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***'I could not bear to be beaten by difficulties'*: Exploring David Livingstone and  
Questions of Manliness, Race and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century Africa and Britain**

**By: Christopher G. Petrusic, B.A. (Hons.), M.A.**

**A thesis submitted to  
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of History  
Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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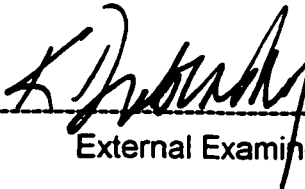
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## Abstract

My dissertation, "*I could not bear to be beaten by difficulties*": Exploring David Livingstone and Questions of Manliness, Race and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century Africa and Britain," examines the complex relationship between gender, race and imperialism. The missionary-explorer David Livingstone (1813-1873) was one of the most celebrated heroes of the British empire. However, his unconventional conception of African manliness and his radical racial politics have long been buried in a potent myth that has obscured his view of Africans, empire and manliness. This study demonstrates that Livingstone's idea of what it meant to be manly was at odds with imperialism's dominant racial and gender stereotypes. Critical of the racial intolerance of his compatriots, Livingstone maintained that manliness was not the exclusive dominion of white men, as it was for most other nineteenth century Britons. He held the unorthodox view that African men could demonstrate manliness on a par with any other 'race' of men, whether they were members of his crew or working in pursuit of their own goals. Although Livingstone was not free from racial intolerance, among Victorians his attitudes towards Africans were radical and they separated him from most of his contemporaries. By comparing his racial attitudes with those of his compatriots, I show that his conception of 'race' challenged orthodox Victorian opinion about the 'nature' of Africans and African society in a number of complex and distinctive ways. Throughout his writings, Livingstone asserted that all Africans had the inherent capacity to 'rise' to the level of the most 'civilized' societies. During his thirty years in Africa, this belief motivated, in part, his support for the anti-colonial struggles of the Xhosa and Khoikhoi peoples against British exploitation in the Cape Colony.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction: *'I could not bear to be beaten by difficulties'*

In November 1870, deep in the lake regions of Central Africa, David Livingstone struggled to find the sheet of paper he needed to write a letter to his close friend Bevan Braithwaite in England. Huddled in his hut, in the rain soaked village of Bambarre (not far from Lake Tanganyika in modern Congo), Livingstone was frustrated, physically drained and pained by bleeding foot ulcers. In this letter to Braithwaite, the legendary explorer reflected on the sanity of his decision to pursue what he hoped would be his greatest discovery - solving the mystery of the Nile's source. Despite his aches and afflictions, he still possessed a sense of humour, which helped him inform Braithwaite: "Had I known all the hunger, hardship, toil and time required, I might have preferred a strait waistcoat [straightjacket] to undertaking the task" of looking for the Nile's headwaters.<sup>1</sup> But, Livingstone's wit could not mask the earnestness with which he approached his explorative task. He cast his search for the source of the Nile as a test of his manhood, the same way he had long approached his duties in Africa as a missionary-explorer. To fail to persevere to the best of his ability, was to fail live up to the vision of manliness that he expected of himself and other men at all times. This led him to declare in the letter, that "having taken [the expedition in hand], I

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<sup>1</sup> David Livingstone to Bevan Braithwaite, November 1870, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20319. Braithwaite (1818-1905) was a lawyer and a Quaker who first met Livingstone in 1857. After their meeting, the two men corresponded for the remainder of Livingstone's life.

could not bear to be beaten by difficulties.”<sup>2</sup>

In close to thirty years in Africa and throughout his working class youth in Scotland, Livingstone had shown an ability to persevere against an endless series of hardships. His life experience had given him an iron will and toughened him to the point where he sometimes carelessly refused to accept perceived weakness in others. When he himself was confronted by physical hardship or self doubt, this inner fortitude provided the impetus to carry on until his goals had been reached. “I have stuck to my work with John Bullish tenacity” he told Braithwaite, invoking this icon of British character that, at least for Livingstone, represented a clear vision of manliness.<sup>3</sup>

At the time, Livingstone was unaware of the fact that in Britain and elsewhere his whereabouts were unknown and he was believed to be lost, held captive by Africans or even dead. In Britain his mass of supporters and his few critics debated whether to send out an expedition to find him and bring him home. Meanwhile in New York, the editor of the *New York Herald* had hatched a plan to send reporter Henry M. Stanley to Africa to search for Livingstone. Two decades earlier, Livingstone had been hailed as the greatest explorer of Africa after he had criss-crossed the continent, his journey recounted in the bestseller *Missionary Travels* (1857). Now, in 1870, at fifty-seven, he longed to reestablish his once unparalleled influence as an explorer by solving the centuries old mystery of the Nile source. Livingstone had come to believe that the Nile sprang from an intricate flow of interconnected lakes and rivers west of Lake Bangweulu. These conclusions were based on his own

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

explorations, the knowledge of Arabs and African traders and travellers, as well as his growing belief that the ancient theories of Ptolemy and Herodotus about the source of the river were accurate. While he recovered from his foot ulcers - and occupied himself by re-reading the Bible four times - he also came to imagine that this watershed had once been travelled by Moses and a number of African biblical figures. "The discovery is somewhat akin to that of the East or West passage," he told his friend.<sup>4</sup> In addition to fellow explorers like Richard Burton and John Hanning Speke, "emperors, kings, philosophers - all the great minds of antiquity - longed to know [the source of the Nile] and longed in vain," he wrote.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, he believed that the mythic story of Moses and the theories of the early geographers gave added importance to the journey and provided biblical significance to his potential discovery.<sup>6</sup> Livingstone was also convinced that the honour that came with the discovery of the Nile's source would give him the power he needed to influence Britain's political elites. On this journey - as with his previous explorations - Livingstone's personal success was fused with his evangelical and humanitarian aims for Africa. With his influence restored, he hoped to again have the moral authority to convince the British government to stamp out the slave trade in Central Africa, as well as support his plan to establish a small Christian colony. "These are my dreams," he told Braithwaite. If they came to fruition, he

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Despite his vast and unparalleled knowledge of African geography, Livingstone had convinced himself that he was wandering in the African territory mentioned in the *Old Testament*, including a Biblical village founded by Moses. In his letter to Braithwaite, he asserted that in addition to the Nile's source, he hoped to find "some trace of the lost city of Meröe and possibly of Tirhaka, King of Ethiopia or Zerah [an Ethiopian general]."

was confident that his “toil” would be “well rewarded.”<sup>7</sup>

.....

In his writing and his life's work, David Livingstone followed and fostered an explicitly masculine self-image. Like the other famous Victorian explorers of Africa, including Burton, Speke and Henry Stanley, Livingstone placed himself as the hero of his explorer narratives. The works of these men celebrated their manly prowess in enduring the tests of courage, determination, and tenacity that were necessary in their efforts to redraw the African map. For Livingstone, however, manliness was not based simply on having the ability and drive to make great geographical discoveries. In his view, to be manly was to have moral character, the will and conviction, for instance, to eradicate slavery and build a Christian colony through humanitarian values. In his mind, he had demonstrated his higher character in willfully pushing himself to the limits of endurance, not for his own gain, but for the higher purpose of ‘helping’ Africans. In doing his duty to the best of his ability, he believed that he had pursued his vision for Africa with a greater moral purpose than other explorers. He held up his achievements - crossing the continent in search of viable trade routes, mapping slave routes, befriending powerful African leaders - as testimony to his perseverance in pursuit of a greater good for Africa.

Livingstone maintained that other British men in Africa, whether they were explorers,

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<sup>7</sup> David Livingstone to Bevan Braithwaite, November 1870, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20319.

missionaries, settlers or administrators, should demonstrate the same standard of moral determination and physical energy in their roles as representatives of a 'civilized' nation. In practice, however, he often found his compatriots lacking the manliness he believed was essential to the colonial experience. In his view, few of his British peers seemed to merit the distinction of exhibiting 'John Bullish tenacity' in their work in Africa. After all, the reason he recruited only a small African crew during his search of the Nile's source was because he had come to believe that few of his compatriots had the work ethic or the moral character - the manliness - necessary to push themselves to 'help' Africans.

As I demonstrate in this dissertation, Livingstone's idea of what it meant to be manly was at odds with imperialism's dominant racial and gender stereotypes. Critical of the racial intolerance of his fellow countrymen, Livingstone maintained that manliness was not the exclusive dominion of 'white' men, as it was for most other nineteenth century Britons. He held the unconventional view that African men could demonstrate manliness on a par with any other 'race' of men, whether they were members of his crew or working in pursuit of their own goals. For Livingstone, manliness was earned through a willingness to work hard, to persevere and to uphold a righteous moral character. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he believed African men had the physical ability and the intellect necessary to display these qualities. He made this clear in his published and unpublished writings, which reveal that he often found African men to be more manly than the Britons he worked with in Africa. Although Livingstone was not free from racial intolerance, among Victorians his attitudes towards Africans were radical and they separated him from most of his contemporaries.

Throughout this study, I argue that Livingstone's conception of 'race' challenged

orthodox Victorian opinion about the 'nature' of Africans and African society in a number of complex and unconventional ways. For example, his contention that African men could be manly was reflective of the fact that he believed Africans were equal to and the same as his British compatriots in many different ways. He may have believed that most African societies were politically, socially and spiritually 'backward' in comparison with the 'civilized' nations of Europe. Throughout his writings, however, Livingstone asserted that all Africans had the inherent capacity to 'rise' to the level of the most 'civilized' and 'cultured' societies. He even went as far as to declare that the British settler society in the Cape Colony was more 'backward' and less 'civilized' than the different African peoples of South Africa. This belief motivated, in part, Livingstone's support for the anti-colonial struggles of the Xhosa and Khoikhoi against the British Crown during his time in South Africa.

As I demonstrate in my examination of the Livingstone historiography, his unconventional conception of African manliness and his radical racial politics have long been buried in a potent myth that has obscured his view of Africans, empire and manliness. As a result, he continues to be seen in popular culture, not as a radical Victorian, but as a defender of British racial 'superiority,' a fervent imperialist, a zealous missionary and a symbol of the 'masculine' drive to explore and to 'civilize' Africa.

### 1.1 Manliness, Race and Empire in the Historiography of David Livingstone

David Livingstone was one of the foremost heroes of the Victorian period. Born in



1813 in the Scottish mill town of Blantyre, he overcame the hardships of working class life by toiling throughout his youth in the town's mill and by striving to receive the education he needed to attend university. In 1841, Livingstone arrived in Africa ready to make his mark as a missionary-doctor. Fifteen years later, he had become the first European to cross Africa, attaining great fame and influence in the process. His reputation waned somewhat after his failed Zambesi Expedition (1858-1863). However, during his seven-year search for the source of the Nile, his name rarely disappeared from British newspapers. When news came during the summer of 1872 that he had been 'found' alive and well by Henry Morton Stanley, interest in Livingstone was brought to a fever-pitch. Stanley's subsequent characterization of the elusive hero's capacity to prevail against the difficulties of exploration brought Livingstone's name and character to the forefront of British public discourse. News of Livingstone's April 1873 death in Africa reached Britain while Stanley's depiction of the explorer remained in the public eye. The subsequent story of the transport of his body from Central Africa by his faithful African crew, his funeral in Westminster Abbey and the publication of his *Last Journals*, edited by his friend Horace Waller, propelled Livingstone into a status close to sainthood. The efforts of William Blaikie, his first authorized biographer, only further strengthened the Livingstone legend. In death, Livingstone's name carried greater influence among his compatriots than he ever could have hoped. Enshrined in myth, he became an iconic symbol of the expanding British colonial empire in Africa. In a profusion of hagiographical biographies written for use in Sunday schools, boy scout meetings or missionary societies, Livingstone's desire to bring Christianity to Africa, his devotion to eradicating slavery and his ambition to open Africa to British 'civilization' were

cast as pivotal stimuli for the British colonization of Africa.

Imperialism needed its heroes and archetypes. As a result, the Livingstone represented in the plethora of popular and scholarly biographies published while Britain held colonies in Africa conveniently fit the mould of the colonial hero and explorer archetype. Moreover, as a reflection and a tool of the exigencies of the British empire, the dominant representation and the public perception of Livingstone changed little during the colonial period and even in its aftermath. The Livingstone of today remains a mythological figure, vaguely associated with Stanley and the historical and theoretical presumptions about the Victorian 'missionary' and the 'explorer' in Africa. While Livingstone himself is now rarely studied, the mythic Livingstone has become a handy trope in the efforts of many post-colonial theorists to universalise the views, aims, ambitions and experiences of white, male colonial figures.

In many ways, this study began as an attempt to confirm and provide depth to the Livingstone myth. Informed by post-colonial theory, a gendered understanding of my subject, and with a critical eye towards the Livingstone historiography, I expected that my study would add historical weight to the view that Livingstone was a racially intolerant apologist for empire who revelled in the gender, racial and national 'superiority' he believed he enjoyed in Africa. I gauged that my research would uncover that Livingstone shared a common outlook with other explorers and missionaries in Africa on issues related to manliness, race and colonialism. For example, I anticipated that Livingstone and explorers like Burton and Stanley - despite different influences and prejudices - together contributed to a powerful normative construction of 'the African' which embodied a similar set of racist,

masculinist and imperialist principles and ideas.

In 1976, an annotated bibliographical study listed close to 650 popular and scholarly biographies, book chapters, journal articles and other published sources dealing with Livingstone.<sup>8</sup> The study's author admitted that this was not a complete list.<sup>9</sup> He realized that so much had been written about Livingstone that cataloguing every published work would be an enduring endeavour. Indeed, although the Livingstone 'industry' has slowed considerably in the past quarter century, many more publications could be added to the bibliography. To influence the production of such a great number of publications, Livingstone's name - and what were represented as his ideas - must have had great symbolic value for many people over a long historical period.

In the vast Livingstone historiography how have writers characterized his manliness, represented his view of Africans and framed his colonial ideas? How has the Livingstone myth been constructed, fostered and questioned? The Livingstone historiography can be divided into four epochs: 1) the period during his search for the source of the Nile and the aftermath of his death when the Livingstone myth was forged by Stanley, Waller and Blaikie; 2) the long colonial era in Africa during which the dominant representation of Livingstone

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<sup>8</sup> See James A. Casada, *Dr. David Livingstone and Sir Henry Morton Stanley: An Annotated Bibliography*, Garland Publishing: New York, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> Casada was proved correct two years later when another bibliographical study of Livingstone appeared. B.W. Lloyd and J. Lashbrook compiled a list of 189 Livingstone bibliographies, 297 published articles and 207 other book length studies, articles and other works relating to Livingstone that had been published up to 1975 (for a total of 693 published sources). Note that this total did not include the high number of revised editions of Livingstone biographies, many of which went into multiple editions. See B.W. Lloyd and J. Lashbrook, *A Bibliography of Published Works by and About David Livingstone 1843-1975*, University of Cape Town Libraries: Cape Town, 1978.

changed little, arguably as a reflection of the ideological needs of empire; 3) the post-colonial period, marked the centenary of Livingstone's death, when scholars questioned his 'saintliness' and other aspects of his character, but only cursorily re-examined his racial views and colonial theories; 4) the current period (the subject of section 1.2) dominated by the attempts of post-colonial theorists to analyse the racial and gender power of 'colonizers' like Livingstone.

Chapter Seven is devoted to an in-depth analysis of how the Livingstone myth was shaped and strengthened in the last years of his life and in the aftermath of his death. As the chapter demonstrates, it was a complex process involving a number of different figures, sources and events. However, the key actors (apart from Livingstone) in constructing both the myth and the normative perceptions of Livingstone's manliness, his view of Africans and his colonial vision were Stanley, Waller and Blaikie.

After finding Livingstone in Ujiji, a town on eastern shores of Lake Tanganyika in October 1871, journalist Henry Stanley spent five months with the subject of his quest before travelling to Britain to publicize his story. When Stanley arrived in London in July 1872, public interest in Livingstone - which had steadily grown throughout his search for the Nile's source - rose to a sensational level. When Stanley's *How I Found Livingstone* was published a few months later it quickly became one of the most successful books written by an explorer during the nineteenth century. Whether it was a calculated design or an outpouring of pure reverence, Stanley clearly wanted to exalt Livingstone in the pages of the book. For Stanley, the venerable explorer was an archetype to be emulated, a hero whose example of manliness presented a model for future generations (of men) to follow. In many ways, Stanley captured

a Livingstone who refused 'to be beaten by difficulties.' For Stanley, a sense of duty above all called Livingstone to action, while his perseverance in pursuit of his goals reflected his heroic nature. In the narrative, Stanley places little emphasis on the success of Livingstone's explorations, stressing instead the strength of character involved in his determination to achieve his goals. He is shown to continually persevere during the expedition despite the desertion of all but his most faithful crew members, the theft of his supplies and medicines, innumerable bouts of malaria and dysentery and the actions of the hostile slave traders who often crossed his path. According to Stanley, this refusal to quit is what made Livingstone "a very fine example of the perseverance, doggedness, and tenacity which characterise the Anglo-Saxon spirit."<sup>10</sup>

In celebrating Livingstone's heroic manliness, *How I Found Livingstone* also worked to minimize the hierarchies and inequalities of colonial relationships. For example, in depicting Livingstone's treatment of his African crew as kindly and altruistic, Stanley set the tone for later representations of the explorer's view of and relationship with Africans. According to Stanley, Livingstone had earned the "respect" of his crew and the many other Africans he had encountered through "his uniform kindness and mild, pleasant temper."<sup>11</sup> In Stanley's estimation Livingstone also deserved to be praised because he was "charmed [by] the primitive simplicity of" Africans and was willing to see "virtue where others [saw]

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<sup>10</sup> H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, Harper and Brothers: New York, 1873, f.p. 1872, p. 355.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 354-355. Note that Stanley became famous for beating and shackling his African crew members. This is discussed in more depth in Chapter Seven.

nothing but savagery.<sup>12</sup> In these terms, Livingstone was clearly superior to the ‘ignorant savages’ around him, yet because of his compassion he was able to see qualities in Africans that others whites could not. This simplistic characterization of Livingstone’s racial tolerance not only worked to ennoble his manliness, it also proved to be highly influential. Stanley’s description of Livingstone’s gentle, benign treatment of Africans was perpetuated widely in later biographies. Yet, Stanley’s portrayal also inhibited any significant debate among biographers about Livingstone’s complex view of Africans or his convictions about ‘race.’ As a result, the representation of his racial views in *How I Found Livingstone* ultimately worked to sustain myths about African ‘inferiority’ and difference rather than challenge these stereotypes. Livingstone’s condemnation of racial intolerance held the promise of provoking discussion about British colonial policy in Africa. Instead, Stanley’s superficial representation of his racial views relegated Africans to the role of stock figures and objects of colonial rule. Moreover, in casting Livingstone as a benevolent white Christian working to bring British goodwill and prosperity to Africans, Stanley presented an Africa free of racial intolerance and ready for ‘compassionate’ colonial rule. In his view, Livingstone’s relationship with Africans had created a precedent for future relations between the ‘benevolent’ nations of the world and the ‘indigent’ peoples of Africa. Generating a bond between his own ‘civilized’ culture and a ‘primitive’ people, Livingstone’s explorations opened the way for other explorers and missionaries to bring ‘light’ to what Stanley clearly cast as a ‘dark continent.’<sup>13</sup> Livingstone had become a Victorian hero long before his

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>13</sup> For further analysis of these issues see Chapter Seven, section 7.3.

meeting with Stanley. However, *How I Found Livingstone* clarified, strengthened and immortalized the public perception of the explorer. Stanley provided a potent characterization of a man he cast as an archetype of manliness, a role model for the colonization of Africa that was soon to come.

In returning to Britain after his time in Africa, Stanley had carried the journals Livingstone had kept throughout his six year search for the source of the Nile. Two years later and only a few months after Livingstone's death his *Last Journals* were published. Edited and in some cases re-written by Horace Waller, the *Last Journals* secured the perception of Livingstone as a saintly and persevering pathfinder who gave his life to achieve the goals of bringing 'civilization' and Christianity to the 'benighted' of Africa. Waller, who was a close friend of Livingstone's, had been faced with an arduous task. In preparing the journals for publication, he was obliged to excise the often hostile and paranoid rantings of an aging explorer worn by years of dysentery, malnourishment and malarial fevers. In what was unpublished, Livingstone had accused his greatest supporters, closest friends and dearest family members of deception and disloyalty. He returned repeatedly to incidents of a decade before to attack the integrity of other missionaries and explorers whom he had worked with in Africa. Waller also removed potentially damaging sections of the journal in which Livingstone admitted to disciplining his African crew.<sup>14</sup>

Livingstone understood the value of his reputation and during his lifetime he did all he could to protect his good name. Waller, who shared many of his friend's goals and ambitions for Africa, also appreciated the public value that could come with preserving and

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<sup>14</sup> These issues are discussed in detail in Chapter Seven, section 7.4.

even enhancing Livingstone's reputation and posthumous influence. Arguably as a result, Waller decided to use his creative powers to try to shape the public memory of Livingstone's last moments. It was his depiction of his friend's death that made perhaps the biggest impression on the book's readers, if not on Livingstone's saintly legacy. Waller constructed Livingstone's heavenly death scene out of a short statement by one of Livingstone's dedicated African crew members who had found the dead explorer kneeling by his bedside with his head on a pillow. He developed the man's account into an extended scene that depicted Livingstone stepping out of his death bed to kneel, then quietly passing away by his bedside after a final prayer that his life's work be completed. In his narrative in the *Last Journals*, Waller even managed to consecrate Livingstone as a saintly "He," whether he had intended to or not.<sup>15</sup> In addition to fashioning this noble ending to Livingstone's life, Waller succeeded in portraying his friend's last years in Africa as the culmination of a life dedicated to eradicating slavery, spreading Christianity and 'helping' Africans. Like Stanley, Waller cast Livingstone as a persevering and courageous example of manliness who was willing to endure any hardship in the effort to reach his goals. Moreover, Waller further developed the idea that Livingstone was a kindly and benevolent leader of Africans. Although he went much further than Stanley in casting Africans as hardworking, industrious and intelligent, Waller gave the impression that they developed these qualities only because of their association with and loyalty to Livingstone.

The Livingstone biography industry began to flourish after Livingstone's death and

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<sup>15</sup> See *The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa, from 1865 to his death*, edited by Horace Waller, Harper and Brothers: New York, 1875, f.p. 1874, pp. 512-513.



the publication of his *Last Journals*. However, the many books that were published in the immediate aftermath of his death were aimed at cashing in on the now lucrative market for easy-to-read, hagiographical synopses of Livingstone's life.<sup>16</sup> The first scholarly Livingstone biography, William Garden Blaikie's *The Personal Life of Livingstone*, was published in 1880. Granted full access to his unpublished letters and journals, Blaikie's book was also the first authorized Livingstone biography. In interpreting his subject's character in much the same vein as Stanley and Waller, Blaikie produced a highly popular portrait of Livingstone that smoothed over any faults in his character, presenting a picture of a saintly explorer courageously struggling to achieve his heroic ambitions for Africa. Armed with a desire to protect and promote Livingstone's reputation, Blaikie strove to put rumours to rest about Livingstone's ability to lead and work with other white men. He also glossed over Livingstone's failures (notably during his Zambesi Expedition), while glorifying his successes and extolling his ability to courageously persevere in pursuit of his goals.

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<sup>16</sup> Some examples include the anonymously published *Dr. David Livingstone: the great missionary traveller*, Adam: London, 1875 and *Wonders of Africa: The life history of Doctor Livingstone, the great explorer...*, J.E. Potter: Philadelphia, 1874; Henry Gardiner Adams, *The Weaver Boy who Became a Missionary*, J.S. Doidge: Douglas (Isle of Man), 1975; James Ritchie, *The Pictorial Life and Discoveries of David Livingstone*, 2 vols., A. Fullerton: London, 1876-1879; John S. Roberts, *The Life and Explorations. LL.D., complete so far as is known*, Adam: London, 1875; Josiah Tyler, *Livingstone Lost and Found: The life and life-work of Dr. David Livingstone, missionary, philanthropist and explorer*, Columbian Book Company: Hartford, 1874. Adams had been capitalizing on Livingstone for years, publishing his first biography in 1857 to profit from the popularity of Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* which had been published the same year. He revised the book under different titles after Livingstone's Zambesi Expedition and published several editions during the 1870s and 1880s in both Britain and North America. Roberts also published Livingstone books under different titles between 1874 and 1913. The works of Ritchie and Tyler were also re-published many times. All of these biographies relied significantly on Livingstone's own published works as well as Stanley's account of his journey to find Livingstone.

Blaikie concluded the biography by proclaiming that Livingstone had left a legacy in Africa that merited the worship of Africans grateful for his effort to bring ‘civilization’ to the continent. Stressing Livingstone’s ‘civilizing’ power and racial superiority, he asserted that the ‘real’ Livingstone in many ways resembled Christ and as the ‘father’ of a renewed Africa he was worthy of pilgrims to the mission stations where he had preached early in his missionary career.<sup>17</sup> For Blaikie, Livingstone, as a Jesus-like figure on African soil, ultimately provided a lived archetype for Africans to emulate in a future Africa ‘civilized’ by the British. Through Blaikie’s efforts, Livingstone had become an ideological bridge to the colonization of Africa, a saintly figure who could shepherd his ‘benighted’ flock of Africans into the ‘civilized’ world provided by British rule.

More than any biography, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone* strengthened the Livingstone myth, in providing weight to the accounts offered by Stanley and Waller and in confirming Livingstone’s standing as one of Britain’s great nineteenth century heroes. As Britain moved to colonize Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, scores of biographers writing to meet the demand for easy-to-read accounts of Livingstone’s life readily followed Blaikie’s portrait in casting the missionary-explorer as a catalyst for the new African empire. With the long absence of another biography that combined his insights and myth-making skills, Blaikie’s idealized representation of Livingstone’s life and ideas remained influential well into the twentieth century.

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<sup>17</sup> See William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, John Murray, London, 1905, f.p.1880. p. 397. For further analysis of Blaikie’s biography, see Chapter Seven, section 7.3.

