

The CMS interpreted Methodist expansion as a “vigorous and hitherto not unsuccessful attempt...to elbow the CMS missionaries out of the way of Methodism,” and feared that “to ignore them would soon reduce Metlakahtla to a state of siege and eventually blot the North Pacific Mission out of [our] atlas.”⁶⁶⁶ Bishop Ridley was so concerned about the Methodist invasion that he became paranoid that Duncan's schism was a plot designed by the Methodists, with whom Duncan “is no longer fittingly hostile as before the rupture, but in close alliance

⁶⁶⁴ Peggy Brock, “Building Bridges: Politics and Religion in a First Nations Community,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 1 (2000): 89–93, <https://doi.org/10.3138/CHR.81.1.67>.

⁶⁶⁵ Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing*, 75–76.

⁶⁶⁶ William Ridley to Henry Wright, 16 August 1880, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers: Correspondence with Bishops, Diocese of Caledonia: William Ridley, 1879-1880, CRL.

though professing himself a Church man.”⁶⁶⁷ And it was not only Ridley: William Collison, a fellow CMS missionary at Metlakahtla and strong Duncan supporter, wrote in his 1881 annual report that “for the future the number of catechisms cannot be many...on account of the new missions inaugurated and carried on by the Wesleyan Missionary Society...with but few exceptions they have baptized all the Indians at Fort Simpson and Skeena mouth and on the Nass.”⁶⁶⁸ Part of the problem with the Methodist presence was the competition they brought for government grants. Brian Hosmer finds that the Metlakahtlan economy was generously sponsored by the British Columbian government throughout its entire existence, with government grants contributing to building houses, industrial buildings, a prison, and subsidizing wages for a police force.⁶⁶⁹ But Hosmer misses the connection between missionary rivalry and competition over government funding. For example, in 1881 Bishop Ridley wrote anxiously to the CMS about a grant offered by the government to fund a mission school, conveying how “my fear is that if we do not accept it then the Methodists will.”⁶⁷⁰

This competition for government grants lends some support to arguments by John Milloy and Amanda Nettelbeck et al. that missionaries sacrificed humanitarian ideals to gain preferential access to government money.⁶⁷¹ However, government funding for Metlakahtla was irregular

⁶⁶⁷ William Ridley to Christopher Fenn, 23 January 1886, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers, 1886, CRL.

⁶⁶⁸ William Collison to Church Missionary Society, 1881, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers, 1881, CRL.

⁶⁶⁹ Hosmer, *American Indians in the Marketplace*, 149–50.

⁶⁷⁰ William Ridley to Frederick Wigram, 3 August 1881, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers, 1881, CRL.

⁶⁷¹ Milloy and McCallum, *A National Crime*, 52–56; Nettelbeck et al., *Fragile Settlements*, 160–71.

and unreliable. In 1881, for instance, the CMS spent £2642 on the mission,⁶⁷² while Duncan reported that “the Indian Department at Ottawa have not rendered us any assistance of late (through fear of being called upon in like manner to aid all other mission stations).”⁶⁷³ This suggests that Methodist missions were primarily of concern because they undermined the CMS’s fundraising strategy at home, as their proliferation diverted donations to the WMMS. This was explicitly admitted in 1886, when the CMS addressed its competition for subscribers with the Wesleyan and London Missionary Societies by asserting that the CMS, though “she may indeed be younger than some others,” was the most deserving Society “because she has always continued steadfast to the first principles of the Protestant, Reformed, Evangelical Church.”⁶⁷⁴ Jeffrey Cox, Hilary Carey, and Bob Tennant each argue that competition between mission societies for subscribers led to aggressive fundraising battles in Britain,⁶⁷⁵ and we must place the Metlakahtla land dispute within this wider context of imperial competition for funds.

Nevertheless, historians of Metlakahtla have been reluctant to connect missionary rivalry with the land dispute. When Susan Neylan observes that the Methodists helped Duncan and the Tsimshian move to Alaska by loaning them some mission ships, she counters speculation that the Methodists were taking advantage of the opportunity to weaken the Anglican mission by suggesting that “Methodist participation in the Metlakahtla migration may point to solidarity among missionaries in the region who viewed the recent imposition of the Indian Act and the

⁶⁷² Church Missionary Society Committee Meeting, 14 November 1881, CMS General Secretary’s Department, Committee Minutes Vol. 47: 28 June 1881–7 July 1882, Cadbury Research Library (CRL).

⁶⁷³ William Duncan to Church Missionary Society, 10 March 1881, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers, 1881, CRL.

⁶⁷⁴ “The Society’s Anniversary,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1886, CMSL.

⁶⁷⁵ Tennant, *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Societies, 1760-1870*, 99; Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, 93–98; Carey, *God’s Empire*, 82.

reserve system not only as an intrusion into their domains but also as an affront to Aboriginal land and resource rights.”⁶⁷⁶ I find this suggestion unconvincing: Ridley’s letters indicate there was very little solidarity between Methodist and Anglican missionaries, and the CMS’s efforts to squash Indian Title claims shows that they had little interest in Indigenous land rights. Jean Usher, on the other hand, blatantly ignores any reference to missionary rivalry. Despite citing Ridley’s letters containing vociferous condemnations of “the ill-disguised contention that lies at the bottom of the Methodist mission” and “the evils arising from the missionaries of [the Methodist] Society,”⁶⁷⁷ Usher selectively quotes around these statements and makes no mention of them.⁶⁷⁸ The historiography of Metlakahtla has represented the land dispute as a typical instance of settler encroachment on Indigenous territory. On the contrary, this chapter has demonstrated the pivotal role played by a metropolitan mission society determined to prevent denominational rivals and erroneous doctrine from impacting their bottom line.

Turning to the APS for assistance in the Metlakahtla land dispute was therefore much more complicated than using an imperial humanitarian network to oppose government encroachment on Indigenous territory. Government encroachment was certainly a major element. Susan Neylan rightly locates the Metlakahtla land dispute within a broader context of Indigenous dissatisfaction with Canadian land policy, and suggests that the Canadian government sought to

⁶⁷⁶ Susan Neylan, “‘Choose Your Flag’: Perspectives on the Tsimshian Migration from Metlakatla, British Columbia, to New Metlakahtla, Alaska, 1887,” in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Pasts*, ed. Theodore Binnema and Susan Neylan (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 216.

⁶⁷⁷ William Ridley to Church Missionary Society, 1 November 1879, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers: Correspondence with Bishops, Diocese of Caledonia: William Ridley, 1879-1880, CRL; William Ridley to Henry Wright, 4 December 1879, CMS Missions to the Americas, British Columbia: Original Papers: Correspondence with Bishops, Diocese of Caledonia: William Ridley, 1879-1880, CRL.

⁶⁷⁸ Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla*, 109–10.

crush Tsimshian claims to Indian Title lest other Indigenous groups get any ideas.⁶⁷⁹ But while historians including Jean Usher, Brian Hosmer, and Adele Perry argue that the Metlakahtla land dispute was fundamentally a clash between Indigenous and settler claims to sovereignty that was only sparked by an minor ecclesiastical spat, my analysis emphasizes the CMS's complicity in the land dispute every step of the way. From the perspectives expressed within William Duncan's and David Leask's correspondence with the APS and the CMS, the Metlakahtla land dispute represented a battle between the opposing forces of missionary capitalism and Indigenous sovereignty, with the settler government dragged along as a big stick when the carrot of doctrinal loyalty proved ineffective.

Since the CMS has not been identified as a key player in the Metlakahtla land dispute beyond providing a small ecclesiastical spark to a larger political fire, no historiographical coverage of the land dispute has considered the CMS's motives for maintaining Metlakahtla, and the concept of opposing missionary and humanitarian networks has not been explored. Jean Usher suggests that the ecclesiastical aspect of the land dispute was no more than a personal feud between Duncan and Bishop Ridley, and that the CMS supported Ridley because they were entirely dependent on his side of the story.⁶⁸⁰ There may be some truth to this, but the question remains why the CMS would care so much about Metlakahtla when it readily abandoned many other mission stations. As I have shown, the CMS interpreted affairs in British Columbia through a lens that was simultaneously evangelical and economic. Its executives were certainly uncomfortable about their capitalist nature, and wrote defensively that "missions, like other things in this mixed existence, are dependent on money,"⁶⁸¹ and warned that "without the home

⁶⁷⁹ Neylan, "Choose Your Flag," 206–7.

⁶⁸⁰ Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla*, 130.

⁶⁸¹ "The Seventy-Eighth Anniversary of the Society," 321–39.

expenditure few or none would be sent forth, and that the whole work would in all probability languish and die.”⁶⁸² Yet the CMS could not escape its need to raise more and more money, and it approached the Metlakahtla land dispute from the perspective of minimizing any impact of doctrinal error and denominational rivalry on fundraising efforts in England. The APS had a completely different perspective. While the APS too was perpetually underfunded and desirous of more subscribers, its explicitly secular and non-denominational outlook freed it from a need to adhere to specific ecclesiastical doctrines or choose sides between missionary societies. I therefore problematize historiographical representations of the CMS and the APS as united elements of imperial humanitarianism. Duncan’s letter to the APS, along with those from David Leask and Arthur McCallum, demonstrate how imperial humanitarian networks were used by colonial subjects to contest not only settler colonialism, but missionary capitalism as well.

The epistolary mobility displayed by Duncan and Leask by weaving between correspondence with the CMS, the APS, and various governments further elaborates the concepts of network fluidity and network impotency that are at the centre of this thesis. Some attention has been directed toward Tsimshian movement between CMS and American government networks by Monica Pastor, who argues that the representations of Tsimshian people changed when they abandoned Canada in 1887 to establish New Metlakahtla across the Alaskan border.⁶⁸³ Paster shows that prior to 1887 the CMS had marketed the Tsimshian for a British donor audience, and that they were most often portrayed in group photos next to markers of European civility: women in front of sewing machines, men dressed in marching band regalia, and children in front of a church. These images aimed to portray the Tsimshian as CMS donors

⁶⁸² “Should Rome Be Our Model?,” *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1876, 341, CMSL.

⁶⁸³ Monica Leigh Pastor, “Imaging the Metlakatlas: Shifting Representations of a Northwest Coast Mission Community” (PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1999), 36–42.

wanted to see them, united as a community around the mission and learning the tools of civilization. After 1887, however, Duncan began replacing those group photos with individual portraits, sometimes in European cloths and sometimes in “traditional” clothes. Pastor argues that this change took place because the marketing of Tsimshian images shifted from been sold to CMS donors, to being sold to American legislators who wanted reassurance that their new subjects were “docile, neutralized, de-contextualized, and, most importantly, non-threatening.”⁶⁸⁴ Pastor astutely demonstrates how Duncan facilitated this shift in imagery after his split with the CMS, which “resulted in the need for support from a different audience in order to maintain the Metlakahtla project.”⁶⁸⁵

However, Pastor fails to identify three important elements. First, Duncan was not only seeking a new network of support but also a network to resist the CMS’s active hostility towards him. Second, the American government was only the latest of a string of new networks that Duncan turned to after the CMS. Third, Duncan’s movement between networks was shared by David Leask and Arthur McCallum. My research therefore reveals a far more extensive movement between imperial networks than Pastor accounts for. Duncan’s movement from the CMS to the APS to the American government in succession indicates that network fluidity encompassed more than exchanging one support group with another, but serial movements between many networks until one’s objectives were either achieved or rendered unachievable. Moreover, the CMS’s active involvement in the Metlakahtla land dispute demonstrates that imperial networks were more than passive sources of income or influence, but were directly involved in the negotiation of colonial events, and that engagement with these networks was a

⁶⁸⁴ Pastor, “Imaging the Metlakatlas,” 41.

⁶⁸⁵ Pastor, “Imaging the Metlakatlas,” 36.

necessary part of colonial life. By identifying these elements, I shine light upon how colonial subjects utilized the availability of multiple overlapping networks to negotiate imperial influences upon their local activities.

John Gribble in Western Australia

While some missionaries – such as William Duncan - were employed directly by metropolitan mission societies and therefore subject to metropolitan fundraising interests, many missionaries were employed by colonial churches that by the late nineteenth century had begun their own internal missions. My second case study, John Gribble (1847-1893), is an example of one such missionary, and the fact that he was paid by a colonial rather than imperial body makes him a useful comparison for analysing the impact of imperial fundraising on missionary humanitarianism. The theme of marketing to British subscribers in the context of denominational rivalry and doctrinal schism that I identified in Duncan's case does not reappear because Gribble's employers, the Diocese of Perth's Diocesan Mission Committee (DMC), did not collect money directly from metropolitan subscribers. Instead, to supplement paltry collections from the sparsely populated colony of Western Australia, the Diocese of Perth leaned heavily upon grants from metropolitan mission societies including the SPG, SPCK, and CCCS. Such grants had to be applied for and there was intense competition from other dioceses across the empire, so the DMC had to market its activities to these mission societies in the most competitive way possible. When Gribble attempted to combine his mission work with humanitarian activism, his efforts impacted the DMC's competitiveness and he found himself persecuted by his employers in much the same way as Duncan. Thus, while missionary fundraising impacted Gribble in a different manner than it impacted Duncan, this section

demonstrates that mission society capitalism played a similar role in delineating mission work from humanitarianism.

Over the course of 1886 and 1887, Gribble maintained an active correspondence with the APS in reference to the forced labour system practiced in the pearling industry of Western Australia's Gascoyne district (see Figure 17 below for map). From the beginnings of the pearling industry in 1867 until the Pilbara Strike of 1946, when Indigenous labourers protested unfair payment and working conditions, pearlers maintained a work force of both low-paid and enslaved Indigenous labourers.⁶⁸⁶ The system arose from the combination of Western Australia's lengthy dependence on convict labour, which lasted until 1868 and contributed to "a culture of imprisonment,"⁶⁸⁷ and the dangerous and harsh conditions of diving for pearl shells that failed to attract a steady flow of voluntary workers. The solution adopted was to force or trick Indigenous workers into labour contracts. "Blackbirders" also kidnapped Indigenous peoples from as far afield as the South Sea Islands and brought them to work in Western Australia. Pearling companies compelled contracted labourers to dive in the pearling season and then assigned them to local households as domestic labourers or pastoralists in the off-season, so that forced labour became enmeshed within all parts of the economy around the northern coastal regions. Many labourers were abused, and running away was a criminal offence punished by corporal punishment or transportation to the infamous Rottnest Prison.⁶⁸⁸ The Western Australian

⁶⁸⁶ Malcolm Allbrook, "'A Disguised and Unquestionable Form of Slavery': Aboriginal Labour on the Nineteenth-Century Pearling Fleet in North-West Australia," *Australian Journal of Biography and History* 6 (2022): 87, http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n10094/pdf/04_allbrook.pdf.

⁶⁸⁷ Ann Curthoys and Jessie Mitchell, *Taking Liberty: Indigenous Rights and Settler Self-Government in Colonial Australia, 1830–1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 364.

⁶⁸⁸ Curthoys and Mitchell, *Taking Liberty*, 372.

government nominally opposed the use of forced labour and made several half-hearted attempts to regulate the pearling industry, but the seat of government at Perth in the far south and the pearling waters in the far north were so far removed that settlers were able to operate with little concern for government policies.⁶⁸⁹



Figure 17: 1886 map showing Gascoyne District in relation to Perth. John Sands, Map of Western Australia (1886), (J. Sands, 1886), MAP RaA 30 Plate 5 (WA), National Library of Australia, retrieved from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231081563>

The Anglican Church of Western Australia turned its attention to the forced labour system in 1880 as an opportunity to develop a mission field in the rapidly developing northern half of the colony. The Bishop of Perth, Henry Parry, formed the DMC to plan and oversee the

⁶⁸⁹ Allbrook, “A Disguised and Unquestionable Form of Slavery,” 90–91.

mission, and after searching unsuccessfully for five years to find a suitable missionary, he hired John Gribble to establish a mission station in the Gascoyne district in 1885. Gribble had been born to a mining family in Cornwall but moved to Australia as a young child and grew up in Victoria. From 1876-1885 he worked on mission stations throughout Victoria and New South Wales and became well-known throughout Australia for promoting justice towards Indigenous peoples and challenging settler practices. He secured his image as an advocate for Indigenous peoples with the publication of *A Plea for the Aborigines of New South Wales* in 1879 and *'Black but comely,' or Glimpses of Aboriginal Life in Australia* in 1884.⁶⁹⁰ Gribble's reputation caught the attention of Bishop Parry, who was concerned about the impact of the forced labour system on Indigenous spiritual and material welfare. Gribble accepted Parry's offer of employment and set out to establish a mission in Gascoyne in August 1885.

Gribble wrote in his journal of various horrors that he witnessed as he travelled from the port at Carnarvon to the site of his future mission station. He saw white employers publicly "debauching" Indigenous women assigned to them, Indigenous labourers "chained like so many dogs to each other round the neck," and a domestic labourer flogged and forcibly dragged away for trying to escape her employer.⁶⁹¹ Gribble denounced these practices in letters to the *Daily News* (Perth) and the *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth),⁶⁹² and the settlers responded aggressively. Settlers petitioned the DMC to have Gribble recalled, and all the stores around Gascoyne refused to sell Gribble supplies. On 6 February 1886, a group of angry employers

⁶⁹⁰ Jane Lydon, *Imperial Emotions: The Politics of Empathy across the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 123–35.

⁶⁹¹ Quoted in Henry Reynolds, *This Whispering in Our Hearts Revisited*, 74; John Gribble, "My First Three Months on the Gascoyne," *Daily News* (Perth), 8 January 1886.

⁶⁹² John Gribble, *Dark Deeds in a Sunny Land* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1987), 1-61.

accosted Gribble on-board the *SS Natal* between Perth and Carnarvon, whether to scare him or to kill him it remains uncertain.⁶⁹³ But when Gribble tried to report these various persecutions to colonial and imperial authorities, he found little interest or sympathy in his case. Most lawyers refused to take up the case, magistrates refused to issue injunctions or summonses, and the clerks at Gribble's local courtrooms avoided him and ignored his letters.⁶⁹⁴ Gribble grew increasingly frustrated and petitioned the Colonial Office to demand justice be done to his persecutors, but the Colonial Office responded that it was "a very silly appeal" and that the chief barrier to justice was "Mr. Gribble's ignorance of procedure."⁶⁹⁵

Gribble began his correspondence with the APS about a month after his ordeal onboard the *Natal*, and at first his letters revolved around his frustration with the colonial and imperial legal systems. After local magistrates refused to hear his case, Gribble told the APS of his persecutions and begged them "most earnestly to bring these facts before the Secretary of State for the Colonies as early as possible."⁶⁹⁶ When the Colonial Office refused to intervene in the matter, Gribble more desperately told the APS to "at once interview the Secretary of State for the Colonies and demand proper and comprehensive protection," and suggested "the necessity of a Royal Commission" to inquire into corrupt officials in the pocket of the pearling industry.⁶⁹⁷ Finally, when Gribble became convinced that there were no government officials willing to challenge the influence of the pearling industry, he told the APS that "the great requirement in this colony so far as the natives are concerned is a 'native protector' and such an officer should

⁶⁹³ John Gribble, "The Alleged Affray On Board the S.S. Natal," *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 17 February 1886.

⁶⁹⁴ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 28 May 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C137/19, BodL.

⁶⁹⁵ Colonial Office minutes, "Case of J.B. Gribble," 9 June 1886, CO 18-206, The National Archives, Kew.

⁶⁹⁶ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 5 March 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G97b, BodL.

⁶⁹⁷ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 25 September 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G97b, BodL.

be a man of highest Christian principle and independent of all mere party influence.” Gribble settled on his friend James Drake-Brockman, “my right hand man during all my recent troubles,” as the best candidate, and requested the APS “to do all you can to obtain the appointment of Mr Drake-Brockman as native protector.”⁶⁹⁸ Gribble’s early correspondence with the APS therefore contained many of the same aspects of other settler letters discussed in Chapter Two, in that he used the APS to claim the protection of imperial citizenship “which, as a British subject, is my birthright and privilege.”⁶⁹⁹ However, while these were Gribble’s primary requests, the immediate context for his turn to the APS was conflict with his Bishop and the DMC.

Throughout his persecutions at the hands of angry settlers, Gribble looked first and foremost to his mission committee for support. When Gribble first approached Bishop Parry about the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Gascoyne, Parry had been in full support of Gribble’s activism and encouraged him to write an article condemning the Indigenous labour system for the *West Australian*.⁷⁰⁰ Later, after the violent encounter on the *Natal*, Gribble wrote again to Bishop Parry before taking legal action, writing that “being your Missioner, my Lord, I submit this statement to the consideration of your Lordship and the Mission Committee, that you may secure to me that protection and justice which are my due.”⁷⁰¹ Upon reading this letter the DMC had again given Gribble their support, passing a resolution to “express to Mr Gribble their deep regret...and would recommend his taking legal steps to bring the offenders to justice.”⁷⁰² Gribble did just as his society had suggested, publishing an article in Perth’s *Daily News* and

⁶⁹⁸ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 17 December 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C137/21, BodL.

⁶⁹⁹ Gribble to Chesson, 28 May 1886.

⁷⁰⁰ John Gribble to Henry Parry, February 1886, quoted in Gribble, *Dark Deeds*, 24-25.

⁷⁰¹ John Gribble to Henry Parry, 9 February 1886, quoted in Gribble, *Dark Deeds*, 20-22.

⁷⁰² John Gribble, “The Revd. J.B. Gribble and His Ecclesiastical Superiors,” *Daily News* (Perth), 22 May 1886.

issuing warrants for the arrest of the men who attacked him,⁷⁰³ and he did all of these without corresponding with the APS. He was certainly on good terms with the APS, having met the secretary Frederick Chesson while in London in 1884 and attended several APS meetings, yet he felt no need to reach out to the APS while he was still enjoying the support of the DMC. But the DMC's support did not last very long.

The DMC turned against Gribble in stages. First, on 25 January 1886, the DMC held a meeting to discuss the article that Gribble had published in the Perth's *Daily News*. The article had sparked outrage among the settler community, and the DMC expressed extreme concern that Gribble's attacks on settler labour practices "must prove extremely detrimental, if not fatal, to the success of the ministry." They resolved that "the action of the Rev. J. B. Gribble in publishing the articles...meets with (and we deeply regret so to express it), the unqualified condemnation of this committee."⁷⁰⁴ The DMC made two demands of Gribble: to apologize to the settlers for attacking their way of life, and to forward all future publications to the DMC "and not to the newspapers of the colony."⁷⁰⁵ Gribble refused both demands, insisting that he would not apologise for telling the truth and that submitting to the DMC's censorship "would mean the wrapping up of the instincts of true Christian manhood, and then committing them to the perpetual safe-keeping of ecclesiastical superiors."⁷⁰⁶

The DMC had been agitated when Gribble published his journals in Perth's *Daily News*, but they were mortified when Gribble decided to publicise his persecutions in Britain as well.

⁷⁰³ John Gribble to Earl Granville, 25 May 1886, quoted in Gribble, *Dark Deeds*, 27-31.

⁷⁰⁴ "Resolutions Carried at the Last Meeting of the C. Committee of the Board of Missions, Perth," 25 January 1886, quoted in Gribble, *Dark Deeds*, 23-24.