During his Zambesi Expedition, Livingstone - in conjunction with two separate missionary societies - had tried to establish missions in Central Africa, not far from Victoria Falls, and in East Africa, in what is now Malawi. When these plans failed, Livingstone concentrated instead on his search for the source of the Nile. However, after his death, missionaries were inspired to return to East Africa to pursue his goal of founding a mission in the Shire Highlands, the region south of Lake Malawi where Livingstone had also hoped to build a small Christian colony. As a result, in 1875 the Livingstonia Mission was established by the Free Church of Scotland at the South end of Lake Malawi. The following year, the established Church of Scotland founded the Blantyre Mission (named after Livingstone's birthplace) in the Shire Highlands. In 1885, the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), the Anglican missionary society that had worked with Livingstone during the Zambesi Expedition to establish a mission in the Shire Highlands, returned to the region to build a mission station. In 1891, the region that is now the independent nation of Malawi became a British Protectorate and a small but important part of the rapidly growing British empire in Africa.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1884 Francois Coillard, who was Livingstone's brother-in-law, travelled to the region just west of Victoria Falls where Livingstone had earlier attempted to place a mission. Seven years later, Coillard convinced the Lozi King Lewanika to sign a treaty with Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company (BSAC). The Lozi nation was then 'incorporated' into Rhodes' Central African empire. In 1888, John Smith Moffat, who had

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<sup>18</sup> In 1893, the region was known as the British Central African Protectorate. In 1907, its named was changed to the Nyasaland Protectorate.

led a Livingstone-funded mission to the Ndebele people three decades earlier, was recruited by Rhodes to 'convince' the Ndebele King Lobengula to sign a 'peace' treaty with the BSAC.<sup>19</sup> Supported by a British National Charter, Rhodes and the BSAC later gained control of what is now Zimbabwe by conquering the Ndebele and the Shona nations during the 1890s. As Britain consolidated its African empire after 1885, this was a process that repeated itself throughout Central Africa. Missionaries who had once been 'loyal' to their congregations were regularly enlisted by the BSAC to engineer the 'submission' of once powerful 'chiefs.' Lewanika had been "eager for British 'protection' which he believed the BSAC was providing."<sup>20</sup> However, other rulers who refused to sign away their land and mineral rights were subdued by superior firepower. Clearly not all missionaries were active agents in this process, and indeed some actively opposed the efforts of Rhodes and BSAC. Nevertheless, by the turn-of-the-century much of South Central and Eastern Africa was brought under the direct control of either the British government or Rhodes' Crown sanctioned BSAC.

Many of the missionaries and a number of the 'empire-builders' who were a part of this movement to colonize and Christianize Africa had been inspired in some way by Livingstone. James Stewart, who helped found the Livingstonia Mission, had been motivated to come to Africa after reading Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* and he later

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<sup>19</sup> John Smith Moffat was also Livingstone's brother-in-law. Moffat's father Robert had first established relations with the Ndebele, who were led at the time by Mzilikazi.

<sup>20</sup> Timothy Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone: Exploration of an Imperial Myth*, Canongate Press: Edinburgh, 1993, p. 344.

worked with his hero on the Zambesi Expedition.<sup>21</sup> Harry Johnston, the first Commissioner to the British Central Africa Protectorate (Malawi) and an agent of the BSAC had declared that he had hoped to finish Livingstone's work in Africa.<sup>22</sup> Frederick Courteney Selous, a hunter and adventurer who had led the Pioneer Column of the BSAC against the Shona in 1890, proclaimed that he had been roused to travel to Africa after reading Livingstone's works.<sup>23</sup> Frederick Lugard, who was an instrumental figure in the British colonization of both Uganda and Nigeria, had been touched as a young man by Livingstone's *Last Journals* and was pegged by Horace Waller to be Livingstone's successor in Africa.<sup>24</sup> There are many other examples of Britons who were inspired by Livingstone or by the way he was represented by Stanley, Waller, Blaikie and the writers that came after them.

In many ways this study is an attempt to demonstrate that the colonization and Christianization of Africa after Livingstone's death were at odds and even antithetical to the

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<sup>21</sup> As John MacKenzie states: "It is difficult to find a missionary of the period who did not proclaim himself as called and inspired by the Livingstone story." See for example, Alexander Hetherwick, *The Romance of Blantyre: How Livingstone's Dream Came True*, James Clarke: London, 1932 and Robert Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, Oliver Boyd: Edinburgh, 1934. See also Sheila Brock, "James Stewart and David Livingstone," in *Livingstone: Man of Africa*, edited by Bridglal Pachai, Longman: London, 1973 and John M. MacKenzie, "David Livingstone: The Construction of the Myth," in *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Popular Culture in Modern Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1990, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup> John M. MacKenzie, "David Livingstone and the Worldly After-Life: Imperialism and Nationalism in Africa," in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, advisory editor John M. MacKenzie, National Gallery Publications: London, 1996, p. 208.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> See Margery Perham, *Lugard*, 2 vols., Collins: London, 1956-1960, vol. I, pp. 64, 71, 78-80 and Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking*, Ohio University Press: Athens, 1987, p. 326.

vision he had proffered for Africa. By examining issues including Livingstone's conception of colonialism, his certainty about the physical and intellectual capacities of Africans, his support for African nationalism and his condemnation of British rule in South Africa, the body of this study will make it clear that those who followed him to Africa rarely engendered the type of 'change' he had envisioned. Nevertheless, it is crucial here to recognize the power of the Livingstone myth to move his compatriots to action in Africa on one level and to publish and buy books in Britain on another. As Britain expanded and then sustained its colonial grip over Africa in the late-Victorian period, the idealized Livingstone became a clear cultural and ideological link to the British empire. There he remained comfortably, a formidable Victorian icon in the years leading up to the Great War, through the Depression and after the Second World War. As the empire historian John M. MacKenzie has stated: "Myths gain their power from repetition and demonstrate their strength through their continuing acceptability."<sup>25</sup> With his popular image as a brave, persevering, and manly Christian dedicated to spreading his faith and bringing 'benevolent' British 'civilization' to Africa, Livingstone was cast as the embodiment of heroic character in a variety of cultural and ideological settings. The Livingstone myth was both used and championed in popular biographies written for missionary societies like the UMCA and LMS, for boy scout organizations, as Sunday School textbooks and prizes and for more general audiences interested in Livingstone's life and African 'adventures.' As a result of the continuous need for and interest in the idealized Livingstone, many of the popular biographies stayed in print for decades, with a new introduction or conclusion often added to update the status of

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<sup>25</sup> MacKenzie, pp. 30-31.

Britain's colonial possessions or missionary influence.<sup>26</sup>

Because Livingstone was a Congregationalist, “he was virtually a Christian without a denomination.”<sup>27</sup> As MacKenzie attests, he thus “could be, and was, appropriated by any church - Scottish, Nonconformist, Anglican, even, through the efforts of Cardinal Lavigerie, Roman Catholic.”<sup>28</sup> Cast as the embodiment of the heroic missionary dedicated to expanding the boundaries of missionary influence, saving Africans from heathenism, introducing the gospel and crushing slavery, Livingstone was used by just about every missionary society in Africa to rouse Christians to greater righteousness. Books like *Livingstone the Pioneer* (a title used by more than one author), *David Livingstone as Bible Christian* (1913), *David Livingstone: Best Friend of Africa* (1902) and *David Livingstone: The Factory Boy who Became a Great Missionary* (1928), all attempted to inspire their readers in some way and perhaps even convince some to follow Livingstone's missionary path to Africa.<sup>29</sup> Like their hero and role model, those who answered the call to become missionaries could then “teach the gospel to the poor degraded natives” and help the British empire's great ‘civilizing’

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Stuart S. Starritt, *Livingstone the Pioneer*, Religious Tract Society: London, 1927; Elsie B. Walker, *Livingstone the Pioneer*, Congregational Union: London, 1925; Jane T. Stoddart, *David Livingstone as Bible Christian*, Hodder and Stoughton: London, 1913; Mary Palgrave, *David Livingstone: Best Friend of Africa*, Office of the Universities Mission to Central Africa: London, 1902 and James Joseph Ellis, *David Livingstone: The Factory Boy who became a Great Missionary*, Pickering and Inglis: Edinburgh, 1928.

mission in Africa.<sup>30</sup>

Many of these books were written in a way to make them accessible to both older and younger readers. However, there was also a large market for evangelically themed Livingstone biographies aimed specifically at young people. For example, the non-denominational Sunday School Union, which had functioned primarily as a publishing house and bookseller since its inception in 1803, published several Livingstone titles aimed at British youth. These hagiographical books cast Livingstone as a saintly role model who used his faith to overcome the seemingly insurmountable obstacles in his path. His perseverance and moral righteousness were emphasized presumably to awaken the passion and imagination of young readers who might be roused to emulate Livingstone's heroic character in their daily lives. D.K Gregory, who wrote several of these books, including *David Livingstone: Weaver Boy, Missionary, Explorer* (n.d.), essentially created children's versions of Blaikie's biography. He excluded the often long excerpts of Livingstone's writing that Blaikie had included and instead underscored the missionary-explorer's boyhood work ethic, his commitment to using exploration to further missionary influence and his determination to end the slave trade. Gregory, like a number of these authors, also followed Blaikie's lead in characterizing Livingstone as a Christ-like figure in Africa. "The greatest legacy ever bequeathed to Africa," he declared, "was the spotless name of David Livingstone, whose upright, consistent Christian character, and patient continuance in well-doing, won the sympathy and confidence of its people. The charm of his name smoothed the path of those who came after him, for his early and life-long prayer that he might resemble

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<sup>30</sup> Ellis, *David Livingstone: The Factory Boy who became a Great Missionary*, p. 33.



Christ, had been indeed fulfilled.”<sup>31</sup>

To reach an even greater percentage of young readers, the authors and publishers of Livingstone biographies also produced more secular books. These were texts that might be used at boy-scout meetings or given as school prizes. While the evangelical nature of Livingstone’s work was not overlooked, authors accentuated his explorative adventures and achievements. In stressing the dangers and adversities that Livingstone had to overcome on his journeys, they usually relied on simplistic stereotypes of Africa and Africans. These works also emphasized the power and authority Livingstone attained as an explorer, with his explorative journeys held as a pivotal stimulus for British colonization of the lands he had mapped. These features are found, for example, in Basil Mathews’ *Livingstone: The Pathfinder* (1912), one of the best-selling Livingstone biographies during the first half of the twentieth century. The book was written in a style intended to be read aloud by groups, a scouting troop for example, “round a forest camp fire.”<sup>32</sup> With references throughout the text to Livingstone as a scout, Mathews was clearly attempting to cast his subject as an archetype for British (and North American) boy scouts to follow. He asked his readers to envision how Livingstone “had travelled in canoes hollowed by savages from the trunks of trees ... while

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<sup>31</sup> B.K. Gregory, *David Livingstone: Weaver Boy, Missionary, Explorer*, The National Sunday School Union, London, no date, p. 157. Gregory published a book on Livingstone under a different title for the Sunday School Union in 1896. A revised edition of the same book was published in 1929.

<sup>32</sup> Basil Mathews, *Livingstone: The Pathfinder*, Oxford University Press: Edinburgh, 1932, f.p. 1912, pp. 12-13. First published in 1912, Mathews’ book was into its 13<sup>th</sup> edition by 1932. Revised editions were also published as late as 1954 and 1960. A Welsh version of the book was published in 1914. See B.W. Lloyd and J. Lashbrook, *A Bibliography of Published Works by and About David Livingstone*, p. 29.

his African companions chanted quaint melodies, as they paddled along the steaming river.... [How he] again and again had been in desperate peril from savage beasts and from wild men, who had always hated all those people beyond their own tribe till they looked into his brave eyes.”<sup>33</sup> As Mathews ‘enlightened’ his readers: “Nothing could stop the pathfinder of Africa, the hero-scout, till his quest had ended.... Our tribe-of-the-world-scattered Anglo-Saxon tribe has no greater than this dauntless and chivalrous pathfinder.”<sup>34</sup>

Mathews’ biography for younger readers, like the studies aimed at a more mature audience, advanced the conviction that Livingstone was synonymous with Africa. Colonial era writers - and presumably many of their readers - embraced the idea that Livingstone’s explorations had laid the groundwork for the subsequent flow of missionaries into the African interior and the eventual colonization of many of the lands he had ‘first’ explored. According to biographer R.B. Dawson, for instance, Livingstone “*made* Africa as we know it today. He was the great pioneer...”<sup>35</sup> In *Livingstone: The Hero of Africa* (1918), Dawson made it clear that he firmly believed that “the reason why British Central Africa is a liveable place today, and why we count it [as] one of the most valuable parts of our Empire, is because Livingstone went there first and took all the dangers and disagreeables upon his own shoulders.”<sup>36</sup> For Dawson, Livingstone’s explorations had effectively “opened up a path for

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> R.B. Dawson, *Livingstone: The Hero of Africa*, Seeley, Service and Co. Ltd., London, 1929, f.p. 1918, p. 18, emphasis in original.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

civilization in those dark places,” subject to “horrible cruelties” and ruled by “savage kings.”<sup>37</sup> In quantitative terms, he calculated that Livingstone “added just about one million square miles to the known parts of the world. He discovered the great lakes and rivers which now form a highway into the very heart of Africa.”<sup>38</sup> If this was not enough, Dawson declared that Livingstone’s “energy made possible all the commerce and prosperity of modern Africa.”<sup>39</sup> The hyperbole in these statements is obvious. Yet, Dawson’s glorification of his subject also reveals the importance that Livingstone’s biographers attributed to his role in the formation and the subsequent strength of the British empire in Central Africa.

Faced with the continued idealization of Livingstone, some writers wondered openly what there was left to write about when dealing with such a ‘flawless’ hero. For instance, in *Livingstone* (1936), David Sommervell wrote:

No modern writer has yet to achieve a reputation for brilliance with a ‘Life of Livingstone’, and the reason is not hard to find. Never was there a hero less in need of a psycho-analyst. Livingstone’s character was as sound as his physique. He was a man of an extraordinarily firm, steady, wholesome temperament, a marvel of saintliness, but equally a marvel of efficiency and common sense. Such a man does not flatter his biographer. There are not weaknesses to probe, no secrets to explore, nothing to be clever about.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever their intended audience, the biographies of Livingstone published during the colonial period in Africa - from 1885 to the early 1960s - both fed off and furthered the Livingstone myth. Yet, despite the plethora of similar books, as British colonialism in Africa

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>40</sup> David Sommervell, *Livingstone*, Camelot Press: London, 1936, p. 10.

reached its nadir, there were occasional scholarly attempts to dispute received ideas about Livingstone. For example, in his important 1955 review article "As Men are Everywhere Else," anthropologist Max Gluckman challenged the way Livingstone's biographers had characterized Africans in their studies. Gluckman remarked that both scholarly and more popular studies of Livingstone had "neglected" or oversimplified the missionary-explorer's views on Africans and questions of race.<sup>41</sup> While some authors had noted "the absence of prejudice from Livingstone's observations," in his view, they did not push "the argument far enough."<sup>42</sup> In lauding Livingstone's relationship with Africans, these authors were simply adding to the "mystique" surrounding an heroic figure, without actually analysing how he viewed Africans or African society.<sup>43</sup> As a result, "in most accounts of his explorations, the Africans appear too much as painted figures on a backdrop - savage, warlike, superstitious, slaving, but won over by Livingstone's personality. Livingstone is built up till he dwarfs thousands of Africans, who are dismissed as tyrannical chiefs, sufferers from slavers, slavers themselves - or helpful headmen by the way."<sup>44</sup> In response, Gluckman argued that there was a clear solution to this simplistic approach to racial matters in the Livingstone literature. Scholars and popular biographers simply had to take a deeper look at the large collection of writings he left behind. As Gluckman asserts, after a long career in Africa, Livingstone's

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<sup>41</sup> Max Gluckman, "As Men are Everywhere Else," *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, Vol. 20, 1957, p. 68. The article was originally broadcast on the B.B.C. in 1954 and published in the *Listener* in 1955.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

writings revealed a wealth of opinion about different African peoples, African socio-political systems and the differences and affinities between blacks and whites.

Gluckman himself provided some important groundwork to explore these areas in future studies of Livingstone. In analysing a statement by Livingstone about the inherent similarities between “men” of different races, he argued that the explorer “brought to his observations of African life and society a balanced open mind, plus the care with which he collected his geographical data.”<sup>45</sup> For Gluckman, “these qualities [made] everything he wrote on Africa a century ago so valuable as records for both historian and anthropologist.”<sup>46</sup> To add further credence to this point, he contrasted Livingstone’s telling response to a claim about African barbarity made by Richard Burton. As Gluckman attested: “Burton once said that African mothers lacked maternal feelings and would sell their children to slavers for a few beads.”<sup>47</sup> In response, “Livingstone commented that this view was based on a single incident; and that one might similarly argue that English mothers lacked maternal feelings because some foundlings were abandoned by their parents.”<sup>48</sup> As this example revealed, Livingstone had the ability to transcend the usual conceptions of racial difference that characterized the convictions of most other explorers and commentators on Africa. Moreover, as Gluckman made clear, a directed and thorough reading of Livingstone would disclose that he often challenged stereotypical notions about Africa and African ‘inferiority.’

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Yet, as he also warned, Livingstone was not infallible. There were contradictions in how he viewed and treated Africans. For Gluckman, it was thus crucial to examine the African societies that Livingstone explored in their own right to better understand his actions and the expectations of the different African peoples he worked with and wrote about. On these grounds, Gluckman's remarks served as a challenge to future students of both the mythic missionary-explorer and African history to beware of the inherent complexities involved in analysing questions of 'race' and empire.

Gluckman's article was actually a review of two scholarly studies of Livingstone: Jack Simmons' *Livingstone and Africa* and Frank Debenham's *The Way to Ilala: David Livingstone's Pilgrimage* (both published in 1955). In discussing the former, Gluckman had noted that Simmons had stressed "the absence of prejudice from Livingstone's observations on Africans."<sup>49</sup> But, as Gluckman realized, this was simply another hollow attempt to "illustrate the man's character, and to praise it."<sup>50</sup> He remarked that the two studies simply reinforced negative stereotypes about Africans rather than providing any depth of analysis of Livingstone's racial politics. Yet, what Gluckman failed to observe was that Debenham's book had actually been subsidized by the British South Africa Company, or one of its subsidiaries.<sup>51</sup> In 1953, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, the two British colonies first ruled by the BSAC, had formed a Federation with British Nyasaland (Malawi). Debenham's study, along with Michel Gelfand's *Livingstone the Doctor* (1957), were aimed in part at

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> See Holmes, p. 349.

demonstrating how Livingstone's explorations and colonial vision had created a foundation for the 'benevolent' rule of the new Federation. Not only did these works buttress the Livingstone myth, they also served the clear ideological purpose of using his name and reputation to justify the continued colonization of Central Africa.

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The late 1950s and early 1960s marked the growth and success of African independence movements across Britain's African empire. This period of de-colonization also signalled the first significant reduction in the Livingstone 'industry.' With the coming of African independence, the moralizing of missionary societies had become suspect and young British boys were no longer being brought up to be empire-builders. The secularized post-colonial world was populated by new and different heroes and the need for the saintly Livingstone faded. With the publication of several volumes of Livingstone's previously unpublished letters and journals, scholars were given the opportunity to re-evaluate and question the long-dominant understanding of his life and ideas. Nevertheless, a far smaller number of Livingstone biographies were published during the 1960s than at any point since his death. Moreover, the Scottish National Memorial to David Livingstone, established at his birthplace in Blantyre in 1929, began to experience a steep decline in attendance during the decade.<sup>52</sup>

The most significant scholarly study of Livingstone during the 1960s was not a

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<sup>52</sup> MacKenzie writes that after its opening, "attendance figures at the Blantyre Memorial swiftly exceeded expectation. Visitor figures of 90,000 per annum were soon being recorded, remarkable for the period." See MacKenzie, "David Livingstone: The Construction of the Myth," pp. 38-39.

biographical work, but a relatively brief analysis of his conception of colonialism. In *Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society, 1840-1890* (1965), Alan Cairns offered what was arguably the first scholarly critique of Livingstone's colonial vision. Following Gluckman, he made important conclusions about some of the ways he believed Livingstone's colonization schemes affected Africans. According to Cairns, Livingstone's colonial theories "represented perhaps the most thorough attempt of the period to present an ordered analysis of the methods to be employed in putting the African on the path to advancement."<sup>53</sup> He granted that in travelling this path, Africans would have to embrace Christianity and some British cultural values. Yet, he argued that, unlike most other Victorian commentators on Africa, Livingstone's "thought was unsullied by serious inhibiting doubts about the capacity of ... Africans to improve [their] position" if given the opportunity.<sup>54</sup> In comparing Livingstone with other explorers, missionaries and colonial officials in Africa, Cairns judged that "his breadth of vision, and his kindly, if paternal, relationship with Africans, marked him as an example of the contact which had been all too rare in the meeting of the white man and his differently pigmented, technologically backward neighbours."<sup>55</sup> However, for Cairns, Livingstone's "unprejudiced tolerant approach to the African" was not matched by a tenable settlement plan that would bring about the change to

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<sup>53</sup> H. Alan C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society, 1840-1890*, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1965, p. 197.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.



Africa - and for Africans - that he so desired.<sup>56</sup> In Cairns' view, Livingstone did not go far enough in explaining his conception of African social change. As a result, "his theories of African advance suffer[ed] seriously from an oversimplification which largely rob[bed] them of value."<sup>57</sup> Cairns thus provided a trenchant criticism of Livingstone's vision, while at the same time noting the distinction between his view of Africans and the more intolerant thinking of the day. Although, Livingstone had dedicated his life to 'helping' Africans, Cairns made it clear that the missionary-explorer failed to leave a clear blueprint behind for others to follow if they hoped to put his vision of Africa into place. As Cairns' analysis hints, this created the opportunity for later colonizers to perhaps unscrupulously profit from this lack of clarity in Livingstone's thinking in using his heroic name to forge a different future for Africa.

The 1973 centenary of Livingstone's death marked an important and substantial renewal of interest in his life. To coincide with the centenary, several biographies along with collections of scholarly articles were published, with a number aiming to challenge the idealized representation of Livingstone. One author argued that Livingstone had claimed 'discoveries' and or exploits as his own that rightly belonged to other explorers.<sup>58</sup> A biographer declared that Livingstone's "intrinsic ambivalence, his follies and sublimities,

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Judith Listowel, *The Other Livingstone*, Julian Friedman: London, 1973. By examining Livingstone's relationship with fellow Briton William Oswell, the Hungarian László Magyar and the Portuguese explorers Antonio da Silva Porto and Candido Cardoza, Listowel concludes (most often accurately) that these men played an important and largely unknown role in assisting and sometimes prefacing some of Livingstone's 'discoveries.'

were manifestations of a manic depressive disorder ... that sometimes ... verged on the psychotic.”<sup>59</sup> The same author also suggested that Livingstone may have been “accompanied [on his travels] by a half caste-son” he had fathered after his wife Mary’s death in 1862.<sup>60</sup> Another scholar identified Livingstone as a “nineteenth century hippy and spy [who] thoroughly enjoyed the fleshpots of Central Africa.”<sup>61</sup> A number of the studies from the period characterized Livingstone as insensitive, even heartless, about the suffering of his compatriots in Africa. He was shown to have great difficulties working with other white men on his journeys. Some questioned his qualities as a husband and father. He was criticized for being reckless, inefficient and negligent as an explorer. It became clear that as a missionary he had managed to convert only one African, who soon lapsed from a Christian path.

Tim Jeal’s *Livingstone* (1973) was by far the most significant work to emerge from the centenary and it remains arguably the most important study of Livingstone to date. Jeal attempted a wholesale re-evaluation of Livingstone’s life by consulting a number of overlooked (through mostly long available) sources. The biography collected the strands of

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<sup>59</sup> Oliver Ransford, *David Livingstone: The Dark Interior*, John Murray: London, 1978, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300. A similar report surfaced in international newspapers in February 2000. See Christina Lamb, “Dr. Livingstone’s African love-child, chiefs presume,” *National Post* (Canada), February 28, 2000. This story is a reprint from *The Sunday Telegraph*. A thorough reading of Livingstone’s unpublished letters demonstrates that there is no credence to this report. It is unlikely that all reference to the child could have been excised from his letters and omitted by Stanley in everything he wrote about Livingstone.

<sup>61</sup> Walter R. Ochieng, “Editorial” in the *Kenya Historical Review*, Vol. II, 1974, p. ii. See Roy Bridges rejoinder to Ochieng’s comments in volume III of the journal, pp. 6-11.

testimony previously confirming the shortcomings in Livingstone's character and added an abundance of new ammunition to substantiate his claim that his subject was a deeply flawed man. Yet, Jeal exaggerated Livingstone's character faults throughout the book in an iconoclastic attempt to question his motives and decisions as an missionary, explorer and expedition leader.<sup>62</sup> In the end, however, Jeal still concluded that Livingstone was a hero, despite his many warts.

Notwithstanding the sheer quantity of his research, Jeal provided only a brief analysis of Livingstone's views on the question of colonialism and spent even less time addressing his racial attitudes. When he does explore his subject's treatment and view of Africans, for example, his analysis is often simplistic and contradictory. Jeal seems to believe that Livingstone's relationships with and opinion of Africans was generally determined by his mood or state of health. If his health was good or his explorations were proceeding as planned, he spoke well of Africans. However, if he was afflicted with malaria or frustrated by unforeseen circumstances his opinion and treatment of Africans was often negative.<sup>63</sup> In a brief investigation of Livingstone's "writing about Africans," Jeal also erroneously argued that Livingstone asserted a general belief in the inferiority of Africans between 1851 and 1853.<sup>64</sup> As I demonstrate in Chapter Three, Livingstone expressed some of his most radical opinions about Africans during this period.

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<sup>62</sup> I examine and often take issue with Jeal's judgements about Livingstone in the upcoming chapters.

<sup>63</sup> See Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. 145-146.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

In contrast to Jeal, other scholars during the centenary period attempted to reach a greater understanding of the racial issues that Livingstone addressed in his writings. For example, in "Livingstone and Race," Andrew C. Ross concluded that Livingstone challenged the dominant racial attitudes of his day. Ross placed Livingstone's ideas about Africans in a more politicized context than other commentators. To this end, he argued that Jeal had paid little attention to Livingstone's early years in South Africa (1841-1853) and had also undervalued the importance of evangelicalism in his system of belief.<sup>65</sup> For Ross, Livingstone's liberal concept of race was based "firmly in the Evangelical tradition" of Britons such as abolitionist leader William Wilberforce and London Missionary Society superintendent John Philip.<sup>66</sup> In his view, these evangelicals believed that "all men shared the same humanity" and that "skin colour was less important than whether [a person] was a believer or not."<sup>67</sup> Acting on these ideas, "Wilberforce, Philip and Livingstone all agreed that Christians ought both to attempt to understand culture and politics and also to get involved in them."<sup>68</sup> According to Ross, this conviction led Livingstone to oppose the Boer conquest of the Transvaal during his career as a missionary in Southern Africa. But, more importantly for Ross, the desire to become involved in South African racial politics meant that Livingstone "clearly was willing to support African people in a struggle for

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<sup>65</sup> Andrew C. Ross, "Livingstone and Race," *David Livingstone and Africa*, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh: Edinburgh, 1973, p. 71.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* The views of both men, and Philip in particular, are examined later in this study.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

independence against the British” during this period of his life.<sup>69</sup> Ross provided little documentary evidence for Livingstone’s activism on behalf of South Africans. His point, however, was that Livingstone’s view of race - his belief in the essential equality of all ‘races’ - led him to decry the injustices faced by Africans in the Cape Colony and elsewhere in colonial Africa.