⁷⁰⁵ "Resolutions Carried at the Last Meeting of the C. Committee of the Board of Missions, Perth", quoted in Gribble, *Dark Deeds*, 23-24.

⁷⁰⁶ Gribble to Parry, February 1886, quoted in Gribble, *Dark Deeds*, 24-25.

Bishop Parry had specifically instructed Gribble to “let the matter drop,”⁷⁰⁷ and when Gribble suggested sending a letter to the APS, Parry “strongly objected” and told Gribble that “I consider such a letter as you propose sending to the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society as very ill-judged, and likely to hinder rather than to promote the work on which we are ourselves entering on behalf of the aborigines of the northern districts of this colony.”⁷⁰⁸ And so when Gribble began writing to the APS in the face of their instructions to the contrary, the DMC published a letter in the *West Australian* condemning “in strong terms the course of conduct which [Gribble] had thought proper to take.”⁷⁰⁹

The DMC were specifically concerned about the APS gaining a negative impression of Western Australia. They wrote in the *West Australian* that they were going “to place the various circumstances which have contributed to Mr Gribble’s recent local notoriety before the Aborigines Protection Society in a fair and temperate spirit, so that Mr Chesson and the powerful body with which he acts may have reliable information by which to judge how far their support can fairly be given to Mr Gribble.”⁷¹⁰ Indeed, Bishop Parry did his best to poison the APS against Gribble when he visited London in the summer of 1886, claiming that Gribble was acting “injudiciously” by taking “a few exceptional instances [of slavery] as tho [*sic*] they were sample of the whole practice,”⁷¹¹ and that he was “acting altogether in a very impetuous and unwise manner.”⁷¹² These activities recall the disinformation campaigns launched by settler governments against Indigenous petitioners in Chapter Four, yet it is important to distinguish

⁷⁰⁷ Henry Parry to Frederick Chesson, 17 July 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 G98, BodL.

⁷⁰⁸ Henry Parry to John Gribble, 6 March 1886, Bishop Henry Hutton Parry papers, ACC 1223A, State Library of Western Australia.

⁷⁰⁹ “News and Notes,” *West Australian*, 21 May 1886.

⁷¹⁰ “News and Notes,” *West Australian*, 21 May 1886.

⁷¹¹ Parry to Chesson, 17 June 1886.

⁷¹² Parry to Chesson, 17 July 1886.

between defamatory and disparaging statements. Compared to the falsehoods spread by the Cape and the New Zealand governments, the DMC did not spread any false disinformation about Gribble, who certainly was being impetuous and perhaps unwise and injudicious as well. Parry's claim that slavery was only practiced in "a few exceptional instances" was incorrect, but it is entirely likely that he believed it to be true, as Gribble was the first to publicly bring awareness to the extent of the slavery system. Nevertheless, by trying to turn the APS against Gribble, the DMC was trying to isolate him from any source of support that might enable him to continue his presence in Western Australia, evidenced by statements made by Bishop Parry that "he has I fear none of the wisdom or patience needful to the prosecution of such work as has been entrusted, and must be withdrawn from it unless it is to be allowed to fail altogether."⁷¹³ True to his word, Parry revoked Gribble's missionary license on 1 July 1886 on the charge of breach of instructions.

Gribble had interacted with the APS while in England in 1884 but had never written to them until persecuted by his ecclesiastical superiors. Turning to the APS therefore appears to be directly contextualized by his struggle with Parry and the DMC. In fact, it is possible to read Gribble's correspondence with the APS as developing in an inverse trajectory to his deteriorating relationship with the DMC. At first it started with legal support, replacing DMC as provisioner of protection and justice. In his letter of 28 May Gribble lamented the lack of support he was receiving from his mission committee, complaining that "my ecclesiastical superiors...are but feebly supporting me. They dare not go against the men of money and political influence."⁷¹⁴ He was convinced that "the Governor brought pressure to bear upon my committee,"⁷¹⁵ so that a

⁷¹³ Parry to Chesson, 17 July 1886.

⁷¹⁴ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 28 May 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C137/19, BodL.

⁷¹⁵ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 2 September 1886, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G97b, BodL.

conspiracy was under foot preventing the DMC from doing its proper duty. Consequently, he enclosed copies of his lawyer's legal opinion on his case and requested the APS "to bring the facts recorded in the legal statements under the notice of the proper authorities at once."⁷¹⁶ That Gribble was sending his legal documents to the APS for forwarding to British authorities directly after the DMC retracted its support for him is telling: the timing indicates that Gribble was looking to replace the DMC's role as provisioner of protection and justice that Gribble had previously indicated "being your missioner...are my due."⁷¹⁷ Indeed, it is striking that Bishop Parry was also in London at the time and Gribble also sent his legal opinion to him, but Parry insisted that "the [British] government are in no way responsible" and refused to forward the case as requested.⁷¹⁸ By sending his case to the APS and Bishop Parry simultaneously, Gribble was hedging his bet in the expectation that his ecclesiastical superiors would no longer be willing to help him in the way they had in the past and signalling his replacement of his mission society with the APS for legal backup.

Gribble's relationship with the APS further deepened as his financial remuneration from mission societies dried up. The DMC paid Gribble a £300 per annum salary,⁷¹⁹ and this was shared by his wife and son who worked on the Gascoyne mission with him and continued to work while Gribble fought his legal battles in Perth. But when the DMC revoked his missionary license in July, Gribble and his family lost their only source of income since the neighbouring settlers continued their boycott and refused to conduct any trading with the mission. Moreover, the bank that held Gribble's savings collapsed in February leaving his family both penniless and

⁷¹⁶ Gribble to Chesson, 28 May 1886.

⁷¹⁷ Gribble to Parry, 9 February 1886.

⁷¹⁸ Parry to Chesson, 17 July 1886.

⁷¹⁹ Leader, *The Standard: A Church Paper for the Diocese of Perth*, 17 December 1885.

with no reliable income.⁷²⁰ Yet even then, the Gribbles did not stop working at their mission station, and they would not leave until offered employment by the Aborigines Protection Association of New South Wales the following year. He worked odd jobs around the colony such as preaching in the open air and teaching at Sunday schools, but he was unable to evangelize as well as work full time and soon was forced to find an alternative funder.

Gribble at first appealed to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and Archbishop of Canterbury for financial assistance. He emphasized to the Archbishop that his family was “without the least prospect humanly speaking for my position as a missionary clergyman has been wrenched from me,” and despite the fact that “my work has not been neglected for a single moment,” his family was “obliged to subsist on vegetables from the mission garden.”⁷²¹ But the Archbishop was persuaded by the Bishop of Perth to withhold assistance, and he informed Gribble that he would do best to leave Western Australia since “no good could come...by your continuance in a Diocese where you are not able to work in complete harmony with those to whom you are responsible.”⁷²² Gribble had more success with the SPG, who ignored Bishop Parry’s insistence that Gribble “has made it impossible that he should continue to be employed in the missionary work of my Diocese,”⁷²³ and recommended that “the portion of his salary which Mr Gribble derives from the Society’s grant should be continued to

⁷²⁰ Reynolds, *This Whispering in Our Hearts*, 77–79.

⁷²¹ John Gribble to Archbishop of Canterbury, 24 September 1886, Benson 40 ff 353-356, Lambeth Palace Library.

⁷²² Archbishop of Canterbury to M. Fowler, on reverse of Henry Parry to Archbishop of Canterbury, 9 November 1886, Benson 40 ff 353-356, Lambeth Palace Library.

⁷²³ Henry Parry to Henry Tucker, 22 November 1886, Papers of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series CLR MSS. Copies of letters received, December 1834 - February 1928, Perth: Volume 1, BodL.

him.”⁷²⁴ Parry had previously allocated £100 of the SPG’s £300 annual grant to Gribble’s salary, but the SPG had no authority to control how Parry allocated the grant and Parry continued to withhold it from Gribble. With Gribble’s financial situation growing ever more serious, he began begging the APS for money by early 1887. He started relatively subtly, by indicating to the APS that “I have no means” and “no settled income,” and stating that “I depend very much in my efforts in this colony on the support of your society.”⁷²⁵ This elicited a pledge from the APS to ask for donations from philanthropists in England, but when no donations materialized, Gribble more boldly proclaimed that “any monetary assistance would be of great service at the present junction.”⁷²⁶ The APS was never a well-funded organization and despite wholeheartedly supporting Gribble, they had no money to give. Nevertheless, Gribble’s attempt to replace his dependence on mission society funds with APS funds illustrates how he perceived the APS as a counterpoint to mission societies that could serve as an alternative when settler influence corrupted mission society humanity.

However, whereas Gribble believed the DMC had forsaken him in deference to local government officials and wealthy pearling employers, the evidence indicates that the DMC was more concerned about securing grants from British missionary societies. Gribble’s contention that the DMC “dare not go against the men of money and political influence”⁷²⁷ has been assumed to be accurate by all historians who have studied his case. John Harris and Su-Jane Hunt both argue that the DMC turned against Gribble because two of its committee members

⁷²⁴ Henry Tucker to Henry Parry, 26 November 1886, Papers of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series CLS MSS. Copies of letters sent, July 1837 - 1935, Australia: Volume 2, February 1872 - December 1927, BodL.

⁷²⁵ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 28 January 1887, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G97b, BodL; John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 26 March 1887, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G97b, BodL.

⁷²⁶ John Gribble to Frederick Chesson, 12 May 1887, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 22 G97b, BodL.

⁷²⁷ Gribble to Chesson, 28 May 1886.

were deeply invested in the pastoral industry around Gascoyne and therefore interested in maintaining the forced labour system,⁷²⁸ while Malcolm Allbrook and Kay Forrest both argue that the DMC turned against Gribble because it was wary of angering the settlers whom the church depended upon for donations.⁷²⁹ Both of these factors likely played some role in the DMC's response to Gribble, but the fact that the DMC was more than happy to "go against the men of money and political influence" on more than one occasion undermines settler agitation as a causal factor. On 17 December 1885, well after the settlers of Gascoyne began their boycott of Gribble's mission, the DMC wrote in their weekly newsletter to condemn employers "who would be utterly unable to make any money at all without their forced labour,"⁷³⁰ showing that it was not at all reluctant to call out the forced labour system. Later, just two weeks before the DMC rebuked Gribble for publishing his critiques of the forced labour system, the DMC admitted employers were correct to fear that Gribble was interfering with their labour supply and that such employers "may rest assured that the work will not be given up because they do not like it."⁷³¹ Clearly, having two members of the DMC invested in the Gascoyne pastoral industry did not prevent it from attempting to interfere in the labour market. And even after Gribble published his account and incurred a reprimand, the DMC pointed out that "we were well aware that there would be opposition to the Mission. If the best man in the world had taken charge of it

⁷²⁸ John Harris, *One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope* (Sutherland: Albatross Books, 1990), 419; Su-Jane Hunt, "The Gribble Affair: A Study in Colonial Politics," in *Dark Deeds in a Sunny Land* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1987), 67.

⁷²⁹ Forrest, *The Challenge and the Chance*, 148; Malcolm Allbrook, *Henry Prinsep's Empire* (Australian National University Press, 2014), 211–14.

⁷³⁰ Leader, *The Standard: A Church Paper for the Diocese of Perth*, 17 December 1885.

⁷³¹ Leader, *The Standard: A Church Paper for the Diocese of Perth*, 7 January 1886.

there must have been opposition.”⁷³² If the DMC had expected settler opposition from the very outset, then it is unlikely that settler opposition caused the DMC to turn against Gribble.