Although many of Ross’ conclusions in “Livingstone and Race” were somewhat tentative and often lacked substantive documentary support, he pointed to a number of long (and still) ignored issues in the Livingstone historiography.<sup>70</sup> More recent scholars, and post-colonial critics in particular, have failed to pick up on the important questions he raised about Livingstone’s racial politics. In Chapters Two and Three, I explore Livingstone’s complex response to the debates about ‘race’ and African rights in South Africa during the 1840s and early 1850s.

After the centenary, scholarly interest in Livingstone decreased significantly. As a result, there have been few scholarly studies of the missionary-explorer in the last quarter-century. In *Livingstone’s Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking* (1987), historian Dorothy Helly examined Waller’s role in the production of the mythic Livingstone through his editorship of the *Last Journals*.<sup>71</sup> By comparing Livingstone’s original journal

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>70</sup> Twenty-seven years after “Livingstone and Race,” Ross came to similar conclusions in “David Livingstone: The Man Behind the Mask,” in *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, 1799-1999*, edited by John de Gruchy, Ohio University Press: Athens, 2000.

<sup>71</sup> Helly’s analysis of Waller’s editorial role is further discussed in Chapter Seven.

entries with Waller's edits and the published product, Helly revealed that Waller had played a significant role in shaping Livingstone's saintly image. Throughout her analysis, Helly was cognizant of the issue of 'race' in the Victorian period. In examining Waller's edits to the *Last Journals* with this issue in mind, she provided a thorough examination of Livingstone's treatment of the Africans under his command during his search for the Nile's source. However, in invoking Gluckman, she provided only a brief explanation of Livingstone's more general racial attitudes. Like previous commentators, Helly stressed the importance of examining his views in the context of their time.<sup>72</sup> For Helly, this method of analysis would differentiate Livingstone from other (unnamed) thinkers of his day. In her view:

From our late twentieth-century vantage point, many of Livingstone's views make him look like a nineteenth-century racist. At the same time, it is easy to identify nineteenth-century racists of a more blatant and pernicious kind, beside whom Livingstone and his opinions represent a call for better understanding of Africans on their own terms.... When we examine closely what Livingstone thought, we can draw clear distinctions between his views and the more vicious racist thinking of his day.<sup>73</sup>

In *Livingstone's Legacy*, Helly only briefly compared Livingstone's racial attitudes with those of other Victorian explorers and missionaries. However, her advice acts as a valuable guideline for future research into Livingstone's thinking about racial and colonial issues. Livingstone's ideas about the capacity of Africans for 'advancement' differed

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<sup>72</sup> In a 1973 article, historian George Shepperson argued Livingstone was a "child of his time" who might be perceived as a racist by late twentieth century commentators. See "David Livingstone, 1813-1873: A Centenary Assessment," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 139, Part 2, June 1973, p. 211.

<sup>73</sup> Helly, pp. 198-197.

fundamentally from most of his Victorian contemporaries. Viewed in a late-twentieth century context, his views about Africans seem paternalistic, often arrogant and sometimes racist. However, in historical context his attitudes take on far greater meaning and evince extensive value to the historian interested in questions of 'race' and imperialism. It is debatable whether all Victorians were racists, but it is clear that all Victorians were not equally racially intolerant.

The most recent text to examine Livingstone is *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa* (1996), edited by John M. MacKenzie. Containing half a dozen articles by scholars in different fields, the book was published in conjunction with a major exhibition organized by the National Portrait Gallery in London and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh. The articles provide a good introduction to various facets of Livingstone's life and his place in the Victorian culture of exploration. However, the contributions of the scholars are overshadowed by the artwork, maps and memorabilia catalogued in the book. In many ways the articles are noteworthy for the questions and themes that are avoided, rather than the issues that are addressed in the book. In a text devoted to Livingstone, Africa and Victorian exploration, there is little attention paid to his colonial theories or attitudes towards Africans and Africa. Interestingly, one of the articles, Tim Barringer's "Livingstone and Visual Image, 1850-1874," does briefly examine Livingstone in a gendered context. Barringer argued, for example, that "Livingstone's amalgam of active heroism and religious conviction singled him out as the ultimate muscular

Christian to the Victorian reading public.”<sup>74</sup> Yet, Barringer went no further than this in his analysis of Livingstone’s masculinity. He judged that Livingstone fit the Victorian muscular Christian model without examining the model itself and without contemplating Livingstone’s own conception of manliness.

It is evident from my exploration of the Livingstone historiography that his manliness or masculinity have largely been assumed by his biographers, rather than discussed or analysed. My larger examination of Stanley’s representation of Livingstone in Chapter Seven demonstrates how he and other commentators championed Livingstone’s manliness during the last years of the explorer’s life. However, after the Livingstone myth had been developed by Stanley, Waller and Blaikie, biographers largely left his manliness to speak for itself. African exploration, after all, was widely imagined to be the domain of the bravest, most indomitable men! Writers and publishers of most colonial era Livingstone biographies seemed to conclude that if the greatest explorers were not archetypes of manliness, then who was. Even Thomas Hughes, the principal proponent of muscular Christianity and the author of *Tom Brown’s School Days* (1857) and *The Manliness of Christ* (1879) avoided any specific analysis of Livingstone’s manliness in his highly derivative 1889 biography of the explorer. Rather than attempt to cast Livingstone as an example of muscular Christianity or place his ‘manliness’ in another context, Hughes simply repeated many of Blaikie’s descriptions of Livingstone’s ‘heroic’ qualities.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Tim Barringer, “Fabricating Africa: Livingstone and the Visual Image 1850-1874,” *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, p. 179.

<sup>75</sup> In his autobiography, William Blaikie complained that Hughes had actually plagiarized *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*. “I did not expect that Mr. Thomas



Barringer's assumption that Livingstone fit the muscular Christian paradigm is indicative of a general tendency among post-colonial theorists to fit male 'colonizers' into gender and racial archetypes. Rather than cast new light on Livingstone as a gendered figure or attempt to place his conception of manliness within the gendered discourses of race and imperialism, post-colonial theory has generally ignored Livingstone. As the next section attests, if he is mentioned at all in post-colonial theory, Livingstone is seen as largely indistinguishable from other white "male imperials,"<sup>76</sup> often appearing in the guise of the universal 'colonizer,' 'explorer' and/or 'missionary.'

### 1.2 Livingstone and the Post-Colonial Mind-Set: The Universal 'Other' and the Generic 'Colonizer'

The publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 opened the field of post-colonial theory, which in turn helped to break down disciplinary boundaries and transcend authoritative historical frontiers.<sup>77</sup> Said's attack on Western representations of the Orient

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Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, should have made such ample gleanings with no acknowledgement," he wrote. It is clear that Hughes' biography was quite similar to Blaikie's work. Barringer does not seem to have been aware of the Hughes biography. Moreover, Livingstone's biographers have failed to mention Blaikie's plagiarism charges against Hughes. See William Garden Blaikie, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1901, p. 297; Thomas Hughes, *Livingstone*, MacMillan: London, 1889.

<sup>76</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest*, Routledge: New York, 1995, p. 29.

<sup>77</sup> The importance of Said and *Orientalism* to the development of post-colonial (discourse) theory has been trumpeted by countless scholars. Gyan Prakash, a member of the Subaltern Studies group, argues that *Orientalism* "established centers of area studies in the United States that have been moved to confront the challenge made by the book, and Western

unsettled a theoretical and historical tradition that laid great stress on the ‘top-down’ military and commercial nature of imperialism. In challenging scholars to rethink the role of culture and ideology in the formation of the West’s identity, his study located and analysed a hegemonic Orientalist discourse reinforced by an incessant body of “ideas, beliefs, clichés [and] learning about the East.”<sup>78</sup> Said defined Orientalism as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient,” as “a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire.”<sup>79</sup> He argued that Orientalism functioned as a “doctrine,” an “influential academic tradition,” and “an area of concern defined by travellers, commercial enterprises, governments, military expeditions, readers of novels and accounts of adventure, and pilgrims to whom the Orient [was] a specific kind of knowledge about specific places, peoples and civilizations.”<sup>80</sup> Orientalism, in his view, championed a system of truths about the Orient, “all of them converging upon such essential aspects of the Orient as the Oriental character, Oriental despotism, Oriental sensuality and the like.”<sup>81</sup> As

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scholarship on other cultures has undergone a noticeable change.” Literary critic Peter Hulme maintains that “without *Orientalism* - and the reading of Foucault that lies behind it - the term ‘colonial discourse’ would hardly have been conceivable.” Gyan Prakash, “Orientalism Now,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1995, p. 205; Peter Hulme, “Subversive Archipelagos: Colonial Discourse and the Break-Up of Continental Theory,” in *Dispositio*, Vol. XIV, No. 36-38, p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage, New York, 1979, p. 205.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 202-203.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

a result of this cultural and ideological process, “human reality was “genuinely divided” into dichotomous “cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races.”<sup>82</sup> Michel Foucault’s concept of discourse underpins *Orientalism*.<sup>83</sup> However, at the heart of the book was Said’s humanist conviction that it was morally wrong for ‘colonizers’ to characterize the ‘colonized’ as a generic, interchangeable group.

Throughout its “seditious life” *Orientalism* has motivated debate throughout academia over the book’s theoretical and methodological underpinnings.<sup>84</sup> Critics such as Robert Young have pointed to Said’s (ab)use of Foucauldian theory, his appeal to humanism and his refusal (or inability) to offer an alternative to the functioning of Orientalism.<sup>85</sup> Yet, as historian Dane Kennedy attests, Said’s “transfiguration of the term ‘orientalism’ from an arcane field of academic study to a synonym for Western imperialism and racism has been accepted and applied to a wide spectrum of scholarship, as has its central thesis and theoretical concerns.”<sup>86</sup> Literary theory, anthropology, art history, historical geography, women’s studies and to lesser extent the study of colonial history have all come under Said

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 3 for Said’s explanation of the importance of Foucault in his work. See also Said’s “The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 4, 1979, pp. 673-714 for an examination of his use of Foucault’s concept of discourse.

<sup>84</sup> The idea that *Orientalism* has had a seditious life comes from Prakash, “Orientalism Now,” p. 199.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, Routledge: London, 1990, pp. 126-140.

<sup>86</sup> Dane Kennedy, “Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1996, p. 347.

and *Orientalism's* “sway.”<sup>87</sup> As result of this influence, writes Kennedy, “many of the weaknesses as well as some of the strengths of his enterprise have become magnified in the works that have followed its lead.”<sup>88</sup>

Not surprisingly, scholars have most often applied Said's theories to the Islamic world of the Middle East and South Asia. Yet, Said made it clear that he believed the ideology of imperialism permeated Western culture throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century. Arguably as a result, Africanists have also been influenced to apply his theories, in a modified form, in their efforts to analyse the Western discourses of Africa. For example, in *Blank Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French* (1985) Christopher Miller analysed an “Africanist discourse” that paralleled Orientalism. By examining the writings of ‘Africanist’ authors such as Baudelaire, Conrad, Gobineau and Rimbeau, Miller attempted to demonstrate that ‘Africa’ was “as loaded with the same rhetorical agendas as the obviously fictive ‘Orient.’”<sup>89</sup> For Miller, the “history of Africanist discourse” has ultimately been “that of a continuing series of questions imposed on Africa, questions that preordain certain answers while ruling others out.”<sup>90</sup> Miller argued that what these writers posited to be the ‘truth’ about Africa were manifestations of a Western attempt to capture the “essence” of

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<sup>87</sup> See John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1995, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> Kennedy, p. 347.

<sup>89</sup> Christopher L. Miller, *Blank Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1985, p. 14.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

Africa and Africans in a series of binary oppositions.<sup>91</sup> As result, he maintained that “one can assert with assurance that the relationship between Europe and Africa has continually been represented as simply North over South, light over dark, white over black: as an unmediated pairing of opposites.”<sup>92</sup>

Taking up the concept of Africanist discourses in *The Invention of Africa* (1988), V.Y. Mudimbe argued that these discourses spoke “about neither Africa or Africans, but rather justif[ied] the process of inventing and conquering a continent and naming its ‘primitiveness’ or disorder,’ as well as the subsequent means of its exploitation and methods for its regeneration.”<sup>93</sup> He maintained, for example, that it was “clear that since the beginning of the nineteenth century, explorers’ reports had been useful for opening the African continent to European interests. Myths about ‘beastly savages,’ ‘barbaric splendours,’ or the ‘white man’s grave’ go along quite well with [the missionary] humanitarian principles for suppressing the slave trade, or the Christianizing and civilizing of Africans.”<sup>94</sup> Taken together, he argued, these “theories of colonial expansion and discourses of African primitiveness” emphasized an invented authenticity of Africa that extended across the colonial era.<sup>95</sup> For Mudimbe this meant that “explorers in the eighteenth

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1988, p. 20.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

century, as well as those in the nineteenth and their successors in the twentieth (colonial proconsuls, anthropologists, and colonizers), spoke using the same type of signs and symbols [often in different languages] and acted upon them."<sup>96</sup>

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said himself included analyses of "Africanist discourses" in his study of imperial culture.<sup>97</sup> He maintained that he now saw these discourses as "part of the general European effort to rule distant lands and peoples and, therefore, as related to Orientalist descriptions of the Islamic world."<sup>98</sup> This led him to declare:

What are striking in these discourses are the rhetorical figures one keeps encountering in their descriptions of 'the mysterious East,' as well as the stereotypes about 'the African mind,' the notions about bringing civilization to primitive or barbaric peoples, the disturbingly familiar ideas about flogging or death or extended punishments being required when 'they' misbehaved or became rebellious, because 'they' mainly understood force or violence best; 'they' were not like 'us,' and for that reason deserved to be ruled.<sup>99</sup>

Invoking Mudimbe, Said argued that the Africanist notion of a universal "African identity" was "so productive and adaptable" over such long time period that it could be "used" by nineteenth century explorers and missionaries and later by anthropologists, Marxist historians and even early African liberation movements.<sup>100</sup> Fundamental to this "identity," according to Said, was the notion of innate African racial inferiority. Citing studies by Stephen Jay

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>97</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1993, p. xi.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. xi.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

Gould and Nancy Stepan, Said judged that “there was no significant dissent from theories of Black inferiority” during the nineteenth century.<sup>101</sup> His own reading of iconic literary figures like Jane Austen, Thomas Carlyle, Joseph Conrad and John Stuart Mill led him to conclude that they contributed to a homogeneous understanding of ‘the African’ as inherently inferior and subordinate to Europeans.

Livingstone did not figure in Said’s analysis of the racism of Africanist discourse. However, he made a brief appearance in Said’s discussion of adventure narratives that celebrated the triumph of imperialism. According to Said, novels, works of colonial exploration and scholarship, memoirs and other texts including “Dr. Livingstone’s personal narratives and Haggard’s *She*, Kipling’s *Raj* ... and most of Jules Verne’s adventures” championed the “progression and triumphalism” of empire.<sup>102</sup> “Almost without exception,” he declared, “these narratives, and literally hundreds like them based on the exhilaration and interest of adventure in the colonial world, far from casting doubt on the imperial undertaking, serve to confirm and celebrate its success. Explorers find what they are looking [and] adventurers return home safe and wealthier...”<sup>103</sup> The idealized Livingstone of the

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<sup>101</sup> A reading of Gould’s *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981), reveals a much more complex analysis of nineteenth century racial attitudes than Said’s conclusion implies. On top of the similarities, Gould brought out the differences in the ways nineteenth century race scientists and theorists characterized Africans. For example, he made a convincing argument that Charles Darwin offered “sometimes conventional, [but] sometimes courageous views on racial differences.” Gould does not cast Darwin as a figure of dissent. However, it is too simplistic to imply that Gould’s objective was to demonstrate a conformity of opinion among nineteenth century race theorists. See Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, revised and expanded edition, W. W. Norton: New York, 1996, p. 50.

<sup>102</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 187.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187-188.

colonial period had been used by a host of biographers to affirm the triumph of British colonialism in Africa. Ironically, Said's Livingstone shared the same purpose. In using the mythic Livingstone to buttress his analysis, Said was able to advance that idea that the explorer's writings were interchangeable with "hundreds" of other texts that championed empire. In the process, Livingstone's important contribution to the Victorian perception of Africa and Africans was ignored, subsumed into what was framed as an essentialist Africanist discourse.

Said is one of the post-colonial theorists who marries analyses of both fiction and the non-fictional writings of explorers and colonial administrators in his studies of the culture and ideology of imperialism. Yet, in a reflection of post-colonial theory's "residual obeisance to its literary studies roots," he clearly privileges the canonical writers of the discipline.<sup>104</sup> As Dane Kennedy writes, this has led to "the almost ritualistic re-examination of Charlotte Brontë, Kipling, Conrad, Forster, and the like in volume after volume of post-colonial scholarship."<sup>105</sup> In *Rule of Darkness* (1988), literary critic Patrick Brantlinger noted this tendency in his colleagues work and responded by including the works of explorers like Livingstone, Burton and Stanley in his frame of analysis. In the chapter "The Genealogy of the Myth of the 'Dark Continent,'" he argued, for example, even though these explorers produced best-sellers, their writings have not figured "in standard histories of Victorian

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<sup>104</sup> Kennedy, p. 355.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.



literature.”<sup>106</sup> Yet, in his view their “accounts of African exploration exerted an incalculable influence on British culture and the course of modern history.”<sup>107</sup>

Brantlinger maintained that Said’s “Foucauldian analysis in *Orientalism*, based on a theory of discourse as strategies of power and subjection, inclusion and exclusion, the voiced and the silenced, suggest[ed] the kind of approach” he was taking in his study of the myth of the Dark Continent.<sup>108</sup> Although he did not use Miller’s concept of “Africanist discourses” in his analysis, it is evident that he was attempting to find dichotomizing discourses of an essentialised ‘other’ by looking at the writings of African explorers. In his study, Brantlinger placed Livingstone at the forefront of the mid to late nineteenth century Western drive to create, fashion and foster the myth of the Dark Continent. In his view: “By the time of the Berlin Conference of 1884, which is often taken as the start of the ‘scramble for Africa,’ the British tended to see Africa as a centre of evil, a part of the world possessed by a demonic ‘darkness’ or barbarism, represented above all by slavery and cannibalism, which it was their duty to exorcise.”<sup>109</sup> Brantlinger maintained that the people “most responsible for promoting this point of view - and for maintaining the crusade against the

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<sup>106</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1988, p. 180. The chapter was first published separately as “Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, Autumn 1985, pp. 166-203. There are subtle differences between the two versions of the chapter.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Brantlinger, “Victorian and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent,” p. 166.

<sup>109</sup> Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 179.

slave trade even after both Britain and the United States were well out it - were the explorers and missionaries, with ... David Livingstone in the lead.”<sup>110</sup> Brantlinger asserted that in their “nonfictional quest romances,” Livingstone and a cohort of contemporaries including Burton, Speke, and Stanley “move[d] from adventure to adventure against a dark, infernal backdrop where there [were] no other characters of equal stature - only bewitched or demonic savages.”<sup>111</sup> These men, he explained, would occasionally “individualize their portraits of Africans,” but taken together, their accounts contributed to a simplistic, normative understanding of the continent in its native inhabitants.<sup>112</sup> Explorers, he argued, would “usually portray [Africans] as amusing or dangerous obstacles or as objects of curiosity, while missionaries usually portray[ed them] as weak, pitiable, inferior mortals who need[ed] to be shown the light.”<sup>113</sup> According to Brantlinger, both explorers and missionaries professed an abhorrence to the slavery they found in Africa. Yet, he maintained that unlike earlier abolitionists, they generally blamed Africans for this evil, rather than Europeans. In his view, “[w]hen the taint of slavery fused with sensational reports about cannibalism, witchcraft, and apparently shameless sexual customs, Victorian Africa emerged draped in the pall of darkness that the Victorians themselves accepted as reality.”<sup>114</sup> For Brantlinger, it was the power of this fantasy of the ‘Dark Continent’ that provided the rationale and the

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

impetus for the rapid colonization of African after the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference. Moreover, he argued that once it became imbued in popular culture in late Victorian period and in the first decades of the twentieth century, the myth continued to foster racism and justify the subjugation of Africans.<sup>115</sup>

In his analysis, Brantlinger implied that Livingstone's writings about Africans straddled both the normative explorer and missionary discourses about Africans. Yet like Said, Brantlinger appeared not to have actually read Livingstone's explorer narratives (or his letters and journals). He had, however, read Jeal's 1973 biography of Livingstone. Although Jeal included relatively few passages from Livingstone's writings and provided only a simplistic analysis of his attitudes towards Africans, Brantlinger used his biography to piece together a synopsis of Livingstone's racial and colonial attitudes. By extracting fragments from his writings, Brantlinger was thus able to make Livingstone appear to be a key contributor to the construction of 'darkest' Africa. For example, he wrote:

Livingstone offers a striking example of how humanitarian aims could contribute to imperialist encroachment. He had more respect for Africans than most explorers and missionaries, though he still viewed them as 'children' and 'savages.' Occasionally he even expressed doubt that a European presence in Africa would be beneficial, but he also believed that the African was 'benighted' and the European was the bearer of 'light' of civilization and true religion. He held that Africa would be without hope of 'raising itself' unless there was 'contact with superior races by commerce.' Africans were 'inured to bloodshed and murder, and care[d] for no god except being bewitched'; without 'commerce and Christianity, the prospects for these dark regions are not bright.'<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> The Livingstone biographies written during this period illustrate this point.

<sup>116</sup> Brantlinger, "Victorian and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent," p. 178. There are slight variations in a longer version of this paragraph in *Rule of Darkness*, p. 181.

Apart from Brantlinger's attempt to place Livingstone within the discourse of the 'dark continent,' post-colonial theory has made little attempt to use Livingstone to get at questions of race, gender or empire. More recent works in post-colonial theory have tended to ignore him. If he is mentioned at all, he is lumped together with other Victorian explorers and missionaries, leaving the important intricacies of gender and racial representation subsumed within a general critique of imperialist culture and/or colonial hegemonies. In a sense, within post-colonial theory in general, Livingstone appears as an omnipresent though largely invisible figure looming over and within the discourses of imperialism. He is the quintessential 'missionary,' one of the archetypal representatives intent on bringing Christianity to the soon to be colonized 'heathen' masses. He seen in the guise of the paradigmatic Victorian 'explorer,' presumed to be emblematic of the Western drive to subdue, normalize and colonize through the privileges of his race, gender and class. Or, he is one of the mass of largely anonymous 'colonizers' who were homogeneously part of the imperialist endeavour at some point over the past two-hundred years.

One conspicuous example of this type of post-colonial scholarship is Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (1995). In introducing her study, McClintock asserted her view that "imperialism emerged as a contradictory and ambiguous project, shaped as much by the tensions within metropolitan policy and conflicts within colonial administrations - at best, ad hoc and opportunistic affairs - as by the varied cultures and circumstances into which colonials intruded and the conflicting responses and resistances with which they were met."<sup>117</sup> As a result, she declared

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<sup>117</sup> McClintock, p. 15.

that she was “unconvinced that the sanctioned binaries - colonizer-colonized, self-other, dominance-resistance, metropolis-colony, colonial-postcolonial - are adequate to the task of accounting for, let alone strategically opposing, the tenacious legacies of imperialism.”<sup>118</sup> In attempting to distance herself from one of the criticisms levelled at Said and post-colonial theory in general, she insisted that “such binaries run the risk of simply inverting, rather than overturning, dominant relations of power.”<sup>119</sup> Yet, as McClintock proceeded with her analysis, she continually lapsed into the practice she criticized by fostering a series of simplistic binary oppositions in her analysis of colonial practices.

In her study, McClintock attempted to locate colonial discourses in the nexus between gender, race and class. “They come into existence *in and through* relation to each another,” she stated, “if in contradictory and conflictual ways.”<sup>120</sup> However, she ended up using gender and race to create what amounted to a dichotomy between a generic colonizer and a universalized ‘other.’ In the first chapter of the book, “The Lay of the Land,” McClintock began her analysis by characterizing the exploration and ‘discovery’ that often prefaced colonization as a “sexual scene of origins.”<sup>121</sup> During the long period vaguely identified as following Columbus, she argued that “by flamboyantly naming ‘new’ lands, male imperials mark[ed] them as their own, guaranteeing thereby ... a privileged relation to origins.”<sup>122</sup> Over

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 5, emphasis in original.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

the next 400 years, this undifferentiated mass of “male imperials” continued to “journey into the virgin interior” of Africa (and other unmapped continents), “feminizing the land” and/or fostering the “the myth of the empty lands” in their adventure narratives.<sup>123</sup> Without actually delving in detail into any explorer narratives, McClintock claimed that these journeys were “figured as proceeding forward in geographical space but backward in historical time, to what is figured as a prehistoric zone of racial and gender difference.”<sup>124</sup>

These differences were most evident in her reductionist account of the European representations of Africans during the nineteenth century. In discussing various visual and textual representations of Africans, McClintock declared that “the rhetoric of *gender* was used to make increasingly refined distinctions among the different *races*.”<sup>125</sup> She then concluded that the “white race was figured as the male of the species and the black race as the female.”<sup>126</sup> Her evidence for this apparently universal phenomenon, ranging across continents and a century of writing, was that Zulu males were repeatedly characterized as effeminate by Western commentators. She then provided three visual illustrations (from 1836), but no written examples, of Zulu men who had been depicted to “display features typical of females of the white race.”<sup>127</sup>

This example of scholarship was indicative of McClintock’s penchant for making

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 17. See also pp. 241-244.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 55, emphasis in original.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

ambiguous claims based on an obvious lack of research. On a surface level there is some validity in her claim that Africans were figured feminine and whites as masculine. African men were often, though certainly not always, characterized as effeminate in nineteenth century explorative and ethnological literature. Yet, at the same time, African women were frequently depicted as physically masculine in the same literature. (I discuss examples of this phenomenon in Chapter Four). Rather than acknowledge that African women did not fit her theory, McClintock argued that they were portrayed as “degenerate” and not specifically masculine.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, her decision to use Zulu males to illustrate her point was also questionable at best. As Alan Cairns wrote in *Prelude to Imperialism*, during the second half of the nineteenth century Zulu ‘tribes’ and their offshoots “received consistently high praise from Britons [the colonizer] for their masculine qualities of martial capacity, force, vigour, power and energy.”<sup>129</sup> In *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone himself characterized some Zulu men he encountered as “tall, muscular, and well made; they are shrewd, energetic, and brave.... Their splendid physical development and form of skull show that, but for the black skin and woolly hair, they would take rank among the foremost Europeans.”<sup>130</sup> Far from

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<sup>128</sup> It is indicative of the specious nature of her argument that the visual example she provided of a degenerate African woman (figure 1.12 in the book) was not of a ‘Hottentot’ or ‘Khoisan’ woman as she implied. The drawing by explorer Richard Burton was of a female warrior from the kingdom of Dahomey, in West Africa. The reader only discovers this by checking the illustration credit at the back of the book, p. 434.