To be fair, there is some indication that the DMC was hoping to increase its income from local settler donations. For instance, in 1882 it published a call for “every person in Perth, above 15 years of age, and who professes to be a Member of our Church, to subscribe monthly 3d.,” expressing anxiety that foreign grants would eventually disappear and “the whole support shall fall upon the people.”⁷³³ But the goal of a locally self-supporting church was a very long way off, and the Diocese of Perth continued to depend on British grants into the twentieth century. For this very reason Bishop Parry toured England in 1886 to beg for grants to sustain the Gascoyne mission, and he repeatedly explained that there simply were not enough settlers to fund it locally. The DMC explained its position at the 1885 Perth Diocesan Synod, stating that “we shall need much larger funds than we have any prospect of raising unless assisted from without,” and requesting Bishop Parry to venture to England and “enlist warmly the preliminary sympathies and help of the great Societies of our Church.”⁷³⁴ Consequently, Parry wrote to the SPG that “our numbers here are too small and the demands upon our several congregations already so many, that [the DMC] feel that it was impossible to do anything effectually...to provide in other ways the funds which are required for the maintenance and extension of our work without outside help,”⁷³⁵ and he begged the SPG “not only to continue to my Diocese their present grant, but to

⁷³² Leader, *The Standard: A Church Paper for the Diocese of Perth*, 21 January 1886.

⁷³³ “Church Funds Claiming General Support,” *The Standard: A Church Paper for the Diocese of Perth*, 16 February 1882.

⁷³⁴ Diocese of Perth, “Yearbook for 1885 Presented at Synod,” 1885, 200900055001-1885, Anglican Diocese of Perth Archives.

⁷³⁵ Henry Parry to Henry Tucker, 10 October 1885, Papers of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series CLR MSS. Copies of letters received, December 1834 - February 1928, Perth: Volume 1, BodL.

increase its amount to an extent that will allow of my at once obtaining some two or three additional clergymen.”⁷³⁶ Additionally, at a public meeting of the CCCS he emphasized that “the English residents [of Western Australia] were not numerous, and it was impossible for them to raise sufficient to carry on the Church there.”⁷³⁷ Financial records further indicate the relative importance of settler and foreign support: settler donations and colonial government grants only amounted to £200 for the first year of the Gascoyne mission, whereas British mission societies provided £640: £500 from the SPCK, £100 from the SPG, and £40 from the CCCS.⁷³⁸

From the DMC’s perspective, therefore, settler animosity towards Gribble was not nearly as important as the opinion of British missionary societies. This does not mean that the DMC did not care at all about government influence or settler donations. As Hilary Carey demonstrates, the trend towards disestablishment and secularism in the late nineteenth century drastically reduced both metropolitan and colonial government funding, particularly in areas like Western Australia that experienced gold rushes, and colonial churches were increasingly forced to fund themselves.⁷³⁹ This trend means that the DMC and the larger Diocese of Perth were likely very concerned about preparing for its inevitable future dependence on local donations. Nevertheless, it is striking that no historiographical assessment of Gribble’s activities makes a single passing reference to the funding provided by the SPCK, SPG, and CCCS. Along a similar line as Jane Lydon, who argues that Gribble’s rhetoric of victimhood at the hands of settlers and his

⁷³⁶ Henry Parry to Henry Tucker, 10 February 1887, Papers of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series CLR MSS. Copies of letters received, December 1834 - February 1928, Perth: Volume 1, BodL.

⁷³⁷ “Colonial and Continental Church Society,” *Leeds Mercury*, 14 September 1886.

⁷³⁸ Leader, *The Standard: A Church Paper for the Diocese of Perth*, 17 December 1885; Annual Report of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge for the Year 1881,” 39–40; The Annual Report of the Colonial and Continental Church Society for 1886, 76–77.

⁷³⁹ Carey, *God’s Empire*, 98–99.

committee must be contextualized as part of a wider imperial discourse of missionary martyrdom narratives,⁷⁴⁰ the DMC's response to Gribble must be contextualized as part of a wider imperial economy of missionary capitalism.

Dependence on funding from British missionary societies meant that the DMC did not have to be overly concerned about settler animosity. However, it also meant that the DMC were under increased pressure to convince British missionary societies that their funds were being spent efficiently and effectively, and complaints about Gribble's lack of progress appear constantly in their correspondence and reports. When Bishop Parry told Gribble not to send a letter to the APS, one of his justifications was that "you have done nothing here yet yourself in the way of real work on behalf of the natives," and that "it will be time enough when this has been done, and some real results can be pointed to, to call the attention of the world."⁷⁴¹ This statement shows that Parry was not entirely against writing to the APS, but only wanted Gribble to wait until he had a better record of progress before shining international light on the Gascoyne mission. Parry also told the APS that Gribble "beyond building a home for himself has done nothing yet during the 12 months which he has been in the Colony towards any real commencement of steady work amongst the natives,"⁷⁴² and he wrote similar complaints to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the SPG.⁷⁴³ Moreover, the DMC complained in its annual report of 1886 that "of the ten months nominally occupied by the Mission about one-third of the Missionary's time was spent in Perth and in voyages to and from Carnarvon."⁷⁴⁴ Jeffrey Cox points out that a failure to demonstrate speedy results plagued many missionaries over the

⁷⁴⁰ Lydon, *Imperial Emotions*, 140.

⁷⁴¹ Parry to Gribble, 6 March 1886.

⁷⁴² Parry to Chesson, 17 July 1886.

⁷⁴³ Parry to Archbishop of Canterbury, 9 November 1886; Parry to Tucker, 22 November 1886.

⁷⁴⁴ Diocese of Perth, "Yearbook for 1885 Presented at Synod."

nineteenth century, and that they blamed their slow progress on God's providence and the character of Indigenous peoples.⁷⁴⁵ But Gribble's lack of results was publicly known to be his fixation with fighting settlers rather than preaching to Indigenous peoples, so he had no recourse to such excuses.

This lack of progress directly impacted the DMC's ability to attract grants from England in two ways. Most fundamentally, the Diocese of Perth had to compete against other dioceses for funds, and mission societies prioritized grants to those dioceses that could prove they were making some level of progress. For example, in 1885 the SPG had £9,091 available for new grants, but received applications from thirty-two dioceses totalling £21,410.⁷⁴⁶ Dioceses competed for these limited resources in various ways, one of which involved pointing to their progress they had already achieved, as when Bishop Parry emphasized at an SPG public meeting the amount of churches his Diocese had built.⁷⁴⁷ Another way of competing was emphasizing the danger of losing ground to other missionary denominations, particularly Catholic missionaries, as when Bishop Parry argued before a CCCS public meeting that he needed funds "if English Protestantism were to continue its hold" in Western Australia.⁷⁴⁸ This last comment would seem to suggest that denominational competition concerned the DMC just as it concerned the CMS in Metlakahtla. Yet there is little evidence that this denominational rivalry was anything more than a rhetorical strategy to drum up more funding. There were no other missions in Western Australia at the time besides the far away Catholic mission at New Norcia (which was not

⁷⁴⁵ Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, 141.

⁷⁴⁶ Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, "Report of the Applications Sub-Committee as Adopted by the Standing Committee, on Thursday, April 29, 1886," in *Report of the Year 1885 of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London: Richard Clay and Sons, 1886).

⁷⁴⁷ "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel," *Birmingham Daily Post*, 2 November 1886.

⁷⁴⁸ "Colonial and Continental Church Society," *Leeds Mercury*, 14 September 1886.

government funded and so posed no challenge for government funds), and in 1882 the Diocese of Perth declared itself unconcerned with Catholicism since it was declining in the colony.⁷⁴⁹ Yet the image of Protestantism under siege was a powerful motive to fund increased missionary activity. However, Gribble's preoccupation with legal battles and failure to focus on building the mission station detracted from this image and undermined the Diocese of Perth's competitiveness for grants it depended on. More importantly, the SPCK grant of £500 that the DMC had secured for the Gascoyne mission was made on the condition that it was only to be spent on building construction and would lapse if not used by 1886. As a consequence, Gribble's inability to focus on mission building resulted in the £500 being written off entirely.⁷⁵⁰ This is why the DMC felt that Gribble was endangering the future of the mission: not because he was turning settler opinion against the church, but because he was failing to make any observable progress that the DMC could use to justify continuing investment from Britain as well as failing to use existing grants within their time limit.

Within the context of Gribble being dismissed by the DMC for failing to act appropriately for funding purposes, the APS represented a critical opportunity to maintain access to an assemblage of imperial resources that defined Gribble as a missionary and a humanitarian. However, despite Gribble having received extensive historical attention, analyses have completely neglected his relationship with the APS. All accounts relay that Gribble wrote to the APS, but none actually cites any of his letters. Harris and Curthoys and Mitchel rely on Western

⁷⁴⁹ "The 'Religions of the People' and the Recent Census," *The Standard: A Church Paper for the Diocese of Perth*, 8 June 1882.

⁷⁵⁰ Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, "Standing Committee Minutes," 29 March 1886, Standing Committee Minutebooks, March 1885 - November 1886, GBR/0012/MS SPCK/A5/33, (CUL).

Australian newspapers and the APS's *Aborigines' Friend* newsletter.⁷⁵¹ Forrest and Hunt rely almost entirely on Western Australian newspapers.⁷⁵² And Reynolds and Lydon rely on Gribble's diaries and published monographs.⁷⁵³ Without Gribble's original letters to the APS, historians have had no capacity to explore *why* Gribble wanted to work with the APS or how his engagement with that network related to his engagement with other networks. These letters reveal how the APS represented a space to pursue mission work and humanitarian activism without being limited by the requirements of missionary funders. With a focus on Indigenous rights rather than evangelism, the APS's support was not conditional on the building of infrastructure or the number of souls converted. Rather, APS support was conditional on the availability of evidence to prove accusations of oppression or injustice, and there was plenty evidence to go around.⁷⁵⁴ The APS therefore represented an opportunity to retain imperial support under different conditions than the support offered by mission societies. By using the APS to replace the legal and financial support of his Mission Committee, Gribble reveals how colonial subjects could take advantage of the divergent interests of missionary and humanitarian networks to pursue imperial projects and objectives that did not perfectly align with a single imperial network.

Even more problematic than historiographical ignorance of Gribble's original letters, none of the existing historical accounts makes even a passing reference to either the SPG, SPCK, or CCCS, nor do they cite any of Gribble's or Bishop Parry's correspondence with these

⁷⁵¹ Curthoys and Mitchell, *Taking Liberty*, 385–404; Harris, *One Blood*, 407–27.

⁷⁵² Hunt, "The Gribble Affair"; Forrest, *The Challenge and the Chance*, 145–53.

⁷⁵³ Lydon, *Imperial Emotions*, 123–42; Reynolds, *This Whispering in Our Hearts*, 72–81.

⁷⁵⁴ Corroborating and independent accounts were sent to the APS from David Carley, an ex-convict who had been transported to Western Australia and sent the APS dozens of eyewitness testimony and newspaper clippings detailing the atrocities committed within the force labour system. See his correspondence at MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C128/79-93, BodL.

societies, despite the fact that their grants provided the majority of the Gascoyne mission's finances. Without locating the Gascoyne mission's finances within the imperial context of mission society fundraising, historians have overlooked the influence of missionary capitalism on the development of Indigenous-settler relations in Western Australia. Unlike in the Metlakahtla case, where the CMS directly supported a doctrine of terra nullius against humanitarian arguments for Indian Title, the DMC did not directly oppose Gribble's humanitarian campaign against forced labour. At no point did the DMC attempt to defend or take part in the oppression of Indigenous workers. Instead, the DMC simply found that Gribble's humanitarian politics got in the way of his mission work and detracted from the fundability of the Diocese of Perth. Thus, this case illustrates how missionary and humanitarian networks were not necessarily ideologically antagonistic, but could nevertheless find themselves on opposite sides of events as a result of their different interests and sources of funding.