<sup>129</sup> Cairns cited a number of missionaries in making this point, including two men who had worked with Livingstone during his Zambesi Expedition and another who helped found the Livingstonia Mission after his death. See Cairns, p. 108.

<sup>130</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa; including a sketch of sixteen years residence in the interior of Africa*, John Murray: London, 1857, p. 95.

being effeminate, in Livingstone's estimation these African men closely resembled the most masculine white "male[s] of the species."<sup>131</sup>

Post-colonial theorist Laura Chrisman has remarked that the "careless way in which McClintock gets her facts wrong is symptomatic ... of an indifference to the actual contents of the facts in question - it is as if any event will do, all are at some level interchangeable, so long as they make good soundbite copy.... One feels McClintock evading the challenge of real substantial analysis - of exploring what is significant about phenomena, their connections and exclusions..."<sup>132</sup> From an historian's perspective, Chrisman's criticisms of McClintock illustrate what is arguably the key shortcoming of post-colonial theory. McClintock made factual mistakes and blanket generalizations because she had not done the research required to bring out the complexities and contradictions inherent in the interwoven discourses of gender, race and imperialism. As a result, her analysis often lapsed into crude essentialisations of the West which paralleled the West's practice of essentialising the colonized.

McClintock is clearly not the only post-colonial theorist guilty of this tendency. The

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<sup>131</sup> McClintock, p. 55. McClintock's use of species is also problematic. Many nineteenth century race scientists considered Africans to be a separate and inferior species, less human and more animalistic than whites. The view was called polygenism. McClintock mentioned polygenism in the book (p. 49), but did not make the distinction that it was premised on the idea that blacks and whites were not members of the same species. I examine the racial theories of the leading nineteenth century polygenists in Chapter Four.

<sup>132</sup> The factual error Chrisman was referring to was McClintock's misdating of the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference. McClintock had written: "In 1886 gold was discovered in South Africa. That same year, the heads of the European powers sat down at a table in Berlin and carved up Africa among them." Chrisman also noted that there were many examples of the hyper-masculinisation of the Zulu at this period. See Laura Chrisman, "Soap," *South African Review of Books*, Vol. 39/40, 1995; McClintock, p. 282.



other scholars I have discussed in this section can also be charged with furthering monolithic conceptions of the West and of setting a generic colonizer against an undifferentiated 'other.' As Dane Kennedy has argued: "In Said's *Orientalism* and much of the scholarship it has inspired, the West is seen as an undifferentiated, omnipotent entity, imposing its totalizing designs on the rest of the world without check or interruption."<sup>133</sup> Critics both within and outside the discipline of post-colonial theory have asserted that in *Orientalism* and elsewhere, Said "frequently relapses into the essentialising modes it attacks and is ambivalently enmeshed in the totalizing habits of Western humanism..."<sup>134</sup> Colonial historian John M. MacKenzie had recently argued that Said and his followers tend to "slip into precisely those sins [they] castigate ... by 'essentialising' the characteristics of European powers no less than they essentialised the East."<sup>135</sup> As MacKenzie makes clear, post-colonial theorists have failed to bring a "complex historiographical understanding" to the historical issues and figures that they have placed within the discourses of imperialism.<sup>136</sup> As a result, in their studies "imperialism has a disturbing vagueness about it. It becomes a generalized concept inadequately rooted in historical facts, lacking historical dynamic, innocent of imperial theory or the complexities of different forms of imperialism and varieties of economic and

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<sup>133</sup> Kennedy, p. 353.

<sup>134</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1988, p. 271.

<sup>135</sup> MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, pp. 15, 5.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

political relationship.”<sup>137</sup>

In “finding always the same triumphant discourse,” post-colonial theory has functioned to create a homogeneous West and a generic (male) colonizer.<sup>138</sup> Rather than recognizing the “uncertainties, inconsistencies, modifications, and contradictions that afflicted Western efforts to impose its will on other peoples,” theorists have looked for and found congruity and conformity.<sup>139</sup> Ultimately in attempting to critique imperialism, or racism or sexism, post-colonial scholarship instead creates historical totalities in which these forms of oppression seem historically inevitable. For example, the racism that prefaced and accompanied the colonization of Africa appeared to be inescapable because of the largely univocal and unilinear ways in which theorists like Miller and Mudimbe presented Africanist discourses in their studies of Western literature. Brantlinger made distinctions between Livingstone and explorers like Burton, but the two were cast along with other writers as equally contributing to the literary construction of the ‘dark continent.’ In *Culture and Imperialism*, it served no purpose for Said to seek out explorers or other colonial figures who championed African nationalism and who condemned their nation’s rule of another people. His goal was to assert the pervasiveness of the dominant Western representations of Africa and its people. Responding to one of the criticisms of *Orientalism*, Said admitted that figures like Fanon offered resistance to both colonialism and its discourses. Yet, his analysis left no

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., xv.

<sup>138</sup> Dennis Porter, “Orientalism and its Problems,” in *The Politics of Theory*, edited by Francis Barker *et al.*, University of Essex Press: Colchester, 1983, p. 192.

<sup>139</sup> Kennedy, p. 353.

theoretical space for any significant Western resistance to the these same sources of power.

As MacKenzie pointed out, the shortcomings of post-colonial theory have had important implications for “radical” scholars “who might be expected to be sympathetic to Said” and the post-colonial effort to critique imperialism.<sup>140</sup> My assessment of Said and the scholarship his work has engendered should not be seen in any way as an attempt to question the nature of the oppression that was a part of colonialism.<sup>141</sup> My study responds to the shortcomings I have pointed to in post-colonial theory by demonstrating how David Livingstone’s key contribution to the understanding of Africa and its peoples challenged normative Victorian ideas about gender, race and colonialism. It posits that an essentialising account of Victorian explorers, missionaries, ethnographers, race scientists and colonial officials ignores the complexities, ambiguities and contradictions that were integral to the Victorian debates about British colonialism in Africa and the racial and gender characteristics of Africans.

As Max Gluckman remarked in 1955, Livingstone left behind a wealth of important, but largely neglected, writing about Africa. Whether published or found in archives, much of it has continued to be overlooked by scholars. By providing an in-depth analysis of these writings, my aim is to challenge both the biographical and the post-colonial conceptions of

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<sup>140</sup> MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, p. 37.

<sup>141</sup> Nor should it be seen as a declaration that post-colonial theory has nothing to offer historians examining the interaction between race, gender and colonialism. As historian Dane Kennedy has attested, “post-colonial theory’s insight into the pervasive nature of Western construction of the Other has ... compelled scholars to re-examine the circumstances under which particular peoples became identified as members of particular tribes, castes, races, faiths, nations and other culturally-defined collectivities.” See Kennedy, p. 357.

Livingstone, his understanding of manliness, his view of Africa and Africans and his attitudes towards colonialism.

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As both Kennedy and MacKenzie have attested, historians of British imperialism have for the most part been reluctant to make use of the theories put forward by Said and his followers.<sup>142</sup> Mrinalini Sinha's *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late nineteenth century* (1995) is one of the few historical studies to respond to and draw upon "recent scholarship that re-thinks the 'Orientalist' enterprise and the critiques of Orientalism."<sup>143</sup> In exploring potent colonial conceptions of manliness and race in a deeply historicized context, Sinha's analysis demonstrated that simple binaries can not account for the complexities of the gender and racial relationships between Britons and Indians. For Sinha the 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' were not fixed, dichotomous classifications. They were categories that were continually contested and debated by Britons and Indians. As Sinha declared: "*Colonial Masculinity* demonstrates that it was precisely because colonial race relations were constantly rearticulated in response to changes in material conditions that a universalising account of colonial racial politics cannot be adequate for understanding the colonial constructs of the 'manly Englishman' and the

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<sup>142</sup> Kennedy., p. 346; MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, p. 20.

<sup>143</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali,'* Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1995, p. 13.

‘effeminate Bengali *babu*.’<sup>144</sup> For example, in examining both elite and popular British and Indian responses to the characterization of Bengali men as ‘effeminate,’ Sinha revealed how shifting conceptions of manliness intersected with “the changing political and economic imperatives of colonial rule” during the late nineteenth century.<sup>145</sup>

In *Colonial Masculinity*, Sinha responded to post-colonial theory by using the concepts of ‘manliness’ and ‘race’ to demonstrate “that the coloniser and the colonised are not fixed or self-evident categories.”<sup>146</sup> However, her study was also a response to the historiography of Victorian British masculinity. Much of the early scholarship in the field focussed on the ideas of manliness at the ‘great English public schools’ and at ‘Oxbridge.’ As a result, as Sinha attested:

There is a general consensus among scholars about the historical evolution of public school manliness in the nineteenth century: the meaning of manliness in the public school changed from Thomas Arnold’s ‘godliness and good learning’ in the 1830s to the ‘vigorous muscular Christianity’ of the mid-Victorian period, associated with men such as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, and, finally to the games-mania or ‘athleticism’ of the 1870s which fed the recruiting campaigns for imperial projects in the late nineteenth century.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> The study that framed the conception of public-school manliness and muscular Christianity was David Newsome’s *Godliness and Good Learning* (1961). For example, Newsome contrasted the form of manliness championed by Rugby headmaster Arnold with the ideas put forward by Kingsley and Rugby student Hughes. According to Newsome, Arnold believed that “to be a man was not necessarily to be a fine muscular specimen who could outfight and outplay all his foreign foes and rivals. To be a man meant to be adult in mind and ideals; to have the courage and will ... to adhere to a philosophy of life” dedicated to the principles of godliness and good learning. Newsome noted that “Hughes’ concept of

More recent work has emphasized the relationship between changing ideas of manliness and middle-class conceptions of domesticity during the nineteenth century. In *Family Fortunes* (1987), Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall demonstrated how an evangelical stimulus led to an early-nineteenth century middle-class domestic idyll premised on the idea “that it was manly to enjoy domestic life.”<sup>148</sup> In their roles as *paterfamilias*, husbands were to love, respect and protect their wives, while acting authoritative without being aggressive.<sup>149</sup> As Davidoff and Hall revealed, this model of manliness was contradicted from the outset by a parallel middle-class ideology of ‘separate spheres’ grounded upon the notion of men’s public role and women’s domestic containment. Building on this work, James Hammerton disclosed in *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life* (1992) how the mid-Victorian conceptions of domestic manliness continued to prize qualities such as patience, tenderness and understanding in companionate married life. As his study demonstrated, for instance, wife-beating was

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manliness differ[ed] somewhat from Kingsley’s.” Yet, taken together, their writings championed “the duty of patriotism; the moral and physical beauty of athleticism; the salutary effects of Spartan habits and discipline; the cultivation of all that is masculine and the expulsion of all that is effeminate, un-English and excessively intellectual.” Following Newsome’s study, Norman Vance’s *The Sinews of the Spirit: The ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian literature and religious thought*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1985, examined the literary representations of manliness in the writings of Hughes and Kingsley. The study of manliness, the game’s ethic and athleticism in the late Victorian period has been led by J.A. Mangan. See his *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1981 and *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, Viking: Harmondsworth, 1985. See David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, John Murray: London, 1961, pp. 91, 216

<sup>148</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1987, p. 169.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110-113, 162-172.

popularly held to be “appalling evidence of the failure of some men of all classes to live up to proper standards of manliness, measured by the chivalrous protection of the weak, especially women,” whom husbands were expected to protect in return for obedience.<sup>150</sup> More recently, in *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (1999), John Tosh examined the centrality of home-life and domesticity to mid-Victorian notions of middle-class men's masculinity.<sup>151</sup> His seven case studies attested that these men's manliness was defined as much or more by their domestic roles as husbands and fathers as by their public activities. As his study showed, tensions and contradictions were integral to domestic manliness. Middle class men remained breadwinners, protectors and figures of authority within the family, but their wives increasingly became the moral and spiritual guardians of the home. According to Tosh, by the late-Victorian period an increasing number of middle class men began to revolt against domesticity in reaction to the increasing ‘feminisation’ of the home and to the challenge of feminism. As he asserted briefly in the book and more substantively in other work, this revolt often took the form of a “flight from domesticity” and an embrace of the new opportunities offered by the expanding British empire.<sup>152</sup>

Other historians have written more case specific studies of Victorian manliness, often

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<sup>150</sup> A. James Hammerton, *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life*, Routledge: London, 1992, p. 66.

<sup>151</sup> John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1999.

<sup>152</sup> See John Tosh, “Imperial Masculinity in Britain and the Flight from Domesticity,” in *Gender and Colonialism*, edited by Timothy Foley *et al.*, Galway University Press: Galway, 1995.

focussing on groups or segments within the British working class. For example, Anna Clark has detailed how early-nineteenth century “ultraradical” London artisans championed “a virile, heterosexual manhood [that they believed was] superior to that of the sober, punctilious middle-class or the effeminate aristocrat.”<sup>153</sup> As Clark explained: “Plebeian men had long sought in a bachelor subculture consolations for the inability to attain the status of mastership and marriage. They celebrated their freedom in ribald songs, bragging of seducing girls and then saying no to marriage; if they married they still spent most of their time and money at the pub.”<sup>154</sup> In contrast, Keith McClelland has examined how changing ideas of masculinity were intertwined with the rites of apprenticeship and the cultivation of respectability among mid-Victorian artisans hardened by the political turmoil of the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>155</sup> Meanwhile, Pamela Walker has explored how working class men in the Salvation Army challenged conventional class-based notions of masculinity in their relationships with Salvationist women and in their religious conversion.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Anna Clark, “Manhood, Womanhood, and the Politics of Class in Britain, 1790-1845,” in *Gender and Class in Modern Europe*, edited by Laura L. Frader and Sonya O. Rose, Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1996, p. 272.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. For a discussion of this subculture, see chapter three of Clark’s *Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class*, University of California Press: Berkeley, 1995.

<sup>155</sup> Keith McClelland, “Masculinity and the ‘Representative Artisan’ in Britain, 1850-1880,” in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, edited by Michael Roper and John Tosh, Routledge: New York, 1991.

<sup>156</sup> See Pamela J. Walker, “‘I live but not yet I for Christ liveth in me:’ Men and masculinity in the Salvation Army, 1865-1890,” in *Manful Assertions* and Pamela J. Walker, *Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain*, University of California Press: Berkeley, 2001.



Collectively, the historical work dealing with Victorian British masculinity has clearly identified and examined several important class-based conceptions of manliness that were negotiated, disputed and subject to change during the nineteenth century. The studies dealing with elites and public schools, the middle-classes and changing ideas of domesticity and the British working-classes and notions of respectability have together demonstrated that manliness was not simply an elite cultural form, but was a malleable social construct whose meanings were fervently debated within and often between the classes.<sup>157</sup> Yet, it is clear that in focussing specifically on national and primarily English (rather than British) representations of manliness, historians have shown a “reticence” to study the ways in which Victorian men in the colonial world characterized themselves and the indigenous peoples they encountered in gendered terms.<sup>158</sup> As Sinha’s exploration of British and Indian conceptions of manliness in colonial India demonstrates, such a study necessarily involves

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<sup>157</sup> Writing in 1994 John Tosh stated that “Victorian manliness was [primarily] an *elite* cultural form, of an often crudely didactic kind.” See John Tosh, “What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-century Britain,” *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 38, 1994, p. 181.

<sup>158</sup> Sinha, p. 8. Women’s historians examining the complex role of Victorian women in the colonial world have, for example, studied how hierarchical understandings of ‘race’ were essential to the ways in which competing conceptions of British womanhood were constructed against and in relation to indigenous masculinities and femininities. See in particular, the collected essays in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, edited by Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1992; *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities*, edited by Antoinette Burton, Routledge: London, 1999. See also Billie Melman, *Women’s Orient, English Women in the Middle East, 1718-1918: sexuality, religion and work*, MacMillan: London, 1992 and Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1994.

analysing the integral link between ‘race’ and definitions of manliness.<sup>159</sup>

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The chapters in this dissertation proceed in a chronological order and are divided so as to follow the main periods of Livingstone’s life and career. Chapter Two covers the longest period of Livingstone’s life, from his working class youth in Scotland to his first decade as a missionary in South Africa. The first section provides a short biographical examination of his early years in Scotland and establishes that he was motivated by an extraordinary sense of determination in his effort to reach his goal of becoming a missionary-doctor. I then explore Livingstone’s early racial politics, including his support for African missionaries and his views on polygamy. By examining his relationship with his wife Mary, the chapter also analyses his attitudes to marriage and domesticity. Chapter Three explores the most radical period of Livingstone’s life. During a brief stay in Cape Town in 1852, he offered his support for the Xhosa and Khoikhoi peoples then at war with the British in the Cape Colony. In the chapter, I analyse his belief that African rebellion against white racial oppression was manly, his criticism of British rule in the Cape Colony, his opposition to the Boer trekkers in the Transvaal, and his role as a modest gunrunner who provided guns to Africans to use against whites. Chapters Four and Five examine a number of issues relating

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<sup>159</sup> In this study, I follow that well-established view that ‘race’ has no scientific validity. Admittedly there are dangers in using a term that has long been used to fix ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’ as indicators of innate physical, mental or moral differences. However, as Paul Gilroy has argued: “‘Race’ must be retained as an analytic category not because it corresponds to any biological or epistemological absolutes, but because it refers investigation to the power that collective identities acquire by means of their root in tradition.” See Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack’: The cultural politics of race and nation*, Hutchinson: London, 1987, p. 247.

to Livingstone's 1852-1856 path breaking crossing of Africa. I begin Chapter Four with a narrative account of the journey and then consider the production of Livingstone's best-selling *Missionary Travels*. I then place Livingstone's attitudes towards Africa and Africans in historical context by analysing how other key mid-Victorian commentators on Africa represented the 'racial' and gender characteristics of Africans. Chapter Five examines the complexities of Livingstone's own views on the 'nature' of African society and African manliness. The first section explores his understanding of 'civilization' in relation to his belief that Africans had the potential to become as 'civilized' and 'cultured' as Europeans. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to four case studies that examine Livingstone's conceptions of 'race,' gender and African manliness. Together, chapters Four and Five confirm that Livingstone was at odds with the growing mid-Victorian consensus that Africans were inherently inferior to and less manly than Europeans. Chapter Six centres around Livingstone's Zambesi Expedition (1858-1863). After providing a narrative account of the largely unsuccessful expedition, I analyse Livingstone's utopian plan to establish a small, racially-mixed and equal Christian colony in Central Africa. I then examine his gendered relationships with the British crew members and missionaries who were a part of the Zambesi Expedition. The focus of this section is on how Livingstone's conception of manliness was integral to the way he judged the work ethic and moral character of these compatriots. The final chapter analyses the development of the Livingstone myth during his search for the source of the Nile (1866-1873) and in the aftermath of his death. During much of his last journey, Livingstone's whereabouts were unknown and he was believed to be lost or perhaps even dead. I examine how his most outspoken defenders and his few vocal critics

used his manliness to debate the merit of sending out an expedition to find him. I then explore how Stanley's representation of Livingstone laid the foundation for the Livingstone myth. The chapter concludes with an in-depth analysis of how his *Last Journals* and Blaikie's biography established Livingstone's mythic representation as a heroic, saintly figure and archetype of manliness for the coming colonization of Africa.

## Chapter Two

### *“I should like to go through the very same struggles:” Exploring Livingstone’s Youth and his Early Career as a Missionary-Explorer in Southern Africa: 1813-1851*

A little more than a year after his arrival in Africa, David Livingstone reminisced about just how far he had come in life, from his days as a working-class mill worker to a university-educated doctor and missionary. Yet, rather than vow that he would never want to return to a life of poverty and struggle, Livingstone told his good friend Margaret Sewell:

I look back with both pleasure and gratitude to my early days. To no portion of them do I recur with fonder recollection than ... struggling almost to desperation in order to amass as much kept [my] body and soul together while attending [university] classes in Glasgow. By toiling at manual labour through the day and at mental during a large portion of the night, I at length succeeded in getting two sessions at College. A happy time it was and if I could begin life again, I should like to go through the very same struggles.<sup>1</sup>

For Livingstone, the challenge of transcending the hardships and exigencies of working class life was a character-building experience. In his first thirty years of life, he had learned to thrive on personal struggle and hard work in his effort to prevail against poverty and earn the money he needed to receive a university education. He knew that his past had been a time of achievement and great personal triumph in which he had overcome overwhelming odds to reach his ambition of becoming a missionary-doctor. It was a formative period when he developed the strength of will and the work-ethic necessary to achieve the goals he set for

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<sup>1</sup> David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 7 April, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656. Margaret Sewell was a widow who kept the boarding-house in London where Livingstone and other LMS students stayed. She and Livingstone became good friends during his time in London and were frequent and close correspondents during his first years in Africa.

himself. As he began his missionary work in Africa, Livingstone left the struggles of his 'early days' behind. Yet, in Africa he quickly forged a unique career path that forced him to again demonstrate his sense of purpose in confronting a new set of challenges.

Clearly, Livingstone was an ambitious and morally driven man. Arguably, after reaching Africa he could have spent the rest of his days at a mission station hoping to convert Africans, while trying to steer clear of contentious missionary issues or difficult career choices. Some of his colleagues in the London Missionary Society took this route, but Livingstone was never content with the *status quo*. He brought the same energy and determination to his missionary work that he had to his working-class youth and his days at university. After arriving in Africa, he promptly challenged standard missionary practice by insisting that exploration should be integral to missionary work. In an effort to expand the boundaries of missionary influence, he was soon trekking to regions where no European had travelled, meeting and befriending Africans who had never met a white person. Rather than remain content with working at one mission station, he constructed and worked at three separate missions within a period of four years. Later, in an effort to reach an influential 'chief' north of the Kalahari desert, he made three path-breaking journeys north, making significant geographical 'discoveries' along the way.

By the end of his first decade in Africa, Livingstone had travelled further afield than any other missionary in Africa and was ready to embark on his historic crossing of the continent. Because of these actions he came to be seen as a maverick by number of his missionary brethren within the London Missionary Society (LMS). His struggle to extend the periphery of missionary operations into Central Africa separated him from the vast

majority of missionaries working in South Africa. As I discuss in section 2.2, as soon as Livingstone arrived in Africa, he began to challenge missionary orthodoxy. In defending the radical racial politics of John Philip, LMS Superintendent at Cape Town, Livingstone was quickly alienated from the missionary mainstream. He further distanced himself from his missionary colleagues in championing the cause of African missionaries and the formation of independent African Christian congregations. During his first decade in Africa, Livingstone used his explorations to try to place African evangelicals into native communities where they would preach free from white missionary influence. In taking up this quest, he argued that Africans had the same spiritual and intellectual abilities as European missionaries. Yet, many within the LMS (and other missionary societies) were unwilling and/or unable to accept the concept of racial equality. As a result, the radical missionary politics that Livingstone advocated during the decade met with little support among his LMS brethren.

In section 2.3, I explore how Livingstone also challenged Protestant missionary tradition in his approach to domesticity after his arrival in Africa. It was customary for LMS missionaries of Livingstone's generation to arrive in Africa with a wife. Yet, he not only travelled to Africa as a bachelor, he initially balked at the notion of marriage altogether. Determined to enjoy his flight from domesticity, he eschewed the idea that he should marry the daughter of one of his fellow missionaries and begin to build a family. When he finally decided to consider marriage, he held firm that he would only marry a woman who shared his work ethic and his racial politics. It seems that he found these qualities in Mary Moffat, the eldest daughter of Africa's most distinguished missionary at the time, Robert Moffat. In

his twenty-five year career Moffat had himself married missionary work with exploration. Although Mary had not joined her father on his explorative treks, she had gained extensive travel experience in journeying across Southern Africa during her youth and young adulthood.

For a time, the Livingstones followed a relatively conventional missionary lifestyle, raising a family while working to effectuate conversions within the mission's congregation. However, after Livingstone made his first attempt to reach the influential 'chief' north of the Kalahari, Mary Livingstone determined that she would rather join her husband on his explorations than stay at her parents' mission station. In section 2.5, I examine how the Livingstones shifted the parameters of traditional missionary work by exploring Africa together as a family. Livingstone was criticized (by his mother-in-law) for taking his wife and children on these expeditions. However, as he saw it, these journeys and all the other arduous work that missionaries and their families undertook, was all part of a greater sacrifice.

Livingstone's struggles during his youth were primarily of a personal nature, aimed at 'self-improvement' rather than a larger cause. Yet, as he began to reach the life goals he set for himself, his priorities changed from improving himself to 'helping' Africans. As I demonstrate throughout these chapters, Livingstone transcended the simple missionary rhetoric about bringing 'light' to 'darkest' Africa by dedicating himself to a complex vision devoted to 'improving' Africa. Livingstone believed that the venture to bring 'civilization' to Africans was a struggle worthy of his life's effort. As a result, he brought the same indomitable work ethic and sense of perseverance to his work in Africa that he had needed



to escape his life as a mill-worker. At the same time, he expected that all who were truly righteous would be similarly dedicated to hard work and endurance in bringing about change in Africa. His wife, his children, his co-workers were all part of this great struggle, a struggle that was far greater than any one of them.

This chapter covers a much longer period of Livingstone's life than any of the chapters in this study. It establishes that Livingstone was driven by an uncommon and arguably obsessive sense of determination throughout his early years in Scotland and later when he began his missionary career in Africa. The first section of this chapter provides a short biographical examination of Livingstone's youth and young adulthood in Scotland. With emphasis on the importance he placed on self-improvement, it explores how he overcame the hardships of working class life by toiling throughout his youth as a mill worker and by striving to receive the education he needed to attend university. By examining Livingstone's relationship with his LMS brethren and his support for African missionaries, section 2.2 demonstrates that Livingstone arrived in Africa ready to champion radical race-based ideas and causes. Livingstone's complex racial politics are again explored in section 2.4 in an exploration of his relationship with his sole convert, the Tswana 'chief' Sechele. This section reveals how Livingstone challenged the conventional LMS view of African polygamy in attempting to rationalize the 'lapse' Sechele suffered after his conversion. As mentioned, sections 2.3 and 2.5 analyse Livingstone's attitudes to marriage, domesticity and family exploration. Section 2.3 pays particular attention to the life history of Mary (Moffat) Livingstone in examining the marital roles of LMS missionary wives. Section 2.5 analyses how she defied her prescribed gender role by insisting on joining her husband in an

unconventional attempt to marry domesticity and exploration. This final section also explains how the explorative success of Livingstone's final family journey led him to place his goals for Africa ahead of his commitment to his wife and children.

### 2.1 The Young Livingstone and the Ethic of Self-Improvement, 1813-1841

In the opening paragraph of *Missionary Travels*, David Livingstone recounted that he was persuaded by "several friends" to write an autobiographical 'Introduction' to his first and most popular book.<sup>2</sup> This short "personal sketch" was in many ways as vital as the body of the book in establishing Livingstone's popular image with his wide readership.<sup>3</sup> In it, Livingstone was able to demonstrate just how far he travelled in life, from his working-class youth in Scotland to his renown as a great missionary-explorer. If his feat of crossing the African continent could be seen as heroic, so too could his ability to transcend the class strictures of his upbringing.<sup>4</sup>

David Livingstone was born March 19, 1813, in the small Scottish mill town of

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<sup>2</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, John Murray: London, 1857, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Livingstone's romanticized account of his early life has continued to serve as the primary basis for the scholarly understanding of his youth. It has been supplemented by sentimental family reminiscences and anecdotes appearing in Blaikie's 'authorized' biography and by Livingstone's own memories of his youth that emerged in letters written from Africa. More recently, biographies by Tim Jeal (1973) and Timothy Holmes (1993) have added new details and analyses of Livingstone's youth.

Blantyre, ‘a days walk to south-east of Glasgow.’<sup>5</sup> In his *Missionary Travels* “Introduction” Livingstone wrote proudly of his “honest” Scottish Highland ancestors, including a great-grandfather who had fought at the battle Culloden (with Bonnie Prince Charlie against the English).<sup>6</sup> His grandfather, a struggling small farmer, moved the family from their highland home on the small isle of Ulva (off the west coast of Mull) and settled at Blantyre. He secured a position as a clerk at the Blantyre Mill and “stayed there for the rest of his life, rising to a position of trust in handling the firm’s cash.”<sup>7</sup> Livingstone’s father Neil also worked as a clerk in the mill. He later became apprenticed to David Hunter, a tailor who manufactured clothes for the child workers at the mill. Neil Livingstone soon married Hunter’s daughter Agnes and the couple settled into the Hunters’ single room apartment in Shuttle Row, a workers’ tenement building next to the Blantyre Mill.<sup>8</sup> While living in this small space, the Livingstone family grew to include five children: John (1811-99), David, Janet (1818-95), Charles (1821-73) and Agnes (1823-95). Unhappy working as a tailor, Neil Livingstone later went into business as a tea-dealer, travelling the countryside of the Clyde river valley to support his young family.

It is unclear whether it was a condition of living in Shuttle Row or matter of

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<sup>5</sup> The Livingstone family actually spelled the family name without the final ‘e’ until 1855. Livingstone’s father Neil had earlier dropped the ‘e’ because he believed the name was “long enough without it.” However, in 1855 Neil Livingstone decided to revert to the traditional Scottish spelling of the family name. David Livingstone followed his father’s lead and began adding an ‘e’ to his name in September 1855. See Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>6</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

economic necessity, but at the age of ten David Livingstone went to work in the mill, where he remained until he was twenty-three. Not far from Robert Owen's New Lanark settlement, the Blantyre Mill had first been owned by David Dale, Owen's father-in-law, but Robert Owen's benevolent practices were never introduced at Blantyre.<sup>9</sup> Among his co-workers were orphan children as young as six who had been adopted from local parishes to fill the demand for labour. In his position as a cotton 'piecer,' Livingstone joined these children in working six days a week from six in the morning until eight in the evening, with an hour for lunch and two short meal breaks.<sup>10</sup> Countless biographers have mentioned Livingstone's long work hours, but have failed to note that his position at the mill was somewhat "peculiar."<sup>11</sup> As Timothy Holmes has recently remarked, Livingstone's "contemporaries

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<sup>9</sup> In 1792, Keith Monteith, who had co-owned the mill with Dale, purchased his partner's share and became sole owner of the Blantyre mill. It remained in the Monteith family until 1873. Unlike Owen, who did not employ children under the age of 10 at New Lanark, Monteith included children as young as six in his workforce. All workers rose with at 5:30 a.m. and reported for work half an hour later. They worked until 8 p.m. with an hour for lunch and two short meal breaks. See George Shepperson "David Livingstone 1813-1873: A Centenary Assessment," for a brief discussion of the attitude of Livingstone's employer to his young workers. For more on Robert Owen's employment practices see J.F.C. Harrison, *Robert Owen in Britain and America: The Quest for a New Moral World*, Routledge: London, 1969.

<sup>10</sup> Livingstone informed his readers of his hours and six-day work week in his *Missionary Travels* "Introduction," p. 3. A piecer's job is to piece together strands of thread on a spinning jenny that look like they might break. According to Tim Jeal, the job of piecer, which most of the children did, was crucial, "for unless flaws were detected early on they were incorporated into the finished yarn. Piecers needed sharp eyes and the power of constant attention if they were to avoid frequent beatings. They also had to be universally agile since their work often involved climbing under the machinery or balancing over it. Piecers walked anything up to twenty miles a day in the mills and much of this distance was covered crawling or stooping." See Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>11</sup> Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 6.

were orphan-apprentices whose status came close to serfdom, while he was a wage-earner who could afford to buy books and was free to spend his days off poaching salmon in the river or earning pocket money tending a nearby farmer's cattle. He had a father and a mother, and lived a family life in 'privileged' accommodation, while his grandfathers both held important offices in the world of the mill, especially Neil senior who handled the money."<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Livingstone's status at the mill should not diminish the fact he was a child-labourer who had to surmount tremendous obstacles and overcome great odds to escape his class position. Even with a superior work ethic and other exemplary qualities Livingstone could easily have been trapped in a life of poverty and remained in Blantyre the rest of his life. Yet, in studying Livingstone's character it becomes clear that during his youth and throughout his years in Africa, he "had a rare set of qualities that allowed his strength to grow, rather than be destroyed, in harsh surroundings."<sup>13</sup> Not only was Livingstone able to endure the grind of a punishing six-day work week, he was also able to summon the strength of will he needed to receive an education.

Throughout his life, Livingstone clearly saw education as a way to prevail against poverty and ignorance. In his youth, he devoted himself to learning, both in the classroom and in less structured surroundings. Taking advantage of affordable schooling offered by the local schoolmaster, he insisted on attending evening classes for two hours after his long day of factory work. Seemingly incapable of exhaustion, his schoolroom hours were often

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Aisling Irwin and Colum Wilson, *In Quest of Livingstone: A Journey to the Four Fountains*, House of Lochar: Colonsay, Scotland, 1999, p. 55.

followed by reading and study until midnight or later in some corner of the family's small home. Even while at work, Livingstone claimed he would read as much as he could by placing a book on a spinning jenny in order to get a glimpse at the text when he could. When Livingstone's wages did not go to his mother as part of the family wage packet, he used what extra he had to purchase books, particularly relating to his preferred subjects of science or travel. In an 1845 letter directed at schoolchildren, he recalled that as a youth he had "been very fond of ... stories about foreigners and foreign climes. Books of voyages and travels were devoured whenever I could lay hold of them," he reminisced. "Indeed I was so fond of some such as [Mungo] Park's *Travels [in the Interior of Africa, 1799]*, I could almost repeat them from memory."<sup>14</sup>

Despite his father's wish that he read Christian theology, Livingstone professed an "open rebellion" during his youth to "dry doctrinal reading," such as Wilberforce's *Practical Christianity*.<sup>15</sup> Combining his youthful interests in exploration and science during the time he had away from the mill and his studies, Livingstone, often in the company of his two brothers, would explore the countryside of Lanarkshire. His love of nature (which would distinguish his writing), as well his lifelong interests in physical geography, botany,

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<sup>14</sup> David Livingstone to Samuel Roberts, 29 April, 1845, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779. Mungo Park (1771-1806) was a Scottish surgeon who was commissioned to trace the Niger river in 1795. His account of his journey, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, proved to be highly popular. In 1805, he was sent by the British government to trace the Niger to its mouth, but drowned after he was ambushed while in his canoe.

<sup>15</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 4. William Wilberforce's *Practical view of the prevailing religious system of professed Christians...* (usually shortened to *Practical Christianity*) was a best-seller for the abolitionist leader after its publication in 1798.

astronomy and geology were all seemingly nurtured on his hikes through the Clyde river valley.

Religion did not play as significant a role in his early life as his career path might indicate. For the teenaged Livingstone, science took precedence over religion and the Calvinist beliefs of his father and many in his community. In his *Missionary Travels* 'Introduction,' he only hints at his youthful distance from established lowland Scottish Presbyterian beliefs. In particular, Livingstone was antipathetic towards the idea of salvation restricted to an Elect, finding "neither peace nor happiness" in the prospect in a God who would impose eternal damnation.<sup>16</sup>

At nineteen, Livingstone was promoted to the job of spinner at the mill, which increased his pay and allowed him to save the money he needed to attend university medical classes in Glasgow. It was around this time that he was able to reconcile his fascination with science with a system of religious thought that emphasized personal salvation through the gospel of Christ. The source of this religious revelation was a book by Thomas Dick, a Scottish Nonconformist minister and astronomer. In *The Philosophy of a Future State* (1828), Dick argued that God had "created nothing in vain," and only His presence could account for the variety of life on earth and in the skies.<sup>17</sup> For Livingstone, this was a Christian theology that explained the wonders and beauties of the natural environment that

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<sup>16</sup> David Livingstone to the London Missionary Society, 9 May, 1837, cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 11. In the letter to LMS, Livingstone also wrote of his early religious doubts, "I found neither peace nor happiness [in Calvinism or religion in general], which caused me (never having revealed my state of mind to anyone) to bewail my sad estate with tears in secret."

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Dick, *Philosophy of a Future State*, W. Collins, Glasgow, 1869, p. 88.

so absorbed him in his youth and later throughout his African journeys. As he wrote, “it was gratifying to find [in the work of Dick] my own ideas, that religion and science are not hostile, but friendly to each other, fully proven and enforced.”<sup>18</sup>

Livingstone’s discovery of Dick also helped bring him closer to his father over matters of theology. In 1832, the same year Livingstone embraced Dick’s ideas, Neil Livingstone heard a Congregationalist preacher assail the doctrines of orthodox Calvinism and the established tenets of the Presbyterian Church. Shortly thereafter, both Neil and David became members of the independent Congregational Church in Hamilton, (a short distance from Blantyre and where the Livingstone children often stayed with their grandparents to alleviate overcrowding at home). Organized on the principle of complete self-government by its members, the Congregationalist Church was closely associated with the anti-slavery cause and with evangelical missionary work in places like China and Africa.<sup>19</sup> It was through the Hamilton Church’s ties with the non-denominational London Missionary Society (LMS) that Livingstone was inspired to “devote [his] life to the alleviation of human misery” by working as a medical-missionary.<sup>20</sup>

In 1834, when he was twenty-one, Livingstone read a pamphlet brought from the church appealing for missionaries to be sent to China from Britain and America. In particular, the pamphlet’s author Karl Gutzlaff sought missionary-doctors who would

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<sup>18</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> See Angus Calder, “David Livingstone, Self-Help and Scotland,” in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, for an examination of the spread of Congregationalism in Scotland, pp. 89-93.

<sup>20</sup> David Livingstone *Missionary Travels*, p. 5.



immerse themselves in Chinese society by learning the language and culture of the ‘heathens’ they hoped to convert. Gutzlaff believed that medically trained missionaries would earn the gratitude of their Chinese patients by improving on traditional Chinese healing practices and that their appreciation would lead to conversions.<sup>21</sup> In this potential career field, Livingstone could marry his interests in science and travel with the desire he now had to spread his faith. With this plan in mind, he then set about the formidable task of saving the funds necessary for his medical education.

After toiling for two more years as a spinner, Livingstone began his medical studies at Anderson’s College in Glasgow in 1836. Lodging in Glasgow during the week, he made the three hour trek by foot to and from Blantyre every weekend. In addition to his medical studies, he also found time to learn Greek at Glasgow University as well as attend theological lectures given by the influential Glasgow Congregationalist Dr. Ralph Wardlaw.<sup>22</sup> During school breaks he would return to the mill to help earn the money necessary for rent and school fees, while reading Latin and medical texts in his free time. Livingstone joined the LMS during his second year of medical studies.<sup>23</sup> In 1838, he began his missionary training

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<sup>21</sup> See Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> See Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 17. In the 1840s, Wardlaw became a prominent writer on prostitution. As Judith Walkowitz notes, “Robert Wardlaw, who regularly debated the Owenite Socialists on the marriage question, described prostitution as the ‘socialism of the beasts.’” Livingstone made no remarks on the content of his speeches. See Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1980, pp. 33, 36.

<sup>23</sup> Livingstone’s decision to join the LMS may have been motivated by an 1837 visit to Hamilton by the famed LMS missionary James Read and Jan Tshatshu, a converted African Xhosa. However, it can not be confirmed whether Livingstone was able to meet with the two men, or was even in Hamilton on the day of their visit. The only mention of the

in Essex, studying Latin, Greek and Hebrew with a mix of fellow students that included middle-class men who, unlike Livingstone, had not been largely self-taught. The following year the Opium War with China ended his hopes of travelling to that country as a missionary. As an alternative, the LMS asked Livingstone to go to the West Indies, but he refused, arguing that his vocation would be more valuable in South Africa where fewer missionaries or doctors were practising.

In 1839, Livingstone was stationed in London where he worked in two of the city's hospitals. At this time, he encountered two men who proved influential in guiding his ideological path in Africa. In London during a four year sojourn from Africa, Robert Moffat (Livingstone's future father-in-law) was one of the best known and most influential missionaries in Africa at the time.<sup>24</sup> Livingstone would often disagree with Moffat over LMS policy and was sometimes critical of his father-in-law's racial attitudes; however, they remained friends and close correspondents during the many years they spent (almost entirely

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visit (showing only that he was aware that they had visited Hamilton) comes in an 1847 Livingstone letter to his mother. No biographer has mentioned the visit, with most focussing on Livingstone's meeting with John Moffat in 1840 as the pivotal influence in his missionary training. Read, however, had a considerably more radical approach to missionary work than Moffat. The two men did not get along. Read had arrived in the Cape Colony in 1801 with Johanness Van de Kemp to launch the LMS in South Africa. Along with John Philip (examined later in this chapter), Read was one of the fiercest critics of the Cape Colony administration and of the racial intolerance of white settlers in South Africa. He was in Britain in 1836-1837 along with Philip to present evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on Aborigines. See David Livingstone to Mrs. Agnes Livingstone, 4 May, 1847, *Family Letters, 1841-1851*, 2 vols., edited by Isaac Schapera, Chatto and Windus: London, 1959, vol. I, p. 198.

<sup>24</sup> Moffat spent the time in Britain working on his book *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (1842) and publicizing missionary issues on an extensive speaking tour.

apart) in Africa. A few months after meeting Moffat, Livingstone heard the abolitionist leader Thomas Fowell Buxton speak at Exeter Hall.<sup>25</sup> At the meeting, Buxton publicized the upcoming Niger Expedition and championed the idea of using ‘legitimate’ commerce to fight slavery and foster civilization in Africa.<sup>26</sup> As Livingstone prepared for his mission to Africa, Buxton and Moffat were widely considered to be among the vanguard of contemporary humanitarian thought concerning the continent. Ironically, the prospect of furthering ‘legitimate’ trade in Africa eventually drew Livingstone away from the type of missionary work practised by Moffat and most other missionaries in Africa. Beginning in the early 1850s, his own quest to fight slavery with legitimate trade would act as a guiding principle behind his expedition strategies and colonial schemes in his work for Africa.

In November 1840, Livingstone returned to Glasgow where he completed the necessary exams and was admitted into the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons. Later in the month, in London again, Dr. Livingstone was ordained as a Nonconformist, Congregational minister. In December, the twenty-seven year old missionary-doctor set sail for Africa, a place that would be his home for much of the remainder of his life. In his “Introduction” to *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone provided few details concerning his medical and missionary education. These aspects of his early life have been outlined in the works of biographers like Blaikie, Jeal and Holmes. However, Livingstone made it clear in the “Introduction,” that he

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<sup>25</sup> The meeting of the African Civilization Society was held June 1, 1840, attracted 5000 people, was chaired by Prince Albert, and featured twenty speakers, including Buxton.

<sup>26</sup> In Chapter Six, section 6.2, I examine how Livingstone’s colonial vision during his Zambesi Expedition (1858-1864) was influenced by Buxton and his plans for the Niger Expedition.

saw his meteoric rise from poverty-stricken mill worker to missionary-doctor as an illustration of the same work ethic that he brought to his work in Africa. In fact, in the “Introduction” he resurrected his 1842 proclamation that the struggles of his youth had prepared him for the challenges he faced in Africa. “Looking back now on that life of toil,” he now wrote in *Missionary Travels*, “I cannot but feel thankful that it formed such a material part of my early education, and, were it possible, I should like to begin life over again in the same lowly style, and pass through the same lowly training.”<sup>27</sup> Here, Livingstone made it evident to his readers that in overcoming the obstacles of poverty - by toiling endless hours in the mill or in study - he had passed the first and perhaps most significant test of his character. With continued hard work he had prevailed against the social and economic forces that kept other “specimens of the Scottish poor” locked in circumscribed lives of poverty and resignation.<sup>28</sup> The ethic of manly perseverance that had driven Livingstone throughout his African journeys had also propelled him to the successes he fought for as a young man. In achieving his early goals, he set a standard of perseverance that he believed he had a duty to follow if he hoped to bring the type of material and spiritual change to Africans that he himself had undergone as a youth in Scotland.

Livingstone’s representation of his youth in his “Introduction” to *Missionary Travels* was the type of life story that attracted the highly popular Victorian moralist, Samuel Smiles.

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<sup>27</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 6. In a letter written less than two years after his arrival in Africa, Livingstone expressed very similar feelings about his past, stating: “A happy time it was and if I could begin life again, I should like to go through the very same struggles.” David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 14 July, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656.

<sup>28</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 6.

In his influential 1859 best-seller *Self-Help*, Smiles wrote admiringly of Livingstone's "persevering youth," which he saw as a harbinger of the spirit and intensity his fellow Scot brought to Africa as a missionary.<sup>29</sup> Smiles' short sketch depicts Livingstone as a prime example of what 'self-help' could do for a young man willing to persevere against poverty in pursuit of higher goals. As the Scottish historian Angus Calder states, "self-help emphasized the virtues of hard work, thrift and sobriety as safeguards against destitution and as the means of rising to respectability and retaining it."<sup>30</sup> For Smiles, Livingstone's humble life had been heroic because his life story had exemplified many of the key values of this self-help ethic. As in his other sketches of great achievers, Smiles was not so much concerned with Livingstone's famous exploits, but with the vigour and strength of will he exhibited in working towards self-improvement. Smiles repeats the motivational tale of Livingstone's long boyhood work hours and dedication to his education as a model for other working-class youths to follow. He highlights the student Livingstone's ability to "support himself" while completing his university studies.<sup>31</sup> For Smiles, the perseverance, resolution, and industry that Livingstone had exhibited in his youthful struggles were the manifestation of good character. In his youth Livingstone had shown the "will to labour energetically and perseveringly" and continued to exhibit these manly qualities in his missionary labours.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help, with illustrations of conduct and perseverance*, John Murray: London, 1965, p. 245.

<sup>30</sup> Angus Calder, "David Livingstone, Self-Help and Scotland," p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> Smiles, *Self-Help*, p. 245.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

As a secular moralist, Smiles was not concerned with Livingstone's efforts to convert Africa's 'heathens.' In discussing Livingstone's missionary work, he thus emphasized the young missionary's physical labour in building homes, rearing cattle and cultivating fields. For Smiles, Livingstone's value as missionary was in teaching "the natives how to work as well as worship."<sup>33</sup>

## 2.2 Livingstone and London Missionary Society: The Missionary Politics of Race and Religion during Livingstone's First Years in Africa, 1841-1848

Livingstone arrived in South Africa in 1841 as an eager young missionary, confident that he could bring Christianity to the heart of Africa. Before making his mark as an explorer, Livingstone gave most of his first decade in Africa to the missionary cause. In his 'apostolic commission,' he was joining a movement borne out of the British evangelical fervour of the late-eighteenth century. "Powered by a rediscovery of the gospel" and "driven by a faith that all human beings were potential believers," the evangelical movement quickly spread throughout the British empire in the first decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> Cast as an heroic calling, missionary work was charged with bringing the 'light' of the gospel to the 'fallen' and the 'savage' of the 'dark' regions of the world. Consequently, as anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff assert, "conversion required not only that would-be Christians

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>34</sup> John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume II: The Dialectics of Modernity on South African Frontier*, The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1997, p. 65.

accept the gospel, but that they discard all marks of degeneracy and primitivism. Heathens had to be made to *acknowledge* their base sinfulness, so that they might be given the means of recovering themselves.”<sup>35</sup> As Dr. John Philip, the LMS Superintendent in the Cape Colony and one of the most outspoken missionaries figures of the time, put it: “The elevation of a people from a state of barbarism to a high pitch of civilization supposes a revolution in the habits of that people, which it requires much time, and the operation of many cause to effect. By the preaching of the gospel, individuals ... may be suddenly elevated to a surprising height in the scale of improvement, and the influence of such a person, on a savage tribe, must be great.”<sup>36</sup>

Dogmatically sure of the superiority of their beliefs and the power of the ‘Word’ to ‘elevate’ non-believers, missionaries have long been cast both as saviours and as villains. They imposed themselves and their convictions on an often unwilling and unreceptive populace, functioned to undermine native cosmologies, cultural traditions and political systems, and sometimes worked hand in hand with colonists in enforcing colonial rule. Despite their paternalism and cultural arrogance, however, many missionaries strove diligently to fight slavery and forced labour practices, while some vigilantly battled colonists who were seeking to relocate, subjugate, or conquer native populations. As historian Catherine Hall remarks, “missionaries of different denominations are characterized as much

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64. Emphasis in original.

<sup>36</sup> John Philip, *Researches in South Africa; Illustrating the Civil, Moral and Religious Condition of the Native Tribes*, 2 vols., James Duncan: London, 1828, vol., II, p. 355.

by difference as by their similarities.”<sup>37</sup>

The non-denominational LMS arrived in South Africa soon after Britain gained control of the Cape Colony in 1795. Like Livingstone, many of the LMS missionaries working in South Africa in the first half of the nineteenth-century came from working-class backgrounds.<sup>38</sup> Paralleling the disproportionate number of Scots working in the British empire, many of these missionaries also hailed from Scotland (with a number of others coming from the north of England).<sup>39</sup> Livingstone was comparatively well educated compared to many of his colleagues. Few of these men (there were no female LMS missionaries in Africa,<sup>40</sup> only their wives) had a university education and many had little formal schooling. Moreover, as missionaries, most had been sent to Africa without much formal religious training. Driven by hard work and the ethic of self-help, men like Robert Moffat, had gained a measure of status and respectability after joining the ministry. Their

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<sup>37</sup> Catherine Hall, “Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s,” in *Cultural Studies*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, Routledge: New York, 1992, p. 243.

<sup>38</sup> See Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume I: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991, pp. 80-81.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> In 1875, the LMS began to accept applications from unmarried female missionaries who wanted to join the organization. As Jane Haggis argues, this corresponded with the “entry of middle-class British women into paid employment and professional careers during the latter decades on the nineteenth century.” See Jane Haggis, “‘A Heart that has Felt the Love of God and Longs for Others to Know It’: Conventions of Gender, Tensions of Self and Constructions of Difference in Offering to be a Missionary Lady,” *Women’s History Review*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1998, p. 171. Note that Haggis does not examine the LMS view of missionary wives before or after 1875.



skills as artisans, tradespeople and labourers were called upon in the LMS, as the society specifically sought out ‘craftful’ men trained in the ‘mechanic arts’ who were willing to endure the toil and privations of establishing remote mission stations. They needed these skills in constructing their Missions, while demonstrating the dignity that came with Christian inspired hard work, prudence and good will to the natives they hoped to convert.

Whatever their missionary skills, by the time Livingstone arrived in South Africa in 1841, LMS missionaries had become inexorably immersed in the complex racial politics of the Cape Colony and the colonial frontier. The volatile region was dominated by racial inequality and the seemingly unstoppable advance of colonial settlement on the disputed frontier.<sup>41</sup> In South Africa, the native Xhosa, Khoikhoi and San populations had progressively lost their land holdings. In the Cape Colony many Khoikhoi and San were forced to join the colony’s imported slave population in a state of indentured labour, bound for instance to Boer landowners as farmhands. On the eastern frontier, a series of battles pitting British soldiers against Africans and Africans against each other, produced a chain of annexations, as colonists and the Xhosa competed for valuable land and resources. During these conflicts, LMS missionaries were placed in a challenging and contradictory position between the region’s colonizers and colonized. Although they were not a unified group, the missionaries often pitted themselves against both the British colonial administration and white settler interests in attempting to win new legal rights for South Africa’s indigenous population. This created a heavily antagonistic relationship with the Boers, who believed

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<sup>41</sup> In Chapter Three, I provide a more detailed account of the historical relationship between the British and the native Xhosa, Khoikhoi and San populations of South Africa.

that missionary support “emboldened” the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa to resist the settlers’ political agenda.<sup>42</sup> As a number of scholars have argued, the missionary inspired success at frustrating Boer attempts to secure African land and labour in the Cape and along the frontier was one of the main factors that inspired the Great Trek. (Livingstone himself was a proponent of this view). As the Comaroffs have explained, however, the missionary support for African rights did not secure the trust of South Africa’s native populations. In many ways, with their competing agendas, the missionaries and the settlers “were competitors in the battle to gain control over black populations.”<sup>43</sup> In sharing the settlers’ whiteness, the missionaries “were always open to the suspicion of being colonial agents.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, while the missionaries may have won new civil rights for the Cape’s indigenous population, they did not succeed in effecting the number of conversions they hoped among these people.

Livingstone arrived in Capetown on March 15, 1841 and spent a month as a houseguest of the aforementioned John Philip. Philip was an authoritative figure in the Cape’s racial and religious politics and had been a vocal critic of the colonial administration and an immutable adversary of racial oppression throughout his long career in South Africa. In his letters, Livingstone admitted that he came to Capetown armed with negative ideas about Philip’s character. It is likely that his opinions were based on London missionary gossip and the apparently scathing disclosures of Robert Moffat. Because of his fight for African rights, Philip had made many enemies among the Cape Colony’s settler population.