Whereas the historiography of the Gascoyne mission holds that humanitarianism was defeated by the power of the settler lobby, this chapter demonstrates that mission society capitalism played a more immediate role in Gribble's removal. The settler lobby was certainly an important factor, but observing how the settler lobby worked in tandem with mission society capitalism changes the overall historical narrative quite significantly. Malcolm Allbrook argues that the impact of the Gascoyne affair was that the colonial landholding elite realized its growing influence and increasingly began to assert it over both missionaries and government officials after 1886.⁷⁵⁵ However, rather than approaching the history of Indigenous-settler relations in Western Australia as the rise of settler power and the decline of imperial influence, we can instead see that the power of the settler lobby to remove Gribble was dependent on the power of

⁷⁵⁵ Allbrook, *Henry Prinsep's Empire*, 214.

mission societies to control the actions and voices of its missionaries based on their own financial interests. Moreover, while Allbrook interprets the lack of missions built after 1886 as evidence that the settler lobby was exerting its influence, this is better understood as the continuation of long-standing difficulties in obtaining funds from England which Harris traces back to at least the 1850s.⁷⁵⁶ Moreover, Curthoys and Mitchell offer opposing evidence that the Gascoyne affair actually increased imperial influence over the settlers, arguing that the APS's lobbying on Gribble's behalf increased metropolitan pressure and strengthened the hand of Western Australia's governor to pass the 1886 Aborigines Protection Bill through a pro-pastoralist Legislative Council and withhold jurisdiction over Indigenous policy during the cession of responsible government in 1890.⁷⁵⁷ Far from representing a settler defeat over metropolitan interference, the influence of mission society capitalism and imperial humanitarianism during and after the Gascoyne affair point to the continuing interconnections of empire and colony in the late nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Together, the cases of William Duncan and John Gribble demonstrate how missionary humanitarianism in the late nineteenth century was contingent either on its compatibility with mission society fundraising strategies, or else on the availability of an alternative network with a different agenda. I am not the first to give significant attention to mission society fundraising, as others have provided in-depth analyses of efforts to solicit donations in Britain and to attract settler funding in the colonies. What I contribute to this scholarship is a recognition that donations solicited in Britain remained a primary source of income longer than has been thought,

⁷⁵⁶ Harris, *One Blood*, 267.

⁷⁵⁷ Curthoys and Mitchell, *Taking Liberty*, 390–91.

and that the amount solicited in Britain was directly connected to missionary activity in the colonies. This is an important counterpoint to historians who emphasize the power of mission societies to control missionary narratives by editing and falsifying missionary letters and reports. While it is true that mission societies could control the narratives within its own publications so that they aligned with fundraising strategies, there was nothing a mission society could do if negative accounts of missionary activity appeared in newspapers or, say, *The Aborigines' Friend*. Mission societies therefore had an active interest in not only editing problematic missionary accounts, but also controlling missionary actions that jeopardized potential revenue. The humanitarian activism performed by Duncan and Gribble constituted such a financial threat, albeit in different ways, and the CMS and the DMC responded with expulsion and defamation.

At the same time, however, this suggests that individual missionaries wielded some level of power over their mission societies, in that they could threaten fundraising revenue by spreading unwanted information through alternate channels. This is precisely why the DMC grew so upset when Gribble started working with the APS, and why the CMS and the DMC worked to turn the APS against Duncan and Gribble. Ultimately these efforts failed: both Duncan and Gribble had to abandon their colonies after breaking with their parent societies, revealing that mission support could not be sufficiently replaced with APS support. Yet their attempts to replace mission with APS support are nevertheless important despite their failure, for they demonstrate that missionaries perceived imperial subjecthood and identity as negotiable through movement between different imperial networks. And the failures that Duncan and Gribble experienced formed the context for subsequent missionary collaboration in settler colonialism: the CMS joined forces with the Canadian government to deny Indian Title to land, and the DMC became complicit with forced Indigenous labour. These moments of collaboration

and complicity snowballed into the twentieth century, and I will close this chapter by pointing to some of the implications of missionary humanitarianism in the 1880s for the child-removal policies that would soon follow in both Canada and Australia.

In Canada from roughly 1879-1997 and in Australia from roughly 1897-1984, missionaries joined forces with their settler governments to administer residential schools where Indigenous children were forcibly removed and subjected to policies of forced assimilation.⁷⁵⁸ Missionary involvement in Canadian residential schools was explicit in their legislative framework: the schools were to be a “joint venture” where missionaries administrated the schools and the government appointed principals and held supervisory authority.⁷⁵⁹ In Australia the link between missionaries and residential schools was less explicit, but in practice the government offloaded much of the responsibility for their operation to missionaries so that “missions run by religious organizations dominated the landscape of places that Stolen Generation people were taken to be confined.”⁷⁶⁰

Missionary collaboration with child-removal programs was in some ways a continuation of missionary collaboration with convict management which Carey examines in *Empire of Hell*,⁷⁶¹ and Canadian historians like John Milloy and Australian historians like Tiwari and

⁷⁵⁸ For historical overviews of these policies, see: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1, Origins to 1939: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume I* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015); National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997).

⁷⁵⁹ Julie Cassidy, “The Stolen Generations - Canada and Australia: The Legacy of Assimilation,” *Deakin Law Review* 11, no. 1 (2006): 141, <https://doi.org/10.21153/dlr2006vol11no1art230>.

⁷⁶⁰ Reena Tiwari and John Richard Stephens, “Trauma and Healing at Western Australia's Former Native Missions,” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 16, no. 3 (2020): 248, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180120948277>.

⁷⁶¹ Carey, *Empire of Hell*, 18-19.

Stephens further suggest that missionary complicity in residential schools was a direct continuation of nineteenth-century missionary interest in civilizing Indigenous peoples.⁷⁶² But that contention contradicts the conclusions of imperial histories such as Porter's *Religion versus Empire*. Porter argues that missionary conversion strategies evolved in the second half of the nineteenth century, moving away from Indigenous assimilation to European culture and towards adaptation of Christianity to Indigenous cultures, entailing an increased focus on preaching in vernacular languages and disavowal of "civilizing" as a core object of mission work.⁷⁶³ Moreover, Porter argues that by the 1870s mission societies were returning to an earlier model of independence from government which allowed them to become more critical of government policies from the 1880s onward.⁷⁶⁴ There is thus a disconnect between Porter's imperial view of mission work which observes a withdrawal from assimilation efforts and national views which observe a continuation and hardening of assimilation efforts.

The struggles I identify between missionaries intent on advocating for Indigenous rights and mission societies intent on silencing them challenges the proposition that missionary complicity in child-removal was a continuation of past practices. There was certainly a continuation of interest in civilizing, but Duncan and Gribble demonstrated a shared missionary commitment to fight against Indigenous rights abuses all the way up to the 1880s, supporting Porter's argument that missionaries of the late nineteenth century were more willing than at other periods to criticize government policies. Interestingly, my analysis reveals a divide between mission society administrators who were willing to be complicit in settler practices like forced

⁷⁶² Milloy and McCallum, *A National Crime*, 53; Tiwari and Stephens, "Trauma and Healing at Western Australia's Former Native Missions," 250.

⁷⁶³ Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, 172–81, 228–31.

⁷⁶⁴ Andrew Porter, "An Overview, 1700–1914," in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60–62; Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, 12.

labour and land alienation and missionaries on the ground who were not. This suggests that the complicity between missionaries and settlers in administering child-removal programs may have been contingent upon battles fought by missionaries like Duncan and Gribble with their employers over the nature of missionary imperial subjecthood – over whether missionaries were to concede or resist Indigenous rights abuses in the colonies. Duncan and Gribble’s movement between mission and APS networks to defend their visions of subjecthood represented a moment of possibility where, if they were successful, missionary alliances with settler governments may not have taken place. And, as a consequence, the child-removal policies that self-governing Canada and Australia implemented and which historians have deemed “national crimes” were, in fact, contingent upon the decision of mission societies in Britain to replace dissident missionaries with those more willing to comply with forced labour and land alienation programs. Of course, British mission societies were not single-handedly responsible, with many local settler churches and European Roman Catholic societies also taking part. Yet British mission societies continued to play an important role, with the Church Mission Society alone operating around 25% of all Canadian residential schools.⁷⁶⁵

On the other hand, my analysis problematizes an argument forwarded by Milloy and Amanda Nettelbeck *et al.* that missionary complicity in child-removal programs was based on interdenominational rivalry. Nettelbeck *et al.* locate missionary support for residential schools within a wider contest between Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists over the Indigenous souls of Western Australia, and suggest the different denominations of mission societies avoided challenging settler governments for fear that doing so would create space for other

⁷⁶⁵ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *They Came for the Children* (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012), 13-15.

denominations to grow in prominence.⁷⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Milloy argues that missionary complicity in child-removal in Canada was driven by competition between denominational mission societies over additional funding provided by the Canadian government in return for administration of residential schools, funding which was allocated based on the alignment of denominational policies to partisan politics.⁷⁶⁷ My analysis of Duncan in particular lends some support to this argument given the CMS's concerns about Methodist competition in British Columbia. Some level of rivalry also existed in Western Australia, although there was nothing like the explosion of mission stations in British Columbia. Yet government funding for missions in British Columbia and Western Australia was not as important during this period as metropolitan mission society funding, rendering competition between rival missionaries for government funding an unconvincing primary explanation for missionary complicity in child-removal. Instead, what I observe is mission society anxiety that British subscribers would give their money elsewhere if they believed that one society was more effective than another, and this put pressure on mission societies to prevent the growth of denominational rivals in the colonies. This suggests that interdenominational rivalry for government funds was not the crucial factor behind missionary complicity in child-removal, but the potential for British donations to be diverted from one mission society to another that pressured missionaries to compete against denominational rivals by allying with settler governments.

Of course, my focus on the perspectives of a single denomination limits the findings from this chapter, and further research into humanitarianism within other missionary circles is necessary to determine the applicability of my arguments to the wider British missionary

⁷⁶⁶ Nettelbeck et al., *Fragile Settlements*, 160–64.

⁷⁶⁷ Milloy and McCallum, *A National Crime*, 52–56.

movement. An analysis of Methodist and Catholic humanitarian activism would be particularly insightful given their predominance in the anxieties of Anglican mission societies. However, there are various additional examples beyond those covered here that indicate the representativeness of my chosen case studies. From the South African colonies, for example, Eugene Casalis of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society sent humanitarian critiques to the APS because his mission society would have lost French supporters for being “held out as political intrigues” if he voiced such critiques himself,⁷⁶⁸ while John Mackenzie of the London Missionary Society asked the APS for help finding employment after the LMS denied him further missionary work on account of his humanitarian activities.⁷⁶⁹ Thus, while this chapter highlighted only two case studies, I chose them deliberately as representative of a wider pattern of missionary movement between mission and humanitarian networks in the face of restrictions placed on them by mission societies. Moreover, in the wider context of this thesis, missionary movement between imperial networks can be seen as yet one more element of the network fluidity that I argue was characteristic of late nineteenth-century colonial subjecthood alongside settler and Indigenous movements between government, newsprint, and APS networks.

⁷⁶⁸ Eugene Casalis to Frederick Chesson, 27 January 1880, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C128/63, BodL.

⁷⁶⁹ John MacKenzie to Frederick Chesson, 18 October 1885, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 18 C141/222, BodL.