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<sup>42</sup> Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. I, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

Yet, he also received the scorn of other LMS members who denounced him as authoritarian and uncompromising. Many of Livingstone's later biographers have argued that he was often swayed by rumour and innuendo in forming his opinions about other whites in Africa. Nevertheless, in a rare disclosure of personal culpability, Livingstone admitted that he had been wrong about Philip, who quickly became an important influence and role model in his life.

His change in attitude toward Philip is important. Philip and Livingstone had much in common and the elder LMS statesperson proved to be an important mentor in setting him on his missionary path. One of the many LMS members in the Cape Colony hailing from Scotland, Philip had also worked as a weaver in his youth. Forced to leave school, he "rose through self-education to become a mill manager."<sup>45</sup> However, his support for the rights of child and women labourers induced him to leave the mill and train for the ministry. Attracted to the LMS cause in South Africa, he arrived in the Cape in 1818 and soon became a passionate voice dedicated to championing the rights of the colony's indigenous populations. In the late 1820s, he travelled to England and exposed the racial oppression practised by Cape Colony settlers and enforced by British colonial officials. With the support of the abolitionist movement and the agitation of Thomas Fowell Buxton in the House of Commons, the colonial governor was forced to pass Ordinance 50. Preceding the 1833 Emancipation Act, the Ordinance granted the Khoikhoi, Xhosa and all other free persons of colour, the same basic civil rights as all British subjects in the Cape Colony.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Angus Calder, "Livingstone, Self-Help and Scotland," p. 85.

<sup>46</sup> The ordinance did not provide the same rights to legally owned slaves.

The legislation also overturned the apartheid-like laws on vagrancy which prohibited the free movement of the native population and often drove them into forced labour on white 'owned' land. At the time of Livingstone's arrival in Africa, the sixty-five year old Philip continued to contest the abuse of power perpetrated against Africans by Boer and British settlers in the Cape Colony and in the eastern frontier. With his reputation secured as a foe of the colonists, John Philip became, as historian Angus Calder has written, "a byword for malice amongst the Afrikaners until the fall of apartheid and perhaps beyond because of his championing of native Africans."<sup>47</sup>

In writing to his missionary friends in England, Livingstone hoped to clarify his position on Philip as well challenge the unflattering characterizations circulating about the LMS Superintendent in London missionary circles: "I want to set you right with respect to Dr. Philip concerning whom I was entirely wrong when in England," he wrote.<sup>48</sup> "I came to the Cape full of prejudice against him, but after living a month in his house and carefully scrutinizing his character, that prejudice was entirely dissolved and affection and the greatest respect took its place.... I am now heartily sorry I ever retailed anything said to me by missionaries whilst I was in England."<sup>49</sup> Philip, Livingstone conceded, might "have done some things which appeared tyrannical, but it must have been from a conviction that the part he took was the path of duty and the only way whereby he could advance the interests of the

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<sup>47</sup> Angus Calder, "Livingstone, Self-Help and Scotland," p. 85.

<sup>48</sup> Livingstone to T.L. Prentice, 3 August, 1841, as cited in *Letters and Documents, 1841-1872*, edited by Timothy Holmes, Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1990, p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

Saviour's cause."<sup>50</sup> In particular, Livingstone was impressed that Philip had "been a staunch advocate of the coloured population" and was willing to fight the virulent racism of the settler population.<sup>51</sup> As he told one friend, Philip "has been the means of saving from the most abject and cruel slavery all the Hottentots and not only them but all the Aborigines beyond the colony. The Boers hate him cordially. Many would think it doing God service to shoot him [sic]. They have an inveterate hatred of the coloured population and to him as their friend and advocate; you can't understand it, it is like caste in India."<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Livingstone was disturbed that some of his missionary colleagues - specifically those in Kuruman - had "imbibed a portion of" the settlers' sense of racial superiority.<sup>53</sup> "I name none [of the missionaries], but you will find none of it amongst the friends of Dr. Philip," he continued; "however you will understand what is meant by 'Colonial feelings' when you come."<sup>54</sup> After only a short time in South Africa, Livingstone had clearly recognized the pervasiveness of the racial intolerance promoted by British and Boer colonists in the Cape Colony, and he himself took a stand on the issue, siding with Philip and his supporters. "I am no partizan," he concluded, "but I am and always have been on the side of civil and

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> David Livingstone to David G. Watt, 7 July, 4 August, 1841, as cited in Harry Johnston, *Livingstone and the Exploration of Central Africa*, George Philip and Son: Liverpool, 1891, p. 65.

<sup>52</sup> Livingstone to T.L. Prentice, 3 August, 1841, *Letters and Documents*, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

religious liberty.”<sup>55</sup>

Livingstone’s support for Philip’s pro-African and anti-settler convictions is significant. It establishes that he arrived in Africa with firm opinions about the injustices of racial inequality and could identify a pronounced strain of racial prejudice among both his LMS associates and the Cape colonists. If Livingstone had been cautious as he set out to begin his missionary career, he would not have aligned himself with a radical like Philip. He could have easily joined his brethren, including Moffat, in denouncing the LMS Superintendent. Notably, he was not afraid to adopt an unpopular stance, either in sympathizing with Philip or in identifying and condemning the racial intolerance of others. Livingstone certainly was not free from shortsighted and unsympathetic observations about Africans, including the native peoples of the Cape region. He advanced often contradictory and ambivalent assertions about the racial ‘nature’ of all the dominant African ethnic groups he encountered in his years on the continent. Nevertheless, as I demonstrate throughout this study, his attitudes towards Africans throughout his life were radical and they separated him from most of his contemporaries.

After his sojourn in Capetown, Livingstone sailed to Port Elizabeth and then travelled by wagon to Kuruman, the mission station established by Robert Moffat in 1821. Located amongst the Tswana just south of Kalahari desert and north of the Cape Colony, Kuruman was a missionary outpost on the edge of settled frontier territory. On his arrival, Livingstone

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. When he returned to Cape Town ten years later, Livingstone was considerably more active in combatting the ‘colonial feelings’ of the Cape Colony’s settler population and of missionaries whom he believed sided with the colonists. My analysis of Livingstone’s early 1850s support for the Xhosa and Khoikhoi in their anti-colonial struggles forms the basis of Chapter Three.

was not impressed with the character of the other missionaries at Kuruman, or with the natural environment that surrounded the mission station. Moreover, to his surprise he found that the mission was not teeming with the number of Christianized Africans that the LMS had seemed to promise. He did admit that in the previous twenty years Kuruman had had “great success” in achieving conversions among the Tswana. But, in a letter to a friend who was contemplating missionary work, he wrote that for an inexperienced missionary “coming from England” African Christians were “invisible or nearly so” around Kuruman at that time.<sup>56</sup> Livingstone was eager to join his brethren in the drive to effectuate more conversions. Yet, he was discouraged that his experienced co-workers were immersed in disputes with neighbouring missionaries, rather than in their work with Africans. The missionaries were “in a sad state,” he wrote a friend in disgust; “whatever may have been the original cause of dispute, the present state of feeling amongst our brethren is disgraceful.”<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, in his eyes, the unpleasant atmosphere induced by the ill-will between missionaries was personified by the “dreary desert” with its “nakedness and sand” that surrounded Kuruman for most of the year.<sup>58</sup> He longed to explore the ‘unknown’ regions north of the mission where he could compare the wonders of the natural world to those which

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<sup>56</sup> David Livingstone to T.L. Prentice, 2 December, 1841, *Letters and Documents*, p. 16.

<sup>57</sup> David Livingstone to David G. Watt, 7 July, 4 August, 1841, as cited in H.H. Johnston, *Livingstone and the Exploration of Central Africa*, p. 64.

<sup>58</sup> David Livingstone to an unidentified correspondent, but perhaps David Watt, cited in Johnston., p. 71.

he had found along the Clyde riverbank in his youth.<sup>59</sup> A year into his time in Africa, Livingstone's fiercely independent spirit dictated that he set out on his own.

Livingstone's perception of Kuruman's leader Robert Moffat likely played an important role in his desire to work independently. Moffat was still in Britain when Livingstone arrived at Kuruman. Until Moffat returned to the mission station in late 1843, Livingstone harboured critical thoughts about what he understood to be the veteran missionary's view on the African capacity for spirituality and 'civilization.' Livingstone also took issue with Moffat's opposition to allowing African missionaries to preach the gospel. After his time with Philip and later at Kuruman, Livingstone became convinced that Moffat was one of the missionaries who had 'imbibed' a narrow-minded, racially intolerant view of Africans. In a February 1843 letter, he derided what he now believed was Moffat's simplistic conception of the Tswana's sense of morality:

when I think of the degeneration of these people, I shall be glad if you let me know if you believe they are really so very far sunk as has been represented. I heard Mr. Moffat say in England that the Bechuanas [Tswana] had really no conscience until it was formed by the missionaries. Now although the statement affected my visible faculties at the time, thinking it was only a poetical figure expressive of the wonderful creative powers of us sentelings [sentient beings], the same statement newly appearing in his book as I understand, inclines me to think that it was meant as plain prose.<sup>60</sup>

Livingstone argued that Moffat "honestly believed" that the 'degraded' state of the Tswana mind "found them destitute of the idea of God, of a future state, and the proper conception

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<sup>59</sup> In 1841, Livingstone was already amassing a collection of fascinating natural specimens discovered on his travels. He later sent some of these to the famed biologist Dr. Richard Owen at the British Museum in London.

<sup>60</sup> David Livingstone to Hamilton Dyke, 24 February, 1843, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.



of sin.”<sup>61</sup> After speaking with Tswana elders, Livingstone had been convinced that the Tswana people had long held preconceived, though ‘simplistic,’ notions of God, the afterlife and the nature of morality.<sup>62</sup> He was able to learn that common phrases referring to God or ‘Morimo’ had “been in the [Tswana] language from time immemorial,” learned long before any missionaries had arrived.<sup>63</sup>

In Livingstone’s view, Moffat’s failure to grasp the spiritual capacities of the Tswana was symptomatic of his opposition towards the placement of LMS educated African missionaries in frontier communities, a policy that at this time the LMS was proposing.<sup>64</sup> As Livingstone wrote: “The more I see of the country, its large extent of surface, with its population scattered and each tribe separated by a formidable distance from almost every other, I feel the more convinced that it will be impossible if not impolitic for the church to supply them all with Europeans. Native Christian can make known the way of life.”<sup>65</sup> In his brief time at Kuruman, Livingstone had worked closely with African Christians whom he

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<sup>61</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers, 1848-1853*, edited by Isaac Schapera, Capetown: Van Riebeeck Society, 1974, p. 100.

<sup>62</sup> For example, Livingstone asserted that “their ideas of sin were essentially the same as among ourselves: doing ... wrong, adultery, theft, murder, witchcraft, &c.” See Livingstone’s *South African Papers*, p. 101.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>64</sup> See David Livingstone to James MacLehose, 28 May, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656 for an example of Livingstone’s condemnation of Moffat’s view on native agency. Note that in the same letter he also praised Moffat’s efforts to spread missionary knowledge and understanding of the Tswana language.

<sup>65</sup> David Livingstone to J.J. Freeman, 3 July, 1842, in *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence, 1841-1856*, edited by Isaac Schapera, London: Chatto and Windus, 1961, p. 19.

believed would make good missionaries. As he declared in a letter, the “warm hearted among them make excellent teachers. They seem to get to the hearts of their fellows in a way we are ignorant of.”<sup>66</sup> Livingstone recognized that Africans were leery of listening to and learning from whites and would thus be apprehensive about receiving the gospel. “The native looks so much upon the gospel as just the ways and customs of white men that little progress is made,” he asserted, “but from their fellow natives, the truth comes directly into contact with their minds very much divested of that peculiar strangeness which attaches to foreigners in every country.”<sup>67</sup> As early as December 1841, Livingstone pressed these arguments to the Foreign Secretary of LMS.<sup>68</sup> Not surprisingly, when he later voiced this position in print, it angered many of his missionary colleagues who were opposed to native agency.

Missionaries tended to fall conclusively on opposing sides of the African agency issue, with Livingstone taking up a radical position on the subject. The Comaroffs have summed up the central problem in the debate: “Was a black Christian - still black, after all - to be trusted with the gospel? Or would he (never she) taint it with savage superstition as he translated and/or taught it?”<sup>69</sup> Critics of native agency argued that Africans placed in a

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<sup>66</sup> David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 7 April, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656.

<sup>67</sup> David Livingstone to T.L. Prentice, 2 December, 1841, as cited in *Letters and Documents*, p. 20.

<sup>68</sup> David Livingstone to J.J. Freeman, 22 December, 1841, in *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. II, p. 80.

position of spiritual authority frequently became arrogant or haughty, or simply lacked the aptitude necessary to impart the message of the scriptures. For these reasons many LMS members believed that native agents would need close supervision in order to guarantee the 'correct' transmission of their message. In practice, many missionaries expected African preachers and interpreters to act as jovial and uncritical "mouthpieces" of the gospel.<sup>70</sup> Some, including Robert Moffat, went so far as to demand that African agents reproduce "original sermons [first delivered by white missionaries] verbatim, complete with accompanying gestures" when preaching to their own people.<sup>71</sup> Conformity, for these LMS 'Nonconformists,' was a sign of faith, of "humble acquiescence before the elevating wisdom of the gospel."<sup>72</sup>

Livingstone's radical approach to native agency was in many ways responsible for the circuitous path his missionary career took during his first years in Africa. However, because his biographers have ignored his support for native agency, they have failed to note its role in motivating his interest in exploration. For example, a little over a year after arriving in Africa, Livingstone had decided that at "the outstations wholly under native teachers more conversions by far happen than at any of the [established] stations and it is really a pleasure to visit them. I intend therefore to refrain from fixing myself anywhere for

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

at least a few years and devote my time to extending the gospel by means of native agents.”<sup>73</sup>

His plan was to establish working links with northern Tswana-speakers, while placing Tswana missionaries in African communities to work as LMS evangelists. As a result, during his first three years in Africa, Livingstone made several long journeys into areas where missionaries had yet to travel. This included two long treks into what is now the north-east corner of South Africa, but was then largely ‘unexplored’ territory, beyond the influence of Boer trekkers who had settled in the Transvaal region.

At this early juncture in his career in Africa, Livingstone clearly saw himself as a roving missionary, dedicated to exploring new territory with the hope of expanding the sphere of LMS influence through the placement of native agents. As he told a friend, his work gave him a sense of freedom and independence: “I am very much a vagabond on the face of the earth and anywhere has to be home for me. But though it is only a bush at my head and a fire at my feet, it is no sacrifice to me.”<sup>74</sup> Elsewhere, he referred to this lifestyle as “Robinson Crusoeing it.”<sup>75</sup> Free from the domestic ‘constraints’ of marriage and fatherhood, he was the protagonist in the kind of frontier adventure story that his father had tried to prevent him from reading as a boy. In his view, he was thoroughly capable of not only surviving but of thriving in this missionary quest, while ‘helping’ Africans in the

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<sup>73</sup> David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 7 April, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656.

<sup>74</sup> David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 14 July, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, David Livingstone to Thomas Steele, 25 August, 1846, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10777.

process.

In fact, Livingstone did help settle some African agents in various outposts. However, his varied interests and goals often diverted him from his original plans. For example, Livingstone's ambition to push the boundaries of missionary influence by exploring the 'unknown' region north of the Kalahari desert gradually took precedence over other missionary matters. Nevertheless, he continued to be directly embroiled in the debate about African missionaries throughout his first decade in Africa.<sup>76</sup> In 1851, Livingstone published an article in the *British Quarterly Review* that dealt with the question of native agency in response to a discussion paper put forward by John Philip.<sup>77</sup> The anonymously attributed article, which he claimed caused some controversy when published, was critical in outlining the extent to which his views on missionary practice differed from established protocols.<sup>78</sup> Livingstone's argument called not only for more African missionaries, but also went as far as appealing for the establishment of independent African churches. Despite his early discovery that there were fewer converts at Kuruman than he had imagined, he now argued

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<sup>76</sup> In 1847, for instance, he called for the establishment of "an Institution for the education of native teachers" with "every effort" to be made by missionaries to find "suitable individuals" to teach in and attend the training facility. Livingstone later explained that he was persuaded to withdraw this proposal after a number of his "honoured brethren" opposed the idea. See David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 17 March, 1847, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>77</sup> The anonymous article was published as "Letter to the Directors of the London Missionary Society, on the Present State of the Institutions in the Colony and the Cape of Good Hope," *British Quarterly Review*, vol. 14, August, 1851, pp. 106-113. The article was reprinted by Schapera in Livingstone's *South African Papers*.

<sup>78</sup> "It had created quite a sensation among our Directors," he told his sister Agnes Livingstone. He ascertained that he was suspected of being its author. David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 29 December 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 160.

that the success of LMS missionaries in working with South Africans had revealed “that there was no insuperable barrier to the evangelization of large masses of the population.”<sup>79</sup> To accomplish this great task, reinforcements were needed, not from Europe, but from the ranks of the “moral and industrious” converts who had benefited from a missionary education and were now ready to impart the gospel in their own communities.<sup>80</sup>

In Livingstone’s mind, it was also time to give African Christians the autonomy to run their own spiritual affairs. As he told the Directors of the LMS: “Deprive a people of the practice of managing their own affairs, and you deprive them of the power of so doing. After they profess faith in Christ, not to enjoin upon them the practice of supporting their own pastors, is to preclude them from the capacity for self-government.”<sup>81</sup> This led to his strong support for the LMS proposal to pull its own missionaries out of established and successful South African missions. Livingstone was convinced that these missions were ready and able to support African pastors. In his view, if Europeans continued to act as the primary messengers of the ‘Word,’ the development of strong, independent African Christian communities in South Africa would be continually obstructed. He argued that in traditional LMS missions, Africans

acquire the habit of looking for another to prompt them in all religious matters, except those of mere routine, and have their faculties only half developed. They trust to the central European authority in all religious

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<sup>79</sup> David Livingstone, “Letter to the Directors of the London Missionary Society, on the Present State of the Institutions in the Colony and the Cape of Good Hope,” *Livingstone’s South African Papers, 1848-1853*, p. 99.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

matters; have small reverence for the opinions of their countrymen - viz. native teachers, though these are derived from the same source as are those of the European, and hence they present the phenomenon of a people in perpetual leading strings. The Missionary Society, so long as the present system is kept up, is virtually a go-cart to them, and until it is abolished the full energy of Christian men will never be developed.<sup>82</sup>

Livingstone was clearly confident that if African Christians were given the opportunity to preach in their own communities without European interference, Christianity would flourish in unprecedented ways in South Africa. However, few of Livingstone's LMS colleagues shared his confidence in the spiritual and intellectual abilities of Africans. The Directors of the LMS did approve the limited placement of native agents. But, at the time, Livingstone's suggestion that the Society create independent African congregations was championed by only the most radical LMS missionaries.

In late 1843, Robert Moffat (and his family) returned to Kuruman after a four year absence. As with Philip, Livingstone soon changed his opinion on Moffat.<sup>83</sup> Although there were occasional tensions in their relationship after this point, the two Scots remained close friends and confidants during the remainder of their days. Yet, Livingstone and Moffat never agreed on the innate capacities they believed Africans had the potential to demonstrate. For example, at some point after his return from Britain, Moffat became a reluctant supporter of

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> After Moffat's return, Livingstone was actually convinced that he was a supporter of native agency. As he told his parents: "He is not, as I was informed by some who knew him, in the least opposed to native agency. He is a warm friend to them, but his character has been traduced by many who ought to have known better." After receiving a copy of Moffat's book, Livingstone also sung its praises, asking his parents if they had read the "excellent" work. David Livingstone to his parents, 16 December, 1843 and 27 April, 1844, *Family Letters*, vol. I, pp. 89, 96.

native agency. However, by the time Livingstone's article appeared in the *British Quarterly Review*, he had re-thought this position, leading him to criticize his son-in-law's stance on the issue. In an 1852 letter to the Foreign Secretary of the LMS, Moffat complained that Livingstone's "remarks on Native teachers [were] exaggerated and some very erroneous. [Livingstone] had what no Missionary had, two native teachers at his station [at Kolobeng], the two best, the very pick of all. And as to anything that they have accomplished, we are of the opinion he would have been better without them."<sup>84</sup> Moffat may have dedicated his life to the 'improvement' of the Tswana. Yet paradoxically, he refused to admit that Africans could actually 'improve' much beyond a state of 'savagery' and 'heathenism.' Although they could become Christians, in his view, Africans could not attain the mental, spiritual, or moral position of Europeans.

As this study proceeds, it becomes clear that Livingstone held the firm belief that all Africans were essentially no different from Europeans (or anybody else). In his view, Africans might have been spiritually, culturally and politically 'backward,' but he was convinced that they had the same inherent mental, moral and physical abilities as the missionaries who tried to convert them. In his paternalistic view, Africans simply needed to be introduced to the 'benefits' of British 'civilization' to reach their potential as human beings, a potential that was as great as any British citizen's. For Livingstone, native agents and independent African churches were indicative of the African capacity for 'improvement' and racial 'equality.' Yet in his mind, they were also symbolic of Britain's 'civilizing' power.

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<sup>84</sup> Robert Moffat to Arthur Tidman, Livingstone's *South African Papers*, p. 111.



2.3 From Bachelor ‘Vagabond’ to Married Missionary: David Livingstone, Mary (Moffat) Livingstone and Missionary Domesticity, 1841-1848

Livingstone’s friendship with Moffat may have been inspired in part by his interest in Moffat’s eldest daughter Mary. On his arrival in Africa as a bachelor, Livingstone had been outspoken in his defence of his “celibate” lifestyle and disparaging towards married missionaries. Until his engagement to Mary Moffat in 1844, Livingstone’s letters to his friends frequently included updates about his prospects for marriage, often written in jest. However, the letters also demonstrate his concern with the gender role he was expected to assume as a missionary husband, both in British and African society. For example, in writing to Margaret Sewell, his widowed friend in London with whom he shared some of his most intimate thoughts about marriage, Livingstone was ready to declare: “I am happy to inform you how exceedingly comfortable is my celibacy and with respect to the natives not understanding my motives without a wife, ‘it is all fudge.’ Now observe I am not saying a word of disparagement about marriage.”<sup>85</sup>

Livingstone was clearly frustrated because he had not yet met a woman who would accept him in marriage or whom he thought would make a suitable spouse. He had developed feelings for a middle-class woman he had met while training as a missionary in Ongar, Essex. Yet, perhaps because of their class differences, he did not propose marriage before leaving for Africa. She subsequently married a middle-class missionary student after

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<sup>85</sup> According to Livingstone, his relationship with Sewell even sparked rumours that he intended to marry the “young widow in London.” David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 7 April, 1842 and 14 July, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656.

Livingstone's departure for Africa. Livingstone's frustration with continued bachelorhood was revealed in a letter he wrote to a recently married friend in which he exclaimed: "I suppose from the tenor of your last letter - it being a kind of apologetic-for-marriage strain - you are nearly about to multiply, increase and replenish the earth. Hoot! Man, there are plenty at that work without you."<sup>86</sup> In surveying the 'field' of potential wives, Livingstone found that his only option was to marry the daughter of a fellow missionary. Yet, he had already denounced the narrow-mindedness and intolerance of his missionary brethren. This led him to conclude that their daughters shared their prejudices, if not their 'colonial feelings.' In continuing his letter to his married friend, he made these feelings explicit in declaring: "Here although I was inclined to be foolish, there is nobody worth taking one's hat off to. Daughters of missionaries have miserably contracted minds."<sup>87</sup> In the hope of finding a more suitable marriage candidate, Livingstone joked that he might even send "home an advertisement to the *Evangelical Magazine*" in which we would presumably set out what qualities he was looking for in a wife.<sup>88</sup>

Livingstone made these remarks shortly after he and another missionary received

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<sup>86</sup> David Livingstone to David Watt, 27 September, 1843, cited in Johnston, p. 73.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. Livingstone was somewhat more positive in his description of the mothers of these women. In a letter to Margaret Sewell, he came to their defence after he had heard that Robert Moffat's wife Mary had been highly critical of other missionaries' wives. "I have been in the houses of all the missionaries," he professed. "I know all their wives and have seen them at work and although I have no doubt [that] they each have their failings, they are an invaluable part of the machinery of this country. I think either as individuals or as a whole they are entitled to rank much higher than the minister's wives at home. I don't know a useless one among them." David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 7 April, 1842, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656.

<sup>88</sup> David Livingstone to David Watt, 27 September, 1843, cited in Seaver, p. 85.

LMS approval to establish a new mission station at Mabotsa, 220 miles north-east of Kuruman. At this point, it apparently became clear to Livingstone that if the mission was to succeed, he needed a wife. Although they could not become preachers, the wives of LMS missionaries were essential to the operation of a mission station. In addition to attending to traditional domestic duties, missionary wives also had a crucial part to play in helping to convert 'heathen' women. By teaching English or sewing skills to African women, missionary wives gained important access to these women in ways their missionary husbands could not.<sup>89</sup> On top of this, wives were also needed to set a 'proper' domestic example, particularly in African communities that practised polygamy. In enjoying his 'vagabond' days at Kuruman, Livingstone had eschewed the importance of a wife and partner to his missionary career. However, when faced the responsibility of building both a mission station and his missionary career, he evidently realized the importance of finding a marriage partner. Yet, it is clear that he was searching for a woman who shared his racial politics, including his support for native agency and his abolitionist principles. Moreover, it was also vital to Livingstone to find a wife who would not be adverse to African travel, a hardy woman who might have even experienced long journeys across southern Africa.

After 'rejecting' the women he believed were eligible, Livingstone seemed eager to meet Mary Moffat after her return from Britain in late 1843. He demonstrated his anticipation by travelling out to meet the Moffat family before they reached Kuruman as they made the long journey from Cape Town. After a short stay at Kuruman with the Moffats, Livingstone trekked back to Mabotsa to continue building the mission station with his

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<sup>89</sup> See Hall, "Missionary Stories," p. 251.

married LMS colleague Rogers Edwards. However, Livingstone returned to Kuruman in July 1844, after he had been almost fatally attacked by a lion in February. The bone in his upper left arm had been shattered in the attack and he had been forced to set it by himself without an anaesthetic. The injury did not heal properly and he was left incapacitated and in pain at Mabotsa, although in his letters he refused to admit that the injury kept him from pursuing his duties. It unclear whether his injury precipitated his decision, but soon after Livingstone arrived in Kuruman he proposed to Mary. His proposal was in the form of a tentative and carefully worded letter, delivered in this fashion, he maintained, so that Mary would have an opportunity to think about the offer before responding.