6. Conclusion

This dissertation opened with two simple questions: why did people living in the settler colonies decide to become informants for the Aborigines' Protection Society, and what do their informing activities reveal about the lived experiences of imperial subjecthood in the late nineteenth century? Each chapter has provided different answers to these questions by adopting the diverse perspectives of Indigenous, settler, and missionary informants. Many of the sub-arguments within each chapter are relevant to all APS informants. For instance, Hirini Taiwhanga's and John Tengo Jabavu's difficulties with settler government disinformation in Chapter Four were remarkably similar to Philip Carpenter's and Harold Stephens's difficulties with settler newspaper censorship in Chapter Three. Both sets of informants faced manipulated information environments hostile to imperial authority and used the APS to overcome communication barriers, indicating that there were high levels of both information suppression and resistance within settler societies. Some sub-arguments are more context-specific. William Duncan's and John Gribble's concerns about missionary society capitalism in Chapter Five, for example, had little direct relevance for other non-missionary informants. This is hardly surprising, as empire was experienced differently by all who encountered it and no meta-narrative can cleanly stitch all these unique experiences together. Yet at a more fundamental level, the experiences of these missionaries were comparable to John Akerman's, John Colenso's, and Robert Lester's experiences petitioning the British House of Commons in Chapter Two. Both sets of informants believed that multiple imperial authorities exerted direct influence over their local environments and used the APS to tap into imperial power dynamics, demonstrating that colonial subjects were closely and actively entangled with imperial power on an individual level.

Moreover, beyond the sub-arguments from each chapter, the shared decision to become an APS informant connected each of the 140 colonial subjects who wrote to the APS from the settler colonies between 1870-1890, and that shared experience reveals several important aspects of colonial life. In this concluding chapter, I elaborate on the overarching insights my dissertation as a whole provides into imperial subjecthood, reflect on my contributions to the historiographies of the APS, the British World, and settler colonial studies, and outline areas for future research.

Late nineteenth-century colonial inhabitants became informants for the APS because they believed the Society could satisfy their need for imperial connection. Every informant wanted something unique to their personal context, but most desires fell within shared demographic categories. Settlers typically wanted influence within British politics. Preferably this entailed a direct voice in the British House of Commons, but if that was not feasible, then an indirect voice in the British press would do. Missionaries usually wanted freedom from missionary society restrictions, whether those restrictions came in the form of pressure to appease local settlers or pressure to appease metropolitan donors. Indigenous peoples often wanted credibility when faced with the compounding barriers of settler governments trying to discredit them and imperial governments not taking their evidence seriously. The APS was well-positioned to cater to all of these desires. The APS had three core mandates: gathering credible evidence, raising public awareness, and lobbying for political change.⁷⁷⁰ Each of these mandates roughly corresponded with what informants wanted the APS to do for them. Consequently, it becomes difficult to determine whether the APS served metropolitan or colonial interests. This challenges

⁷⁷⁰ Aborigines' Protection Society, *The First Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society, Presented at the Meeting in Exeter Hall, May 6th, 1838* (London: W. Ball, Aldine Chambers, 1838), 12-25.

historiographical representations of humanitarianism as flowing from the metropole outwards and supports Alan Lester and Fae Dussart's concept of mediated agency within humanitarian networks, in which donors (activists in Britain), practitioners (activists on the ground) and recipients (Indigenous communities) all enabled and constrained humanitarian agendas.⁷⁷¹ Indeed, despite the APS being founded and organized in London, nearly every action it took in the period under study in regard to the settler colonies was taken at the request of colonial informants. Thus, while some people in the colonies may have seen the APS as "the evil genius of the colonies" and "a pack of conceited blockheads,"⁷⁷² many others believed the APS to be allies and partners to be used for local purposes.

The desire to obtain influence, freedom, and credibility from the APS reveals two crucial elements about the lived experience of imperial subjecthood in the late nineteenth-century settler colonies. First, it shows that people believed imperial authorities still possessed substantial power after the granting of settler self-government. This power came in many forms. Some informants believed political power to flow directly from the British House of Commons, even though responsible government disallowed imperial intervention into domestic issues in all but two of the ten settler colonies.⁷⁷³ Some informants further believed British public opinion exerted informal power over colonial politics, whether by pressuring MPs in the British House of Commons or by influencing colonial MPs. Missionary informants believed economic power

⁷⁷¹ Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, 31–33.

⁷⁷² "The Aborigines' Protection Society; Or, What Will Mrs. Grundy Say?," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 July 1864; "The Aborigines," *Cape Argus*, 21 October 1882.

⁷⁷³ Western Australia did not receive responsible government until 1890, and Natal until 1893. For analyses on why these two colonies waited so long, see: J. Lambert, "The Responsible Government Question in Natal, 1856–1893," *Kleio* 7, no. 1 (1975): 22–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00232087585310021>; Ann Curthoys and Jessie Mitchell, *Taking Liberty: Indigenous Rights and Settler Self-Government in Colonial Australia, 1830–1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 385–404.

flowed through the donations of evangelical philanthropists and the funding allocations of missionary society grant committees. That APS informants believed the metropole to possess these powers suggests colonial inhabitants did not perceive settler self-government to be the radical and antithetical shift that many settler colonial studies scholars claim it was.⁷⁷⁴

Not only did APS informants *believe* that such imperial power continued to remain relevant, they also *wanted* it to continue and acted as if it did by invoking imperial power through their letters. Imperial power seldom existed or operated in the way APS informants believed it did, and their efforts usually failed. Yet the very attempt to access imagined power is telling, illustrating that a major aspect of the lived experience of imperial subjecthood in this period was the liminality of living in a world constituted by multiple undefined and misunderstood spheres of power. The dawn of settler self-government was a major development in colonial history, but at the time, many colonial inhabitants saw self-government as neither permanent nor revolutionary. APS informants therefore reveal that the place of the late nineteenth-century settler colonies within the larger empire was remarkably open and undecided, with the future direction of colonial-imperial relations subject to negotiation, definition, and consolidation over the coming decades.

In addition to illustrating the indeterminacy of power relations between colony and empire, APS informants also reveal the extent to which colonial inhabitants combined multiple networks in different ways to access imperial power from a distance. Each of the informants examined in this dissertation turned to the APS only after discovering a weakness or limitation in another imperial network. Petitioning the imperial government was often the first course of

⁷⁷⁴ For examples of the radical shift thesis, see: Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*; Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*; Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*; Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*.

action, but it was also plagued by the most difficulties. Settlers found petitioning to be too public. Having one's name broadcast on a public document inviting imperial intervention opened one up to abuse from fellow settlers dedicated to the self-government project, whereas becoming an informant for the APS afforded the chance to instigate a petition while remaining anonymous. Indigenous petitioners, on the other hand, found that petitioning solely through government networks was liable to settler government disinformation, whereas petitioning through the APS afforded the opportunity to circumvent settler interference. Colonial inhabitants hoping to publish letters in the British press discovered that British newspaper editors only rarely accepted their submissions. The APS, on the other hand, was exceedingly skilled at publishing letters, so that using the Society as a publishing agent counteracted the low acceptance rate of the British press. Missionaries, unlike most other colonial inhabitants, possessed their very own imperial missionary networks, but they often found missionary societies unwilling to use their networks for political purposes or in ways that would alienate donors. Conversely, the APS was explicitly designed for activism and its funders expected their money to go towards political agitation. Missionaries took advantage of this to seek support that missionary networks were unwilling to provide. By combining the APS and other networks together in these ways, APS informants demonstrate how colonial subjects perceived imperial power as constituted by and mediated through multiple overlapping strands of networks. Their histories attest that they leveraged their knowledge of and access to different networks to access imperial power. This suggests that historians cannot approach the concept of imperial networks merely as a theoretical tool to model transnational flows of information, people, and goods.⁷⁷⁵ Rather, imperial networking was a

⁷⁷⁵ For examples of scholarship on networks as conduits of information, see: Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation*; Lester, *Imperial Networks*; Ballantyne, *Orientalism and*

conscious and strategic element of *doing*, and APS informants reveal that a networked perspective is necessary to understand how colonial subjects lived imperial lives.

These two insights – that late nineteenth-century colonial inhabitants perceived the relationship between empire and colony as ambiguous, and that they engaged with imperial power by interweaving multiple imperial networks - offer significant contributions to the historiographies of the APS itself, of the British World, and of settler colonial studies. In terms of APS scholarship, my bottom-up approach of centring APS informants rather than APS executives provides new insights into the Society’s role and function in the imperial system. Unlike Charles Swaisland and Zoë Laidlaw, who argue that the APS’s primary function was as a conduit of information and discourses between the colonies and the metropole,⁷⁷⁶ and Heartfield, who argues that the APS’s primary function was as a lobbyist shaping imperial policy,⁷⁷⁷ my findings show that the APS also functioned as a space that fostered imperial participation and belonging. This new perspective has many implications. For one, it means that the historical significance of the APS lies not only in its impact on information flows or policy decisions in the metropole, but also in the sustainability of imperial identities in the colonies. Historians disagree over whether the APS successfully impacted imperial policy by circulating accurate information. Swaisland and Heartfield contend that the APS successfully improved imperial policy by funnelling information about humanitarian crises to the Colonial Office and forcing humanitarian issues into the House of Commons.⁷⁷⁸ Laidlaw disagrees, countering that the APS failed to

Race; Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture*.

⁷⁷⁶ Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society and British Southern and West Africa,” i–vii; Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*, 16–18.

⁷⁷⁷ Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*, 43–54.

⁷⁷⁸ Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*, 49–54; Swaisland, “The Aborigines Protection Society,” 399–413.

improve imperial policy because it was compromised by a variety of factors such as its naïve trust in systematic colonisers, its paradoxical view of Indigenous peoples as only deserving of rights if could prove their ‘civilization’, and its difficulty in obtaining timely, relevant, and accurate information from the colonies.⁷⁷⁹ Both sides present compelling arguments, but neither acknowledges that the APS did not only impact imperial knowledge and policy.

As this dissertation demonstrates, the Society also impacted its informants’ perspectives of themselves as imperial citizens. From this perspective, it does not really matter whether the APS changed imperial policy as long as it confirmed informants’ identities. For example, if the APS fulfilled an informant’s wish to raise a question in the House of Commons or to publish a letter in *The Times*, it succeeded in reinforcing that informants’ perception of themselves as having a voice in imperial affairs. Conversely, if the APS failed to provide a missionary with funding or defend an Indigenous petitioner’s credibility, it contributed to disillusionment with the idea of imperial citizenship. By shifting the historiographical discussion from the impact of information on imperial policy to the impact of connectivity on imperial identities, this dissertation demonstrates that the APS held a different significance for its colonial informants than for its metropolitan executives, and that the consequences of success or failure were not only the nature of imperial policy but also the sustainability of the British World system in the face of settler colonialism.

At the same time, my analysis of settler, Indigenous, and missionary relationships with the APS in the late nineteenth century provides temporal context to previous assessments of colonial attitudes towards the Society which do not consider this time period. Laidlaw’s analysis of the APS in the early nineteenth century finds that the APS was forced to rely on dubious and

⁷⁷⁹ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire’s Humanity*, 227, 270, 307–8.

self-interested sources because it had difficulty in attracting colonial informants.⁷⁸⁰ This is very different from the APS of the late nineteenth century, which I have shown attracted a large number of earnest, dedicated, and unsolicited informants. Similarly, in Rachel Whitehead's account of Rhodesian land disputes in the early twentieth century, she finds that Indigenous leaders distrusted the APS because of diverging perspectives on land and labour rights, that missionaries opposed the APS because they were dependent on settler funding, and that settlers tricked the APS into thinking that they were benevolent before capitalizing on APS support to dispossess large swaths of African land.⁷⁸¹ These findings from the early twentieth century do not agree with my findings from the late nineteenth century. Where later Indigenous peoples experienced disillusionment with and opposition to the APS, earlier Indigenous informants expressed complete faith in the Society and hoped that it could overcome settler government disinformation. Where dependence on settler funds dissuaded later missionaries from working with the APS, earlier missionary informants believed that the APS could replace dependence on such funding. And where later settlers cynically exploited the APS to further their own interests, earlier settler informants pleaded for imperial intervention to reign in colonial violence.