Like Livingstone, the twenty-three year old Mary Moffat had few other options in choosing a marriage partner. Most of her father's LMS colleagues were married on their arrival in Africa. The only single men she met at Kuruman were British traders or wealthy adventurers passing through the area on their way to somewhere else. Because so few of her writings have ever surfaced, there are no letters that shed light on why she decided to marry Livingstone and what qualities she saw in her new fiancé. Whatever her reasons, the couple were married at Kuruman in January 1845.

Most of Livingstone's biographers have generally decided that he married Mary Moffat as something of a 'last resort.' At best, their union is seen as a marriage of convenience between two people with few prospects other than each other.<sup>90</sup> Livingstone's early biographers, following William Blaikie, portrayed the couple's marriage as happy, or

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<sup>90</sup> For example, see Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 60.

touched on their relationship only briefly, painting Mary as a good, hardworking wife.<sup>91</sup> Later biographers, particularly Jeal, have denigrated her as “fat and plain” and “fortunate to get married at all.”<sup>92</sup> Despite a lack of evidence from her own pen, these studies have habitually cast Mary Livingstone as a naive and weak-willed woman who was easily manipulated by her domineering husband. It is clear that in placing his plans for Africa ahead of his wife and children, Livingstone never became a dedicated husband and family man. For Livingstone, the goals of ending slavery, introducing ‘legitimate’ trade and bringing ‘civilization’ to Africa far outweighed any desire he might have had to establish a contented home life. With a husband who devoted his life to a higher cause, Mary Livingstone’s life was seldom easy, even after Livingstone achieved his great fame. Yet, it is clear that in marriage the couple grew to love each other and that there were a number of factors which strengthened their relationship. For example, Livingstone’s biographers have disregarded the fact that they shared a sense of humour, which led to a “decorous amount of merriment and play” in their marriage.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, by universally ignoring Mary’s life before she met Livingstone, these biographers have failed to see that she was a resilient, hardy and independent woman who went into her marriage well prepared for Livingstone’s ‘vagabond’ missionary lifestyle.

As the oldest of ten missionary children (seven who survived into adulthood), Mary

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<sup>91</sup> See Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 58.

<sup>92</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 60.

<sup>93</sup> David Livingstone, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal, 1861-1864*, edited by Gary Clendennen, Scottish Cultural Press: Aberdeen, p. 25

Livingstone had a very different upbringing than her husband. Yet, if anything could have readied her for her life with Livingstone, it was her childhood and youth as the daughter of a missionary couple like the Moffats. From an early age, she learned how to prevail when confronted by the hardships of life on the South African frontier. She developed the mental and physical toughness necessary to combat difficult journeys and long separations from loved ones. With six years of schooling in the Cape Colony, she developed her mind as well as the skills she needed to teach at a mission. After spending three years in Britain in her late teens, she was also exposed to a much broader world than has been assumed. As her biographer has revealed, Mary Moffat's first home was a hut with a mud floor.<sup>94</sup> She learned to speak the Tswana language at the same time as she learned English. From her 'nurse,' a former slave, she even "picked up of the difficult clicking language" of the San, a skill Livingstone later wished he had.<sup>95</sup> At three, she was taken on her first ox-pulled waggon journey to Cape Town, a distance of over 800 miles. When her mother was busy teaching the mission children or working with their mothers, young Mary was often left in charge of her three younger siblings. At ten, she and her younger sister Ann made the five-week journey to their new school at Salem, run by Wesleyan missionaries and Quakers. Salem was a village in the 'buffer zone' of the Cape Colony in a region annexed from the Xhosa by the

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<sup>94</sup> Edna Healey, *Wives of Fame: Mary Livingstone, Jenny Marx, Emma Darwin*, Sidgwick and Jackson: London, 1986, p. 7. Note that these are popular biographies. Healey provides no citations in her chapters on these women. Her account of Mary Livingstone is based primarily on the published letters and journals of David Livingstone and Robert and Mary Moffat.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

British Crown.<sup>96</sup> It was also close to Grahamstown, the centre of pro-settler and anti-missionary sentiment in the Cape Colony. As a result, during her time at the school Mary was often taunted by Grahamstown settlers and was even on occasion forced to lodge “during the holidays with unwilling hosts.”<sup>97</sup> In 1835, at the age of fourteen she had to make the long trek back to Kuruman after her mother became seriously ill during her eighth pregnancy and her father was away on a government-funded expedition. Here again she was called upon to care for her younger siblings, interrupting her education, until her mother was well (and also pregnant) again. The following year she and two siblings were sent to a new school in Cape Town, (likely because the area around Salem had become a war zone).<sup>98</sup> She remained here for three years acquiring the skills and credentials she needed to teach African children in a mission school.

In 1839, Mary and her family sailed to Britain so that Robert Moffat could publish and publicize his *Missionary Labours and Scenes in South Africa* (1842). For Mary, this was a reunion with her father, whom she had not seen in over eight years. On the voyage to Britain (by way of India), the forty-four year old Mrs. Moffat was again pregnant and Mary was delegated with caring for her siblings, one of whom who died after contracting the measles during the long sea-voyage. During their time in Britain, Mary and the rest of the family followed their father while he gave lectures discussing missionary principles and

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<sup>96</sup> See Map 1, Appendix 1.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>98</sup> During the 1835 ‘Frontier War’ between the British and Xhosa, Salem was surrounded by Xhosa warriors, but was not attacked.

objectives. When her mother became pregnant yet again, Mary and Ann lodged with friends of the Moffats. At some point during their stay in Britain, Mary also became “half-engaged to an unnamed cousin.”<sup>99</sup> The Moffats departed for Africa in early 1843, with the plan that Mary would return to Kuruman to teach at the mission. On reaching ‘home’ she was introduced to Livingstone and began her married life a year later.

After a life like this, marriage might have seemed like an escape for Mary. Yet at the same time, she must have known that her husband’s duties and ambitions were similar to her father’s and that her future might mirror her mother’s life as a missionary wife. Her biographer has made it clear that Mary was not a callow young woman heading blindly into a life of hardship. As she writes: “From extreme youth Mary learned to shoulder responsibility and had seen the sober reality of missionary life. She had observed the loneliness of missionary wives, she had watched them endure constant childbearing in primitive conditions, and she had known the agony of separation from her family. She had also experienced from the earliest childhood the difficulties of travel by ox waggon.”<sup>100</sup>

This outline of Mary’s early years should in no way excuse Livingstone’s actions during their marriage. However, it does illustrate the traditional position of LMS missionary wives and daughters in early and mid-nineteenth century Africa and Britain. Tied to their families, missionary women like Mary Moffat had little autonomy and few options in life. Yet, it is too easy to cast Mary as a simple victim of her circumstances. She had more education and had experienced more cultural diversity than many other young white women

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<sup>99</sup> Healey, p. 12.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



in Africa or in Britain. She was an intelligent, strong and industrious woman who cared for her siblings and for her husband and children. Ultimately, Mary Moffat had many, if not all, of the qualities Livingstone had hoped to find in a wife. He wanted to marry an 'open-minded' woman with whom he could discuss South Africa racial and missionary politics (topics he often wrote about in letters to his mother and sisters). With her experience at Kuruman, Salem and Cape Town, Mary was well prepared to bring an informed opinion to his discussions with her husband. Her teacher training and language skills also made her a valuable missionary partner. As Livingstone quickly discovered, his wife also demonstrated a laudable work ethic, a trait he rarely found in British men in Africa. Moreover, after her marriage, Mary forged a unique position as a missionary wife by insisting on being a part of her husband's explorative journeys.

After their marriage ceremony, David and Mary Livingstone moved into the house Livingstone had built at Mabotsa, the mission-station he had co-founded with Rogers Edwards, an LMS missionary-carpenter twenty years his senior. Mary soon established an 'infant school' for the village's children. She also became pregnant for the first time and delivered Robert in December, 1845. However, the family's stay at Mabotsa was short. Livingstone never got along with Edwards and decided to seek a mission station where he and Mary could live and work on their own. Three years earlier, he had befriended a Tswana 'chief' named Sechele. He had been highly impressed with the man's character and intelligence and was excited by the interest the 'chief' showed in Christian thought. On a later visit to Sechele, Livingstone convinced him to accept a LMS mission among his people. Escaping Edwards and Mabotsa in late 1845, the Livingstones joined Sechele and his Kwena 'clan'

at Chonuane (or Chonwane), a village forty miles to the north. However, because of a severe drought in the region, they stayed in the village for only a year, during which time Mary gave birth to Agnes. In early 1847, the Livingstones moved with Sechele and his Kwena to Kolobeng, a village forty miles to the north-west.

At Kolobeng, life assumed a certain stability for the growing family. They built a home, acquired furniture and attempted to make a breakthrough in their missionary work by convincing the villagers to accept the gospel. Mary was able to establish an 'infant and sewing school,' which meant teaching eighty Kwena children, while imparting sewing skills to the village women.<sup>101</sup> She also had her own children to attend to, in addition to an unending array of domestic chores. Livingstone was clearly impressed with his wife's energy and effort in attending to her mission 'duties.' In his writings he detailed the toil that was a necessary part of missionary "housekeeping," praising Mary's pioneering skill in baking bread, moulding candles, churning butter and producing soap.<sup>102</sup> In describing her 'average' day at Kolobeng, he extolled her work ethic (and also counted himself lucky). "My better half is employed all morning in culinary or other work and feeling pretty well tired by dinner time," he wrote.<sup>103</sup> "We take about an hour's rest then, but more frequently without the respite I try to secure for myself, she goes off to the infants' school and this I am happy to

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<sup>101</sup> After the birth of the couple's third child, Thomas in March 1849, Mary gave up the school to concentrate on her own children.

<sup>102</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 40.

<sup>103</sup> David Livingstone to David Watt, 13 February, 1848, *Letters and Documents*, p. 26.

say is very popular with the youngsters.”<sup>104</sup> For Livingstone, Mary’s efforts, matched by his own “manual labour” had produced a sense of domestic harmony for the missionary couple.<sup>105</sup> Irrespective of his wife’s feelings on the issue, he was able to conclude that “married life is all the sweeter when so many comforts emanate directly from the thrifty striving housewife’s hands.”<sup>106</sup> Years later, in an 1857 speech to the Royal Geographical Society in London, Livingstone used a public/private sphere taxonomy in delineating the gendered parameters of their domestic ‘arrangement.’ He drew loud applause from the male audience in commenting that Mary “kn[ew] that the wife must be the maid-of-all-the-work within, while the husband must be the jack-of-all-trades-without” in a missionary family.<sup>107</sup>

Livingstone could not help but be satisfied that his wife was seemingly willing and able to fulfill, if not exceed, the gendered expectations of a missionary wife. Mary, however, was less sanguine about her life at Kolobeng. As her biographer has written: “It is not surprising that there are few letters from Mary - an occasional postscript scribbled on David’s letters, or a brief message.”<sup>108</sup> Clearly, she did not have time to sit down to write many letters or journal entries. In one of her few (known) written statements from this (or any other) period, Mary was frank about the domestic role of missionaries wives. In a note to her mother-in-law, she despaired over the ceaseless series of chores she faced, which included

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> “Farewell Banquet to Dr. Livingstone,” *The Times*, 15 February, 1858.

<sup>108</sup> Healey, p. 19.

knitting clothing for herself and her family. “My dear mother I have not much time to write anyone,” she declared.<sup>109</sup> “Missionaries’ wives have not much time to knit stockings in this country, as they have to act as domestic drudges.”<sup>110</sup>

Livingstone recognized that his wife was overworked and he was even sympathetic towards her domestic plight.<sup>111</sup> Yet, in his mind, missionary work, whether it was exploring, building a home, baking bread or knitting clothes, was all part of a higher purpose. Inspired by his evangelical beliefs, he followed the missionary axiom that missionary toil was all part of a sacrifice for a greater good. Livingstone firmly believed that his work in Africa served the humanitarian goal of ‘helping’ Africans. This sense of purpose motivated him throughout his years in Africa. It gave him the resolve to confront great obstacles and overcome hardships. Because she wrote so few letters, it is unclear whether Mary Livingstone shared this sense of purpose. Her domestic work evidently gave her little satisfaction. Because she did not have time to write, it is unclear whether teaching Africans to read, write and sew gave her much gratification. Nevertheless, she continued to demonstrate the tenacity to carry on with her domestic drudgery, her teaching and the

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<sup>109</sup> Mary Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, added to a letter written by Livingstone to his mother, 4 May, 1847, *Family Letters*, vol. I, pp. 199-200.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> For example, in a letter to his brother Charles, Livingstone explained that “Mary has very little time for anything except household matters. She had an infant school which was very well attended, but the appearance of Thomas Steele, our third [child], made her give that up. Three children and domestic matters engross her most of the time, so you need not expect to hear much from her. We have many things to attend to, I can scarcely spare an hour for correspondence except in winter. I am in general quite exhausted by the evening & how it is with her you may guess.” David Livingstone to Charles Livingstone, 16 May, 1849, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 55.

demands of motherhood. As I examine in section 2.5, she also had the fortitude to join her husband on difficult ox waggon journeys across the Kalahari desert.

#### 2.4 Livingstone and his Sole Convert: Sechele, Christianity and the Missionary Politics of Conversion, 1847-1849

After arriving in Kolobeng in 1847, Livingstone's main goal was to achieve his first conversion. To this point in his career, he had had little success as a preacher and had yet to convince any Africans to embrace the gospel. He thus concentrated on articulating the merits of Christianity to Sechele, his star pupil at the mission station. He had been struck by the Tswana chief's inquisitiveness about theology after their first meeting in 1842.<sup>112</sup> Three years later he was profoundly impressed with the facility with which Sechele had learned to read and write the Tswana language.<sup>113</sup> "His love of reading is really striking," he told Robert Moffat; "he has read all our books twice [and] is now in the Psalms, the second reading of the Testament."<sup>114</sup> In fact, Livingstone believed that because of his newfound devotion to reading, Sechele had lost the slim physique he had achieved through hunting and

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<sup>112</sup> See David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 24 June 1843, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 36.

<sup>113</sup> He was also struck, for example, that Sechele "acquired a perfect knowledge of the alphabet, large, small & mixed in two days." David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 5 September, 1845, *Family Letters*, vol. 1, p. 143.

<sup>114</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 29 September - 14 October 1847, *Livingstone's Family Letters*, vol. 1, p. 219.

“had become quite corpulent from want of exercise.”<sup>115</sup> In letters to his family from the period, Livingstone characterized his first enthusiastic student as a “sensible” and “clever man.”<sup>116</sup> He was also delighted that Sechele had “an intense desire for everything connected with civilization.”<sup>117</sup>

Under Livingstone’s tutelage at Kolobeng, Sechele continue to embrace Christian theology and learning. However, he would not commit to an official conversion. Livingstone and Sechele both realized the biggest obstacle to his baptism were his five (or perhaps six) wives.<sup>118</sup> Polygamy had long been the concern of missionaries intent on rooting out ‘primitive’ sexuality and inculcating the righteousness of a Christian monogamous marriage. As the Comaroffs state, for missionaries polygamy “violated the Christian ideal of marriage and the family as the cradle of moral being.”<sup>119</sup> Yet, most missionaries who tried to “banish the ‘barbarism’ of plural marriage ... had scant idea what was at issue.”<sup>120</sup> As the

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<sup>115</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 16.

<sup>116</sup> David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 11 November 1845, *Family Letters*, vol. I, p. 157.

<sup>117</sup> David Livingstone to Charles Livingstone, 16 March 1847, *Family Letters*, vol. I, p. 191. A decade later, in *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone also spoke highly of Sechele, calling him a “remarkable man” and providing examples of his keen ability to read and write and understand the bible. David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, pp. 14-19

<sup>118</sup> In his study of Sechele, Anthony Sillery lists six wives, but relates that first-hand “informants” who visited the Kwena in the 1840s accounted for only four or five wives. Livingstone seems to have identified only five wives. Jeal states also the Sechele had five wives. See Anthony Sillery, *Sechele: The Story of an African Chief*, George Ronald: Oxford, 1954, pp. 91-92 and Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 79.

<sup>119</sup> John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. II, p. 73.

<sup>120</sup> Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revelation*, vol. I, p. 132.

preserve of the powerful and wealthy, the polygamous household was “the quintessential domestic unit” in pre-colonial Tswana society.<sup>121</sup> In this system of inter-tribal hierarchies, the Tswana socio-political order was rooted in the domestic arrangements engendered by marriage. Hence, the influence of hereditary leaders like Sechele “rested heavily on affinal alliance.”<sup>122</sup> Two of his wives, for example, were the daughters of powerful under-chiefs who had been instrumental in fostering Sechele’s royal ascension as leader of the Kwena after the assassination of his father.<sup>123</sup> He also depended on the support of surrounding chiefs who were opposed to his conversion and the threat it posed to Tswana social systems. Thus, if Sechele was to renounce his ‘superfluous’ wives and embrace Christianity and its separate domestic rules, he faced the threat of reprisal, if not a significant challenge to his leadership.

Although he professed a disdain for polygamy, Livingstone empathized with Sechele’s plight. “He asked me to send him away to some other country in order that he might without distraction attend to instructions for three or four years,” Livingstone told a friend.<sup>124</sup> Sechele’s hope was that his “wives might in the meantime ... become married to others.”<sup>125</sup> Moreover, Livingstone liked Sechele’s wives. In his view, they were Kuruman’s

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. II, p. 73.

<sup>123</sup> Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 1 November 1848, *Missionary Correspondence*, p. 119. In *Missionary Travels*, however, Livingstone says that three of Sechele’s wives were the daughters of under-chiefs, p. 15.

<sup>124</sup> David Livingstone to James Risdon Bennett, 23 June, 1848, *Letters and Documents*, p. 32.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

best scholars and also “the most agreeable females in the town.”<sup>126</sup> However, at a point when Livingstone was prepared to concede that his student might never convert, Sechele announced that he was willing to brave the consequences and was ready to accept the gospel. With Livingstone’s support he made the difficult decision to find new homes for his ‘superfluous’ wives. Although his last wife Mokokon was nursing the couple’s young daughter and had no other family in the village, she was allowed to stay in Kuruman. Sechele remained ‘married’ to his first wife Selemeng, who was mother of his successor Sebele.<sup>127</sup> Livingstone reported that to assuage the anger of his people with this turn of events, Sechele offered to let those who “wished to kill him ... do so immediately.”<sup>128</sup> However, two months later, in October 1848, Livingstone was able to baptise his one and only convert.

In the months after his conversion, Sechele continued to delight Livingstone by embracing signs of ‘civilization.’ As I explain in detail in Chapter Five, Livingstone believed literacy - in any language - was a crucial element in building a ‘civilized’ society.

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<sup>126</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 29 September - 14 October 1847, *Family Letters*, vol. 1, p. 219 and David Livingstone to James Risdon Bennett, 23 June, 1848, *Letters and Documents*, p. 32.

<sup>127</sup> According to Livingstone, Selemeng was the only wife who was hostile to Christianity. In *Missionary Travels*, he described her as “about the most unlikely subject in the tribe to become anything else than an out-and-out greasy disciple of the old school.... [A]gain and again, I have seen Sechele send her out of church to put her gown on, and away she would go with her lips shot out, the very picture of unutterable disgust at his new-fangled notions.” He did admit that she later became more accepting of Christianity. David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 18.

<sup>128</sup> David Livingstone, *Private Journals, 1851-1853*, edited by Isaac Schapera, Berkeley: University of California, 1960, p. 298.



He was thus particularly pleased that Sechele learned to read and write in English, thereby becoming literate in two languages. Yet, Sechele's status as an LMS certified Christian did not last long. In March 1849, Livingstone noticed that Mokokon was pregnant. When questioned, Sechele readily acknowledged that he had engaged in sexual relations with her in the period after his baptism. After admitting this transgression, in Livingstone's words "he exhibited all the symptoms of deep sorrow, and asked if by [giving Mokokon up] he might obtain forgiveness..."<sup>129</sup> Livingstone was deeply disappointed by Sechele's 'adultery,' but understood how it could have happened. He realized that polygamy was an ingrained social system and a time-honoured practice among the Tswana and other African nations. As a result, he reasoned that Sechele's act should be judged on a different basis than the adultery of a man born into the tradition of Christian monogamous marriage. In Livingstone's view, Sechele's "connection" with Mokokon "required no effort such as going to another man's wife would have done. He had been so accustomed to [heathen] customs, it was like his ordinary food."<sup>130</sup> After consulting with Paul and Mebalwe, the two African missionaries at Kuruman, it was decided that Sechele should be suspended "for a time, in order to see the fruits of repentance."<sup>131</sup> A few weeks later, Livingstone was ready to

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<sup>129</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 11 April, 1849, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 30.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* Paul was one of Robert Moffat's "earliest conversions, and the 'oldest deacon' of the church at Kuruman." He began working as a 'native agent' in 1834. After his conversion, Paul abandoned his African name which meant 'Father of Darkness.' David Mebalwe was related to Paul. Livingstone preferred calling him by his African name, because he was opposed to giving converts new Christian names. When Livingstone was attacked by the lion at Mabotsa in 1844, Mebalwe's actions likely saved Livingstone's life. After grabbing a gun from another man, Mebalwe had fired two shots at the lion (following

pronounce: “the first paroxysms of grief are over, we think we have reason to hope that he has been truly converted.... [N]or have we heard anything ... to make us disbelieve his frequent declaration, ‘I shall never tloboga [give up] Jesus.’”<sup>132</sup>

Livingstone was clearly willing to give Sechele another chance after his admitted sexual impropriety.<sup>133</sup> He believed the Tswana chief had shown great strength of character in his struggle to become a baptized Christian. In his mind, Sechele had courageously endeavoured to learn the teachings of the gospel and had embraced the manhood expected of a follower of Christ. Despite the unpopularity of his convictions, he challenged the opposition of his people and risked his leadership of the Kwena. He had shown such determination in making his choice that in Livingstone’s mind he deserved a measure of leniency from the LMS. However, when the LMS reviewed his case, Sechele was officially suspended from the church for an indeterminate amount of time.

On the surface, it might have seemed that there was no racially based ‘double standard’ practised by the London Missionary Society in its treatment of adulterers. The LMS claimed that it would not tolerate “the atrocious crime of adultery” among its converts

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two earlier shots by Livingstone), but the gun misfired. He succeeded in diverting the animal’s attention from Livingstone and in the melee received a severe gash on the thigh from the lion. See Livingstone’s *Missionary Correspondence*, pp. 81 note #2, 102.

<sup>132</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 11 April, 1849, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 30.

<sup>133</sup> Livingstone’s was not willing to give all African Christian adulterers a second chance. For example, after Paul’s son Isaac (a longtime Christian) was found to have committed adultery, Livingstone reacted critically and decisively. According to Livingstone, Isaac had tried to keep his act secret and showed no remorse when he was caught. As a result, his church membership was rescinded. See David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 23 March, 1849, *Missionary Letters*, vol II, p. 27.

any more than it would among its own missionaries.<sup>134</sup> For example, in 1816 James Read, one of the first LMS missionaries to arrive in Africa, was found to have committed adultery. After an LMS inquiry into his actions, he was suspended from duty and forbidden to preach to his congregation. (However, he was allowed to remain at his mission station with his family). There were other official incidents of adultery committed by LMS missionaries, but like Read's 'indiscretion' most of these were cases in which white missionaries engaged in sex with an African woman from their own congregation. Not surprisingly, in its effort to instill 'Christian' morality, the LMS condemned sexual relations between missionaries and members of their congregations, whether the missionary was married or single. Yet, Read's case exemplifies the complexities and contradictions in the LMS policy towards adultery and sexual immorality before and during Livingstone's time in Africa. Read, like a number of other early missionaries in Africa, married an African woman after his arrival in South Africa. His adultery was thus with a woman of the same 'race' as his wife. As such, the LMS was not punishing Read for the added impropriety of dishonouring a white wife through an adulterous affair with a 'racially inferior' and 'lascivious' African woman. But, it is also clear that Read might not have been punished at all, if not for the efforts of some of his adversaries within the LMS. From his arrival in South Africa, Read had been an outspoken supporter of African rights and a vehement critic of both missionary and settler racial intolerance. The drive to suspend him was led by missionaries who were opposed to his views, as well as by those who simply wanted to curb his influence. On this basis, Read's

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<sup>134</sup> Dr. Waugh to James Read, cited in Noël Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1992. p. 455.

suspension can be seen more as an attempt to silence a radical voice within the LMS, than an attempt to enforce sexual morality. As it turned out, once fellow radical John Philip gained authority as LMS Superintendent for the Cape Colony, Read's "restrictions appeared gradually to fall away."<sup>135</sup>

Despite his 'suspension,' Sechele never renounced Christianity and he continued to be an adherent and student of the faith throughout the remainder of his life. He filed numerous petitions to the LMS to be re-instated by the church, but his 'official' suspension lasted over forty years. In 1889, three years before his death, Sechele was finally welcomed back by the LMS! The adultery cases of Sechele and Read reveal that there was in fact a racially based 'double standard' in the ways in which their 'immorality' was dealt with by the LMS. The LMS reaction to their 'misdeeds' (and those of others) demonstrates that the adulterous indiscretions of white missionaries were considered on a case by case basis by the LMS, while those of African converts were dealt with peremptorily. Read initially refused to accept a ban on his preaching and later had an opportunity to argue his case in front of a committee. Largely due to the support of African Christians and the efforts of supporters within the LMS, he returned to active missionary service a little more than a decade after his suspension. On the other hand, Sechele admitted his mistake, lived a 'Christian' life, but was repeatedly banned from rejoining the church. As late as 1862, Livingstone was ready to

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<sup>135</sup> Mostert, p. 625. As I examine in Chapter Three, Read resurrected his missionary career and his influence after he was chosen by the Khoikhoi to lead a congregation at Kat River.

pronounce that Sechele had “proved himself a true man and a Christian.”<sup>136</sup> Yet, his opinion seemingly carried little weight with the LMS (perhaps because he had left the LMS in 1857).

After Sechele’s ‘lapse’ and suspension, Livingstone pledged to leave Kolobeng to establish a new mission station north of the Kalahari. His decision to desert Sechele and Kwena was based on his desire to explore and seek new challenges, rather than on his discontent with his sole convert. Nevertheless, Sechele’s suspension certainly provided Livingstone with a convenient excuse to quit Kolobeng. Despite this pretext, he was clearly disappointed in the outcome of his time with Sechele and the Kwena. His sole convert’s quick ‘re-lapse’ into ‘heathenism’ was an obvious embarrassment to Livingstone. Moffat and other LMS missionaries, after all, had converted many more of their subjects than Livingstone had among the Tswana. In a sense, after ten years, his missionary career had been a failure. He left Mabotsa before gaining the confidence of the Kgatla and had made little progress after five years with the Kwena. Always impatient with failure or the status-quo, he likely relished the opportunity to find out what was north of the Kalahari, if not to achieve personal redemption in the eyes of his missionary brethren by extending the reach of LMS influence into Central Africa.