This change over time underscores my argument that the act of becoming an APS informant held a unique significance in the period 1870-1890. For while colonial disinterest in the APS in the early nineteenth century reflected a pre-settler colonial context in which imperial belonging was the default, and scepticism towards the APS in the early twentieth century reflected a post-war context of deglobalization, colonial hopefulness towards the APS in the late nineteenth century was a temporally specific reflection of the settler transition when imperial and

⁷⁸⁰ Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire's Humanity*, 307–8.

⁷⁸¹ Whitehead, "The Aborigines' Protection Society," 301–5.

national belonging were both in flux. Consequently, by presenting the first in-depth analysis of late nineteenth-century APS informants, this dissertation reveals that colonial disinterest and disdain for the APS were not stable elements of colonial societies, but represented temporally specific attitudes based on the evolving dynamic between imperial and settler worlds.

As for British World and settler colonial studies scholarship, this dissertation has utilized a unique combination of both approaches to address serious critiques that each has received. The British World school is nearing its fourth decade as a formal sub-discipline (if the first British World conference at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in 1998 is taken as its starting point) and continues to inform myriad new papers, monographs, and edited collections.⁷⁸² Nevertheless, critics have identified numerous limitations to the British World framework. Many of these limitations are debatable. For instance, Dan Kennedy and Rachel Bright and Andrew Dilley are sceptical of the British World's ambiguity over who exactly counts as "British" and which exact territories fell within this "World," and express concerns that it "begs for definitional clarity" resulting in "many different and distinct phenomena are collapsed together without precision."⁷⁸³ Yet most British World scholars see this ambiguity as a strength rather than a weakness, and

⁷⁸² For examples, see: Jatinder Mann and Iain Johnston-White, eds., *Revisiting the British World: New Voices and Perspectives* (Bristol: Peter Lang, 2022); Jeremy Black, *Geographies of an Imperial Power: The British World, 1688–1815* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018); Peter Denney et al., eds., *Sound, Space and Civility in the British World, 1700–1850* (London: Routledge, 2019); Geraldine Vaughan, "A Global Network: Ultra-Protestant Societies Throughout the British World," in *Anti-Catholicism and British Identities in Britain, Canada and Australia, 1880s–1920s*, ed. Geraldine Vaughan (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 31–71; David Thackeray, "Selling the Empire?: Marketing and the Demise of the British World, c.1920–1960," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 48, no. 4 (2020): 679–705, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2020.1741837>; Hugh Morrison, *Protestant Children, Missions and Education in the British World* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Leigh Muffet, "The Cape of Good Hope Colony and the British World Turned Upside-down, 1806–1836," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (2022): 1–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2022.2086205>.

⁷⁸³ Bright and Dilley, "After the British World," 554–57; Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 75–77.

neither Kennedy nor Bright and Dilley offers any counterpoints indicating why their preference for precision is better than ambiguity. Indeed, as historians from Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper to Andrew Porter have argued for decades, imperial history must always be somewhat fluid, whether because historical identifiers like “civilized” or “coloured” were open to constant negotiation and interpretation or because scholarly categories like “formal” and “informal” empire are overlapping and abstract.⁷⁸⁴

A more convincing critique of the British World school holds that it fails to attend to power structures,⁷⁸⁵ and I entirely agree. We have observed this trend in every chapter of this dissertation. From Simon Potter’s contention that the imperial press shaped culture but not politics to John Darwin’s insistence that Britishness entailed loyalty to British institutions but not to the British government,⁷⁸⁶ British World approaches to the networks under study have consistently ignored power struggles between colonial and imperial authorities. This ignorance is often somewhat justified by the historical sources that historians tend to use. For example, many British World scholars lean upon powerful polemicists like Charles Dilke and Joseph Chamberlain to access what late Victorians understood as the proper relationship between the various nodes of the British World, and such analyses find that Dilke clearly saw Greater Britain as a *cultural* rather than a *political* unit while Chamberlain never achieved popular support for an imperial federation.⁷⁸⁷ Yet the polemics of “great men” like Chamberlain and Dilke do not necessarily represent the perspectives of colonial inhabitants themselves, and it is these on-the-

⁷⁸⁴ Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism, 1860-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 1–13; Cooper and Stoler, *Tensions of Empire*, 6–11.

⁷⁸⁵ Bright and Dilley, “After the British World,” 562–63; Pietsch, “Rethinking the British World,” 446; Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation*, 25–26; Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 78–80.

⁷⁸⁶ Potter, *News and the British World*, 58–62; Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 147.

⁷⁸⁷ For instance, see: Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*; Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*.

ground perspectives on the proper relationship between colonial and imperial power that have remained understudied. To address this issue, I have borrowed settler colonial studies' analytical framework of imperialism and colonialism as antithetical power structures and applied it to the expressions of imperial belonging articulated by APS informants. By doing so, I have been able to identify relationships between cultural connectivity within the British World and subjectivity to the opposing centres of settler and imperial power. My findings across all four chapters reveal that continued connection to the British World via the APS was *not* detached from subjectivity to imperial power, but that adherence to cultural ideals of British subjecthood, the fourth estate, missionary evangelicalism, and humanitarianism were closely entangled with visions of colonial subjection to imperial power.

More importantly, the visions of colonial subjection to imperial power articulated by APS informants always revolved around policing racial hierarchies and controlling access to land. John Akerman and John Colenso from Chapter Two invoked imperial power to control Zulu marital practices and land rights. Philip Carpenter and Harold Stephens from Chapter Three sought APS assistance to preserve the boundaries between Britishness, Frenchness, and Afrikanerness while simultaneously asserting the rights of settler populations to access and control Mohawk and Tswana land. John Tengo Jabavu and Hirini Taiwhanga from Chapter Four called on imperial networks to undermine settler discourses of racialized credibility. And William Duncan and John Gribble from Chapter Five looked to the APS to challenge missionary society perspectives on Tsimshian savagery and settler civility. All of these cases show that the interconnected networks of the British World, far from simply transferring ideas across imperial spaces, were directly utilized to maintain the imbalanced racialized power structures within settler societies. Thus, by applying a settler colonial studies analysis of imperial and colonial

power to a British World analysis of identity and connectivity, this dissertation offers one possible means of writing power into the British World.

Settler colonial studies as a distinct field of study is around the same age as the British World school, tracing back to Patrick Wolfe’s theoretical framework laid out in 1994 (although based on previous and chronically under-cited Indigenous scholarship),⁷⁸⁸ and it too continues to inspire countless monographs and articles.⁷⁸⁹ Just as with the British World school, settler colonial studies has been subject to significant criticism in recent years, although some critiques are more substantial than others. One of the most common refrains is that settler colonial studies re-marginalizes Indigeneity by focusing on settler violence instead of Indigenous resistance.⁷⁹⁰ But J. Kēhaulani Kauanui argues that such claims are ignorant of the wide variety of settler colonial scholarship which does centre Indigenous agency, while Alice Te Punga Somerville and Shino Konishi point out that settler colonial studies provides valuable analytical tools for contextualizing Indigenous agency as long as Indigeneity and settler colonialism are not treated as mutually exclusive fields of study.⁷⁹¹ This is precisely the model I adopted in Chapter Four,

⁷⁸⁸ J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “False Dilemmas and Settler Colonial Studies,” 290–96.

⁷⁸⁹ For examples, see: Philip Steer, *Settler Colonialism in Victorian Literature: Economics and Political Identity in the Networks of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Cole Harris, *A Bounded Land: Reflections on Settler Colonialism in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2021); Natsu Taylor Saito, *Settler Colonialism, Race, and the Law: Why Structural Racism Persists* (New York: NYU Press, 2020); T.J. Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal: Indigeneity and the Violence of Belonging in Southern Africa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019); Lisa Slater, *Anxieties of Belonging in Settler Colonialism: Australia, Race and Place* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018).

⁷⁹⁰ For instance, see Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 83.

⁷⁹¹ Kauanui, “False Dilemmas and Settler Colonial Studies,” 292-293; Alice Te Punga Somerville, “OMG Settler Colonial Studies, 278–82; Shino Konishi, “First Nations Scholars, Settler Colonial Studies, and Indigenous History,” *Australian Historical Studies* 50, no. 3 (2019): 285–304, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2019.1620300>.

where I converge structures of settler government disinformation and Indigenous agency to challenge and subvert those structures into a single frame.

A more problematic critique of settler colonial studies is that it succumbs to what Alissa Macoun and Elizabeth Strakosch term “colonial fatalism,” in which excessive emphasis on structure produces representations of settler colonialism as inevitable. This critique is specifically directed towards the impact of scholarship on activism in the present. According to Macoun and Strakosch (among other Indigenous scholars), settler colonial studies’ analysis of oppression as a deep-rooted historical structure precludes efforts at decolonization so that “the role of political activists is to wait for the structurally determined future, and at most to prepare others for its arrival.”⁷⁹² Yet the colonial fatalism critique also applies to the study of the past. Historians have been quite correct to identify the development of responsible government in the colonies as a pivotal moment in the construction of settler power structures and have usefully theorized settler and imperial sovereignty as antithetical and oppositional. In the process, however, historians have too readily assumed that the advent of self-government and the antitheticity of settler and imperial sovereignty inevitably led to the settler colonial regimes which took shape in the early twentieth century and remain with us today.

On the contrary, this dissertation reveals that there was no inevitability to how settler and imperial sovereignties would reconcile between 1870-1890. Instead, I have demonstrated that colonial inhabitants continued attempting to negotiate the terms of settler-imperial power

⁷⁹² Macoun and Strakosch, “The Ethical Demands of Settler Colonial Theory,” 435, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2013.810695>; See also: Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, “Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (2014): 8–9, <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/21166/17970>; Konishi, “First Nations Scholars, Settler Colonial Studies, and Indigenous History,” 291–92.

relations for decades after self-government. By arguing that informants articulated hybrid imperial/colonial subjectivities through the APS long after the dawn of settler self-government, this dissertation presents a novel interpretation of the origins of settler colonial sovereignty that is better suited to the ambiguity and open-endedness of the period. Combining British World approaches to continuities of imperial networks with settler colonial studies approaches to conceptualizing settler and imperial sovereignty therefore offers one means of ameliorating the colonial fatalism issues within settler colonial studies scholarship.

The major limitation to this dissertation and the question that remains to be answered is that of latitudinal scope. As part of my semi-microhistorical methodology of comparing a small number of highly detailed and contextualized case studies, I chose case studies based on their representativeness of trends within the APS correspondence archive. While this approach enabled me to discuss APS informants as a social category with a high degree of representativeness, it also prevented me from precisely locating APS informant behaviour within broader settler, missionary, and Indigenous populations. This means that my findings about imperial petitioning, participatory journalism, Colonial Office investigations, and missionary capitalism may be generalizable to Victorian societies as a whole, but also may be entirely unique to APS informants. Moreover, my focus on Indigenous rights activism precluded me from attending to sources unrelated to Indigenous rights, so that my conclusions regarding imperial citizenship and colonial sovereignty may or may not be specific to issues of Indigenous-settler relations.

There is historiographical evidence that points toward the latitudinal potential of my findings. Kevin Luginbill shows that the practice of writing directly to the Colonial Office about

a variety of topics was a common practice as late as 1903,⁷⁹³ indicating that the settler petitions examined here are part of a wider phenomenon beyond the APS or Indigenous rights. Cecilia Morgan and Coll Thrush detail how Indigenous visitors to Britain leaned on many intimate and professional connections to assert their voice in British politics, suggesting that the APS was not the only resource used to establish Indigenous credibility.⁷⁹⁴ Julie Codell has begun researching British periodical articles authored by “native informants,” where she finds that “between 1840 and 1901 there were over one hundred articles by sixty authors from India, Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, China, Japan, Turkey, Armenia, Sudan, and South Africa.”⁷⁹⁵ This indicates that participatory journalism was common outside of APS circles. Jeffrey Cox, Hilary Carey, and Bob Tennant each apply an administrative lens to the study of the British missionary enterprise, pointing toward the importance of financial decision-making beyond instances of humanitarian activism.⁷⁹⁶ By corroborating that the trends identified in this dissertation relate to elements beyond the APS and Indigenous rights, these branches of historiography indicate that there is some level of representativeness to my findings.

Nevertheless, more research is needed into the wider practice of imperial petitions, participatory journalism, Colonial Office investigations, and missionary capitalism beyond the confines of a humanitarian lens. Incorporating more settler petitions into the historiography of the British Empire will shed light on the operation of imperial citizenship and its impact on colonial

⁷⁹³ Kevin Luginbill, “Penny Post Imperialists: Imagining and Experiencing Empire in Letters to the Colonial Office, 1903,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 49 (2021): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2021.1892375>.

⁷⁹⁴ Morgan, *Travellers through Empire*; Thrush, *Indigenous London*.

⁷⁹⁵ Codell, “The Empire Writes Back: Native Informant Discourse in the Victorian Press,” 188.

⁷⁹⁶ Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*; Carey, *God’s Empire*; Tennant, *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Societies, 1760-1870*.

politics, not only regarding Indigenous-settler relations but also in relation to a wide range of topics including medicine, industry, war, education, religion, and more. Analyzing Colonial Office investigations could provide insights into the history of Indigenous resistance to colonial violence as well as the collaborative participation of settler and imperial governments in dispossession and disenfranchisement. Studying colonial letters to the editor of British papers holds the potential not only to considerably broaden our awareness of the breadth of imperial discourses available to nineteenth-century Britons, but also to hear the voices of people who faced barriers to publication within the colonies themselves. And studying missionary capitalism could generate important insights into the entanglement of religious and economic imperialism, two concepts that are typically studied separately.

Finally, in addition to addressing the question of latitudinal representativeness, there is also much more research to be done on colonial rather than specifically imperial humanitarianism. My focus on the APS meant that I could only investigate instances when colonial subjects engaged with metropolitan-based humanitarianism, so I largely ignored the activities of local organizations like South Australia's Aborigines' Friends Association, the Canadian Indian Research and Aid Society, and the Māori Rights Conservation Association. These groups were modelled after the APS yet fashioned around local adaptations of Indigenous rights activism. Moreover, many of these groups were established around and after the turn of the twentieth century, suggesting that in some ways they were colonial replacements for the old system of imperial humanitarianism that was in decline during the transition to settler statehood. Local humanitarian organizations therefore present a crucial counterpoint to the arguments forwarded in this thesis, and I hope to examine them more closely in future research.

The practice of becoming an APS informant did not end with Frederick Chesson's death in 1888, but it did decline dramatically thereafter. While the APS archive contains letters from 140 people living in the settler colonies addressed to Chesson, it only contains letters from forty settler informants addressed to his successor Henry Fox Bourne between 1888-1909, and eight of those were carry-overs from Chesson's era. As stated in the introduction to this thesis, I am wary of drawing too strong conclusions from these statistics since it is impossible to know how many informant letters are missing from the archive. Nevertheless, the sharp disparity between the number of informants before and after 1888 does suggest that, in the context of deepening structural oppression in the settler colonies, disillusionment was finally taking its toll on APS informants. Historians such as Richard Price and Alan Lester argue that humanitarian disillusionment – the cumulative disappointment experienced by nineteenth-century activists who witnessed their efforts repeatedly fail to bear fruit – took hold for the most part by the mid-nineteenth century,⁷⁹⁷ but the APS attracted those persistent humanitarians who held on to their belief in imperial justice far longer.

Nevertheless, even the most stalwart humanitarians could not fail to recognize by the turn of the twentieth century that the ideal of empire as a moral check on colonial oppression was a distant fantasy. From legislation in Canada and Australia empowering the state to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children to legislation in South Africa and New Zealand empowering the state to forcibly dispossess Indigenous land,⁷⁹⁸ the “global colour line” that was being drawn over immigration and citizenship policies by self-governing settler states at the turn of the

⁷⁹⁷ Price, *Empire and Indigeneity*, 71; Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 145.

⁷⁹⁸ I am specifically referring to the 1894 amendment to the Indian Act in Canada, the 1915 amendment to the Aborigines Protection Act in New South Wales, the 1893 Native Land Purchase and Acquisition Act in New Zealand, and the 1913 Natives Land Act in South Africa.

twentieth century was also being drawn over Indigenous rights to land and life. It became increasingly obvious that the APS could not do anything to change the course of colonial oppression, and so fewer and fewer people chose to become APS informants in the years after Chesson's death. The informants examined in this thesis therefore represent a unique and significant moment in time between the beginnings of settler colonial governance and the entrenchment and normalization of settler power. By exploring how informants used their connections with the APS to perform an imperial citizenship that did not exist and sustain a fantasy of imperial humanitarianism that had long since proved illusory, this dissertation shows that imperial networks and their eventual failure played a pivotal role in the transition from an imperial to a settler world.

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Appendix

APS correspondent breakdown by region

Correspondents from South Africa

Name	Colony	Demographic
Abraham, Hendrick	Cape Colony	settler
Adams, Ellen Martha	Natal	settler
Adams, William	Natal	settler
Akerman, John William	Natal	settler
Appia	Basutoland	missionary
Arnot, David	Cape Colony	settler
Ashton, William	Cape Colony	missionary
Atkinson, Samuel	Transvaal	settler
Barbour, Robert	Cape Colony	missionary
Barker, C.F.	Natal	settler
Beck, Alfred Wallis	Transvaal	missionary
Bellville, Alfred	Natal	missionary
Berthoud, Paul	Transvaal	missionary
Bethell, Christopher	Cape Colony	settler
Boegner, Alfred	Basutoland	missionary
Bond, Maria	Cape Colony	missionary
Bourdillon, Edmund	Transvaal	settler
Bouverie, William Pleydell	Cape Colony	settler
Brand, Johannes	Orange Free State	settler
Brannan, W.C.	Cape Colony	settler

Brooks, Ellen	Natal	settler
Brownlee, Charles	Cape Colony	settler
Calder, J.	Cape Colony	settler
Campbell, W.Y.	Natal	settler
Casalis, Eugene	Basutoland	missionary
Cochet, Frans Leon	Transvaal	missionary
Colenso, John	Natal	missionary
Cuthbert, Sidney	Natal	settler
Daumas, Francois	Basutoland	missionary
de Smidt, Marie	Cape Colony	settler
Escombe, Harry	Natal	settler
Eustace, J. J.	Cape Colony	settler
Fowle, George	Cape Colony	settler
Garland, Jr	Natal	settler
Garland, Thomas William	Natal	settler
Gibbs, Samuel	Natal	settler
Gould, Francis Baring	Cape Colony	settler
Grant, Francis	Natal	settler
Grant, William	Natal	settler
Harper, John	Cape Colony	missionary
Herero, Kama	German Southwest Africa	Indigenous person
Jabavu, John Tengo	Cape Colony	Indigenous person
Jameson, Julius	Cape Colony	settler
Jones, J.P.	Transvaal	settler
King, W.V.	Basutoland	settler

Kingon, William Larson	Cape Colony	settler
Kirby, Frederick Vaughan	Transvaal	settler
Knights, Bryan Thomas	Cape Colony	settler
le Fleur, Andries	Basutoland	Indigenous person
Lester, Robert	Cape Colony	settler
Lewis, Robert	German Southwest Africa	settler
Mabille, Adolphe	Basutoland	missionary
Mackenzie, John	Cape Colony	missionary
Mama, Shadrach Boyce	Cape Colony	Indigenous person
Mankoroane	Bechuanaland	Indigenous person
Martin, William	Transvaal	settler
McNicholas, Hamilton	Cape Colony	settler
Mears, J. E.	Transvaal	settler
Middleton, William	Natal	settler
Mileman, William	Natal	settler
Moffat, John	Basutoland	missionary
Moroka, Samuel	Orange Free State	Indigenous person
Moshete	Bechuanaland	Indigenous person
Mqikela	Cape Colony	Indigenous person
Mullins, Jr, John	Natal	settler
Murray, Richard	Cape Colony	settler
Mzimba, Pambani	Cape Colony	Indigenous person
Nicholson, G.	Transvaal	settler
Orpen, Charles	Orange Free State	settler
Orpen, Joseph	Cape Colony	settler

Passmore, W. N.	Cape Colony	settler
Pote, Charles	Cape Colony	settler
Robinson, John	Natal	settler
Sanderson, John	Natal	settler
Smith, David	Cape Colony	settler
St Leger, Frederick	Cape Colony	settler
Statham, Reginald	Natal	settler
Stephens, Harold	Cape Colony	settler
van Graan, Johann	Cape Colony	settler

Correspondents from Canada

Name	Province	Demographic
Carpenter, Philip	Quebec	settler
Disney, Richard	Canada	missionary
Duncan, William	British Columbia	missionary
Green, William Sebright	British Columbia	settler
Haliburton, Robert	Ontario	settler
Haviland, Thomas	Prince Edward Island	settler
Isbister, Alexander	Manitoba	Indigenous person
Kennedy, Howard	Quebec	settler
Leask, David	British Columbia	Indigenous person
Legiac, Paul	British Columbia	Indigenous person
Logan, Scobie	Ontario	Indigenous person
MacDonald, W.L.	British Columbia	settler

Machray, Robert	Manitoba	missionary
McCallum, Arthur	British Columbia	settler
Muirhead, George	Ontario	settler
Roche, Alfred	Ontario	settler
Schultz, John	Ontario	settler
Steward, Theophilus	Prince Edward Island	settler
Talfourd, Froome	Ontario	settler
Tupper, Charles	Canada	settler
Waddilove, W.J.	Ontario	Indigenous person
Wampum, John	Ontario	Indigenous person

Correspondents from New Zealand

Name	Region	Demographic
Bell, Francis Dillon	North Island	settler
Champtaloup, Edward	North Island	settler
Cowie, William	North Island	missionary
Hadfield, Octavius	North Island	missionary
Hapuku, Iratene	North Island	Indigenous person
Hardy, Charles	North Island	settler
J.J.R.	North Island	Indigenous person
Kapa, Matthew	North Island	Indigenous person
McBeth, James	North Island	settler
McMillan, John	South Island	settler

Patahi, John Mete	North Island	Indigenous person
Ropiha, Hori	North Island	Indigenous person
Sinclair, James	North Island	settler
Spencer, Frederick Hamilton	North Island	missionary
Taiaroa, Hori Kerei	South Island	Indigenous person
Taiwhanga, Matenga	North Island	Indigenous person
Taiwhanga, Sidney	North Island	Indigenous person
Tawhai, Hone Mohi	North Island	Indigenous person
Tawhiao	North Island	Indigenous person
Te Aroatua, Hori	North Island	Indigenous person
Te Haara, Heta	North Island	Indigenous person
Te Tuhi, Wiremu Patara	North Island	Indigenous person
Te Wheoro, Wiremu	North Island	Indigenous person
Tomoana, Henare	North Island	Indigenous person

Correspondents from Australia

Name	Region	Demographic
Baker, James	Western Australia	settler
Carley, David	Western Australia	settler
Davidson, Alfred	Queensland	settler
Douglas, John	Queensland	settler
Finlayson, H.	South Australia	settler
Fisher, Frank Owen	New South Wales	settler
Gribble, John Brown	Western Australia	missionary

Holder, C. J.	South Australia	settler
MacKay, H. W. Boyd	Queensland	settler
Miklouho-Maclay, Nicholas	New South Wales	settler
Parry, Henry	Western Australia	missionary
Rose, William Kinnard	Queensland	settler
Short, Robert	Victoria	settler
Steele, Robert	New South Wales	missionary
Syme, David	Victoria	settler