### 2.5 The Travelling Livingstones: Marrying Exploration and Domesticity, 1849-1851

Before Livingstone and his family could leave Kolobeng, he would have to establish

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<sup>136</sup> David Livingstone to Frederick Fitch, 31 January, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.

a new mission station. His goal was to reach a powerful 'chief' by the name of Sebituane, who reportedly lived with his people north of the Kalahari on the banks of the Zambesi river. If he could convince Sebituane to accept a mission among his people, Livingstone knew that he would be pushing the boundary of missionary influence into Central Africa for the first time. He could thus use exploration to both expand the spiritual authority of the LMS and increase his own influence within the missionary movement. In pursuit of these aims, Livingstone completed three substantial journeys to the north-west between 1849 and 1851. On the inaugural journey, he made his first significant geographical 'discovery,' thereby making his mark as an internationally recognized explorer. On the second, in company of his family, the expedition was forced to turn back after encountering the tsetse fly and malaria near Lake Ngami. Despite these difficulties, Livingstone brought his family on the final and most successful of the three journeys. He attained his goal of reaching Sebituane and received the man's blessing to build a mission amongst his Kololo people. Moreover, after seeing the Zambesi, he determined to return to the region to explore the potential of the river.

On the first journey, Livingstone was joined by his friend William Cotton Oswell, Oswell's companion Mungo Murray, trader J.H. Wilson, a dozen African attendants (hired by Oswell) and 30 Kwena sent by Sechele to act as guides and porters. Livingstone and Oswell had met when the wealthy, Rugby-educated Englishman had stopped at Mabotsa on a hunting trip in 1845. Now 'retired' to a life of leisure and adventure after a short career in the Indian Civil Service, Oswell generously supplied the expedition with "twenty horses, eighty oxen, two waggons and enough supplies to keep three Europeans and eight Africans

in gunpowder, bullets, tea, coffee and sugar for a year.”<sup>137</sup> The foremost goal of this first expedition was to reach Lake Ngami, which had yet to be visited by a European. From the lake, the group then hoped to travel a further 200 miles north to the Chobe river, the most southerly point of Sebituane’s territory. After a five-week, 300 mile trek across the Kalahari, the group reached the lake. However, they were refused passage north across the nearby River Zouga by the locals who feared that the men were gunrunners intent on arming Sebituane. On their return, Livingstone claimed the discovery of the lake for himself, without protest from Oswell or Murray, although Wilson later declared that he had actually discovered Lake Ngami in 1848.<sup>138</sup> Livingstone maintained that he had not been seeking the “fame of discovery” in undertaking the journey, but had been motivated by “an unquenchable

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<sup>137</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 91.

<sup>138</sup> Wilson did not make the claim right away and Livingstone did not become aware of the ‘challenge’ to his discovery until 1853. In a 17 September, 1853 letter to William Thompson, Livingstone declared that Wilson had “*asked and obtained* permission from me to accompany us as such. Oswell and Murray were not pleased with me for giving permission. His opinion was never on any occasion asked, never spoke a word in any emergency, paid nothing to the guides, was fed and otherwise assisted, and got a fine load of ivory for next to nothing. Yet some of his friends, in order to detract as much as may be from my honours, set up his claims as *true discoverer* of the Lake.” See *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 245, emphasis in original.

Wilson also seems to have married one of Sechele’s daughter’s in about 1854. (Referred to as Kuantang by Robert Moffat, she may have gone by a different name). The reaction to the marriage sheds light on how Wilson was perceived by other Europeans. Moffat, for example, was unhappy that Sechele had allowed his daughter to marry a man “whose shameless character is a joke in this country.” The marriage did not last and Kuanteng left Wilson (or vice versa) in 1858. Although Sechele had allowed the marriage, he was apparently angered when it had faltered. An English hunter who had transported Kuantang to Sechele’s village reported that the chief blamed all “Englishman” for Wilson’s transgressions, comparing the English to the Boers. Although Livingstone seems to have known of the marriage, his opinions on it are not known. See Sillery, *Sechele: The Story of an African Chief*, pp. 124-128.

desire to introduce the gospel into the immense and well peopled region beyond” the lake to the north.<sup>139</sup> However, after the Royal Geographical Society received his report of the journey, it was Livingstone who was hailed by its new president Sir Roderick Murchison and awarded a gold medal and a £25 prize by the then fledgling Society.<sup>140</sup>

When Livingstone had set out on the journey in June 1849, Mary and their three children had “reluctantly” travelled south to visit her parents at Kuruman.<sup>141</sup> However, according to Mary’s biographer, “she could not take her mother’s dominating presence” and returned to Kolobeng two months later (and two months before Livingstone returned from the expedition).<sup>142</sup> Livingstone had initially planned to make his second journey without his family. Yet Mary, who was three months pregnant, had “balked at the idea of [returning to] Kuruman” to stay with her parents while Livingstone was away.<sup>143</sup> Nor could she and the children stay at Kolobeng, which faced the threat of a Boer attack.<sup>144</sup> It is unclear why

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<sup>139</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 8 July 1850, *Livingstone’s Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 85.

<sup>140</sup> Ignored by the RGS, Oswell was later granted a medal from the Paris Geographical Society for his role in the discovery. Despite Livingstone’s self-serving actions after the expedition, the upper-class Oswell became one of his closest and most supportive friends.

<sup>141</sup> Healey, p. 21; David Livingstone to Harriet Ingraham (Charles Livingstone’s fiancée), 20 May, 1849, *Letters and Documents*, p. 35.

<sup>142</sup> Healey, p. 22.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Both Livingstone and Sechele had developed a hostile relationship with the Transvaal Boers, their neighbours to the east. The Boers believed Livingstone had armed Sechele and the Kwena in preparation for an offensive against Boer positions in the Transvaal. These issues are examined in Chapter Three.



she made this decision, but it seems clear that she had a strained relationship with her mother. Life at Kuruman might also have entailed helping with her mother's domestic chores, including tending to siblings who were young enough to have been her own children. Moreover, after five years of teaching and domestic work, she may have wanted a change of pace and environment, and in fact she was well prepared for an ox-pulled waggon journey across the Kalahari. She had made longer and equally difficult journeys as a child, youth and adult with and without her parents. Her mother had repeatedly travelled by waggon while pregnant and with young children. In fact, Mary Moffat had once written: "you can form no idea how comfortable our waggons are. They are very light vehicles, and in them we carry all necessary comforts. If there are children, they play on the bed or lie asleep."<sup>145</sup>

The travelling party for the April-August 1850 journey was truly a family affair. The Livingstones and their three young children were joined by Sechele, his (first) wife and some of their children. The Tswana missionary Mebalwe and some of the Kwena were also a part of the journey. William Oswell, who had travelled to Cape Town for supplies, joined the expedition on its return leg. Yet, Oswell would have missed the travelling party altogether if the expedition had not been forced to turn back sooner than Livingstone expected. On his previous travels across the Kalahari, the Cape Colony and the Transvaal, Livingstone had not faced the dangers posed to humans by malaria and to most animals by the tsetse fly. However, as they neared Lake Ngami some of the oxen sickened and died and Livingstone realized that the tsetse was responsible. Then, after passing through a mosquito infested

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<sup>145</sup> Mary Moffat, cited in Healey, p. 9.

expanse, two of the Livingstone children were beset by the 'fever.'<sup>146</sup> Livingstone had had the foresight to bring quinine, the only known curative for the disease. Nevertheless, he took no more chances and the expedition returned immediately to Kolobeng. In letters written during the journey, Livingstone wrote of his concern about the weakened state of his children, but also seemed pleased with their ability to endure the calamities of exploration. He similarly vaunted Mary's courage and toughness during the expedition. In a letter to Robert Moffat he vouched how she "behaved like a heroine" during an ox-waggon accident that occurred when the couple had taken a brief sightseeing excursion together near the lake.<sup>147</sup> "Takes after her father," he wrote, "waggon turned clean over in a pitfall, an event she often feared, but when it came [she] could not help saying to herself, 'Is this all?'"<sup>148</sup>

Already weakened by malaria, on their return to Kolobeng in July 1850 the Livingstone children were afflicted by a bronchial infection which had struck the village. While nursing the children back to health, Mary delivered her now overdue child. Days later Mary herself became grievously ill and suffered paralysis to the right side of her face.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> At this early stage, Livingstone suspected that the mosquito might be responsible for malaria. Yet, for Livingstone and for other explorers, it was one of many possible causes of 'the fever.' The scientific link between the mosquito and malaria was not made until the late-nineteenth century.

<sup>147</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 8 July, 1850, *David Livingstone: Family Letters*, Vol, 2, p. 84.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* Mary had been in a similar accident at the age of ten. According to Healey, "she was praised for her cool-headedness" at the time. "She had waited, rolled up in a mattress and protecting her baby brother..." See Healey, p. 28.

<sup>149</sup> She likely suffered from Bell's Palsy. The worst effects of the paralysis lasted about two months, but she continued to suffer from headaches and other side-effects for many months. See David Livingstone to the Livingstone family, October 1851, *Family*

Imperiled by the illness that surrounded her, the Livingstones' newborn daughter contracted a lung infection and died six weeks after her birth. Livingstone himself was ill and after a visit from Mary Moffat the Livingstone family journeyed to Kuruman to convalesce.

Despite the setbacks of the second expedition and its aftermath, Livingstone was determined to reach Sebituane. He had twice failed to realize his goal and was confident that with a third journey he could overcome the obstacles that had plagued his path. Moreover, his missionary career was floundering. Other than Sechele, none of the Kwena at Kolobeng would accept the gospel. He would thus have to establish a new mission or at least find a people who were willing to accept the Livingstones in their midst. Before her illness and the death of her baby, Mary had told her husband that she was willing to remain at Kolobeng with the children for up to a year while he attempted to reach Sebituane and work towards his other objectives. However, she later changed her mind and decided that she wanted the family to travel together on the expedition. Given his bachelorhood boasts about the joys of 'Robinson Crusoeing it' on previous journeys, Livingstone would have been content to travel alone or with Oswell. Yet, he was also clearly willing to accept the company of his wife and children. Instead of pursuing a 'flight from domesticity,' as has been said to characterize the behaviour of European males on the colonial frontier, Livingstone was happy to bring his family along.<sup>150</sup> No longer able to experience Defoe's vision of single-male frontier life, he

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*Letters*, vol. II, p. 144.

<sup>150</sup> See John Tosh, "Imperial Masculinity in Britain and the Flight from Domesticity," in *Gender and Colonialism*, edited by Timothy Foley *et al*, Galway University Press: Galway, 1995.

could now undertake a family excursion in the style of the ‘Swiss Family Robinson.’<sup>151</sup> Livingstone realized that the expedition was not a family ‘adventure’ patterned on the stories he had read as a youngster in Blantyre. It was a difficult and challenging struggle in pursuit of a higher purpose, an attempt to spread the gospel and British ‘civilization’ into Central Africa.

When Mary Moffat heard that her pregnant daughter was to again embark on an ‘explorative’ family journey, she immediately questioned Livingstone’s motives. Although she had accompanied her own husband on many difficult waggon journeys while pregnant, she angrily impugned that her son-in-law was risking the lives of his wife, children and unborn child for the sake of exploration. In a letter to Livingstone, she proclaimed:

Mary had told all along that should she be pregnant you would not take her, but let her come here [to Kuruman] after you were fairly off. Though I suspected at the end that she began to falter in this resolution, still I hoped it would never take place, i.e. *her going with you...* O Livingstone, what do you mean? Was it not enough that you lost one lovely babe, and scarcely saved the other, while the mother came home threatened with Paralysis? And will you again expose her & them in those sickly regions on an *exploring* expedition? All the world will condemn the *cruelty* of the thing to say nothing of the indecorousness of it. A pregnant woman with three little children trailing about with a company of the other sex, through the wilds of Africa, among savage men and beasts! Had you *found a place* to which you wished to go and commence missionary operations, the case would be altered. Not one word would I say, were it to the mountains of the moon. But to go with an exploring party, the thing is preposterous. I remain yours in great perturbation.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> *Swiss Family Robinson*, by the Swiss author Johan Rudolf Wyss, published in 1813, was first available in English translation in 1820. On this basis, Livingstone may have included it in his childhood readings of travel and adventure tales.

<sup>152</sup> Mary Moffat to David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s Private Journals*, pp. 70-71. Emphasis in original. Livingstone transcribed the letter into his journals. No date is provided, but judging from a letter Livingstone wrote to his brother Charles, it was likely

For Mary Moffat, it was clear that it was Livingstone as *paterfamilias* who would decide whether or not his family took part in the expedition. She attempted to convince him - and not her daughter - to change his mind about the journey. Mrs. Moffat had determined that it was irresponsible for a young mother to risk the well being of so many for the sake of an exploratory expedition. Some of her consternation over the impending journey was likely borne out of her own married life. She had lost one of her own newborn children as a result of joining her husband on a difficult ship and waggon journey from Cape Town.<sup>153</sup> (As mentioned another child had died on the Moffats' voyage to Britain in 1839). But in her mind, these deaths were the unfortunate result of following the dictates of missionary duty. They were not caused by unnecessary 'exploring expeditions.' For Moffat, domesticity and 'exploration' were incompatible. Her letter made it clear that she believed that the integrity of marriage and the safety of women and children were directly threatened by the randomness and risk inherent in exploration. She envisioned a clear separation between the manliness required in family life and the qualities of masculinity that were a part of exploration. In her mind, a potentially dangerous journey between mission stations with family in tow was a dutiful aspect of missionary family life, a part of a missionary's duty to God and family. Conversely, it was reckless and irresponsible for a married man to subject his family to a perilous expedition in pursuit of vague set of goals or in search of an 'undiscovered' landmark. She could not see a higher purpose in Livingstone's journey. At

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written in March 1851 (though Schapera posits April).

<sup>153</sup> See Cecil Northcott, *Robert Moffat: Pioneer in Africa, 1817-1870*, Lutterworth Press: London, 1961, p. 125.

the same time, she saw neither dignity nor honour in submitting a pregnant wife and young children to a calling best left to men.

Livingstone was stung by his mother-in-law's criticisms and concerns. Nevertheless, neither he nor Mary would reconsider the decision to travel as a family on the expedition. Further hostilities between Sechele and the Boers meant that Kolobeng was too dangerous a place to leave Mary and the children. The prospect of war between the Cape Colony and the Xhosa made the route to Cape Town too dangerous for her to stay there with friends or family during the time that Livingstone was away. Despite Mrs. Moffat's plea, it was also clear that Mary did not want to spend upwards of a year at Kuruman in her mother's company. Livingstone could have appealed to his wife to stay with the Moffats. However, he already believed his mother-in-law was 'difficult' and 'hard to please.'<sup>154</sup> As a result, her letter only seemed to provoke him to hold firm against her request to reconsider bringing Mary and the children on the expedition.

In letters written during the journey, Livingstone suggested that Mary Moffat simply did not understand his aims in attempting to reach Sebituane and spread the gospel north. Without naming names, he complained to Robert Moffat: "I can't please everyone, and least

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<sup>154</sup> Livingstone complained, for example, that even presents from her grandchildren could not bring pleasure to Mary Moffat. He made this clear to Robert Moffat in remarking: "Robert [Livingstone's eldest son] picked up a shell on the banks the Ngami and said, 'I shall give it to Grandma.' I felt proud to hear it. Perhaps she will to. But when her seven children have increased to about 49, [with] all of them trying to do something for Granny, she will become so buoyant I can fancy her [in] about 1870 snapping her fingers and jumping for joy." David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 8 July, 1850, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 84.

of all those who know not the objects I have in view.”<sup>155</sup> Livingstone’s meaning was clear: Mary Moffat was a meddling irritant who did not grasp the significance of what he hoped to accomplish through his explorations. Livingstone believed his mother-in-law simply could not comprehend the aims of a missionary who used exploration to further ‘the Word.’ In his view, the evangelical and humanitarian goals of his journey were clear. In reaching Sebituane and the Zambesi, he was convinced that he would open up a base from which the LMS could introduce the gospel, combat the slave trade and establish legitimate trade between Britons and Africans. He told his family in Blantyre that he and Mary “felt it to be our duty to proceed to the country of Sebituane... I am sure we ... have been honoured to open the way in to a large section of the slave producing portion of Africa.”<sup>156</sup> In an obvious allusion to his mother-in-law, he added: “Persons whose predilections lie in the [usual] systems disapprove of our effort & call them mere explorations, but we make known (or try to do so) the good will of God to man...”<sup>157</sup>

In a further effort to clarify his motives, Livingstone told his brother-in-law Robert Moffat Jr., that he believed his explorations were sanctified by God. The journey, as such, was not a quest to satisfy his ego or his curiosity. He argued that the expedition - like his

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<sup>155</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 29 November, 1851, *Family Letters*, vol II, p. 155. Livingstone made similar remarks in a letter to his two sisters. He wrote: “We may settle in the region beyond. It is a great venture. Fever may cut us all off. I feel much when I think of the children dying. But who will go if we don’t? Not one. I would venture everything for Christ.” David Livingstone to Agnes and Janet Livingstone, 28 April, 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, pp. 134-135.

<sup>156</sup> David Livingstone to the Livingstone family, October 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 141.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

missionary work - was undertaken to serve God's will in expanding the boundary of missionary influence into the African interior. Livingstone explained: "We are on our way North again, and will if we find a suitable locality make arrangements towards a settlement.... Feeling that Providence has opened the way for us up in the North, and believing in Christ as the Head over all things to His church, I should think myself a sorry caitiff [despicable person] if unwilling to make a venture for his glory."<sup>158</sup> If Moffat Jr. was concerned about his sister's faith in this undertaking, Livingstone attempted to mitigate his anxiety by stating: "I am happy to say Mary reciprocates these sentiments."<sup>159</sup>

To an extent Livingstone's remarks to his brother-in-law were rhetoric meant to pacify Mary Moffat. Yet, he knew that there were risks involved in African exploration, (as there were in all difficult forms of travel). Although Livingstone had dismissed Mary Moffat's counsel, he was willing to admit that his family's health was compromised in joining him on the expedition. On the previous journey, Livingstone had learned firsthand that malaria was a real threat and he had wisely turned back at Lake Ngami out of concern for his children. He knew that many other expeditions in other regions of Africa had ended in disaster with the malarial deaths of ill-prepared explorers. Yet, he was also determined to reach Sebituane. Armed with a supply of quinine, an unrelenting ability to persevere and his evangelical faith, he vowed to accept the risks that burdened his 'Providential' journey. In a letter to Arthur Tidman, the Foreign Secretary of the LMS, Livingstone was forthcoming

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<sup>158</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, Junior, 28 April, 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 131.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*



about the dangers of the expedition, but was adamant that the journey served a higher purpose and thus needed to be undertaken. "It is a venture to take a wife and children into a country where fever, African fever prevails," he wrote.<sup>160</sup> He then asked: "But who that believes in Jesus would refuse to make a venture for such a Captain? A parent's heart alone can feel as I do when I look at my little ones and ask: 'Shall I return with this or that one alive?' However, we are His, and wish to have no interests apart from those of His kingdom and glory."<sup>161</sup> In Livingstone's mind, he and his family were the vanguard of a Christian, 'civilized,' slave-free Central Africa. As an evangelical, he drew strength from his religious convictions. At the same time, he was driven by the certainty that his efforts would ultimately help Africans. Livingstone was convinced that by reaching Sebituane and the 'unknown' African interior he could initiate a period of change in Central Africa. To rationalize the danger to his family, he judged that the perils of exploration were a part of this calling and therefore must be borne with courage and determination. Livingstone seemed to believe that Mary could endure the rigours of exploration, in much the same way Mrs. Moffat had borne the hardships of waggon travel in her day. Mary herself seemed confident that she could brave whatever difficulties the journey offered.

Livingstone's motives for including the children on the expedition are unclear. However, in 1842 and 1857 he had reminisced that his youth was the happiest time of his life. He knew that his children faced a different set of struggles in Africa than he had braved

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<sup>160</sup> David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 30 April, 1851, *Missionary Correspondence*, p. 171.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

as in Blantyre. Yet, he may have hoped that the hardships they encountered as youngsters would prepare them for any obstacles they encountered later in life. In many ways their young lives were quite similar to their mother's missionary upbringing. They had learned from birth to endure the ruggedness of frontier missionary life. They had spent nearly as much time on waggon journeys as they had at their 'home' at Kolobeng. The first language they mastered was Tswana, the language their parents and the peoples around them spoke most often. They had endured malaria, seemingly without complaint and without fear. Livingstone knew that Mary had learned to be hardy, resilient and industrious in facing similar challenges and burdens in her youth. In facing these youthful ordeals, the children seemed to be developing the same qualities. Although, they had yet to reach the age at which Livingstone had gone to work at the mill, he may have believed that his children might also look on these early days as the happiest time of their lives.

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The third expedition ultimately proved to be a great success, beyond even Livingstone's expectations. Joined again by William Oswell, the group took a different route across the Kalahari and after a difficult journey they became the first Europeans to reach the banks of the Chobe river, a tributary of the Zambesi. Livingstone initially left his family at this 'healthy' spot, while he and Oswell travelled the twenty-five miles that separated them from Sebituane and his Kololo people. Judging by his lengthy descriptions of the Kololo leader's life and accomplishments, Livingstone was clearly awed by Sebituane. Together the

two men discussed Livingstone's vision for the African interior and his desire to establish a small mission settlement among the Kololo. On hearing that Mary Livingstone was the daughter of Robert Moffat, the famous missionary who had befriended Mzilikazi and the Ndebele people, Sebituane's interest in Livingstone's plans was heightened. Livingstone discovered that the Kololo and Ndebele had long been enemies, but that a mission station settled by the blood-relatives of Moffat might bring peace to the warring nations. Mary and the children were then brought to meet Sebituane and an agreement in principle was reached for the Livingstones to establish a mission among the Kololo. According to Livingstone, the Kololo leader "was much pleased with the proof of confidence we had shown in bringing our children, and promised to take us to see his country, so that we might choose a part of the country in which to locate ourselves."<sup>162</sup> However, to the Livingstones' sadness and dismay, Sebituane, who was ill at the time of their meeting, died of pneumonia two-weeks after Livingstone's arrival.<sup>163</sup> The leadership of the Kololo then passed to Sebituane's eldest daughter, who gave Livingstone and Oswell her consent to explore the vast Kololo 'nation' to find a site for the mission. Livingstone was particularly interested in reaching the Zambesi and together he and Oswell made the 100 mile journey (on horseback) to reach the river. The sight of this wide, fast rolling waterway, effectively transformed Livingstone's future plans. As early as 1845, he had envisioned the extension of a river 'highway' from either of

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<sup>162</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 89.

<sup>163</sup> "I never felt so sorry for the death of a black man before," Livingstone wrote. In a case study in Chapter Five, I examine how Livingstone considered Sebituane to be an archetype of manliness. See David Livingstone to the Livingstone family, October 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 144.

Africa's coasts to the centre of the continent. He imagined that traders travelling up and down the river could combat slavery by introducing the economic benefits of 'legitimate' trade. They would be joined by missionaries who had formed a settlement among the Kololo and who were working to introduce Christianity and other 'civilizing' benefits. After taking a canoe out on the Zambesi, Livingstone was convinced of the power of the river and the opportunity it offered to transform Africa. He quickly decided that he needed to determine whether the Zambesi was a navigable waterway. Because much of Kolololand had proved to be malarious, he would also need to explore the region to find a healthy spot to place his mission and his family.

Livingstone realized this was a vast undertaking that would take time and planning. He knew that to map the Zambesi and the difficult terrain of Kolololand he would have to travel by canoe or on foot, rather than by ox-pulled waggon. Moreover, both he and Mary recognized that the threat posed by malaria made this venture far too dangerous for the family to undertake together. The couple also agreed that their children were in need of an education other than an immersion in nomadic travel and missionary life. Because the children were more literate in Tswana than in English, Livingstone now determined that it would be more advantageous if they received an education in Britain than at a mission school in South Africa. Although Mary had given birth to a healthy boy, she still suffered from headaches as a result of the earlier paralysis of the right side of her face. The couple thus decided that she and the children would be better off in Britain with the children while he

concentrated on his explorative goals.<sup>164</sup>

After their return to Kolobeng and a short visit to Kuruman, the Livingstones travelled to Cape Town where Mary and the four children boarded a ship bound for Britain. This effectively put an end to the Livingstone experiment in family travel and their attempt to marry exploration and domesticity. For a number of reasons Livingstone never established a mission station in Kolololand, nor a home for his family in Africa. As I examine in subsequent chapters, his return to the Zambesi in 1852 eventually evolved into his path-breaking cross-continental journey. In the course of this five-year trek and its aftermath, he developed a complex scheme to bring his vision of 'civilization' to Africa. Building on the radical racial politics of his first decade in Africa, his utopian plan envisioned Africans and Britons living and working side by side in a small Christian colony reached by the Zambesi.<sup>165</sup> After his visit to Sebituane and the Zambesi, Livingstone spent close to twenty years in Africa struggling to make his vision a reality. During this time he became Britain's foremost explorer and missionary.

Historian John Tosh has argued that empire-building was tantamount to a 'flight from

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<sup>164</sup> Concerned about the damp Scottish climate, Livingstone concluded that the children should attend English schools and spend summers with the Livingstone family in Scotland. Since Mary was used to a dry climate, they determined that she would spend most of her time in England. A portion of the costs of the children's education and lodging was to be covered by the London Missionary Society. See David Livingstone to the Livingstone family, October 1851, *Family Letters*, vol II, pp. 143-144.

<sup>165</sup> See Chapter Six, section 6.2 for an in-depth analysis of Livingstone's 'colonial' vision.

domesticity' for Victorian men.<sup>166</sup> In his view, "the attraction of empire [was one of the] most alluring means of shaking off the shackles of domesticity."<sup>167</sup> Tosh's analysis ignores missionaries (and explorers) and deals with the period of 'High Imperialism' (1880-1914), yet in a sense, his model can be applied to Livingstone. If Livingstone had wanted to be close to his family, he could have followed a traditional missionary lifestyle. Like Robert Moffat, he could have chosen to remain at the same mission station for many years, only occasionally making journeys outside of the surrounding area. This in itself would not have made Livingstone a good husband and an attentive father. Arguably, however, it would have shown that he found home-life to be preferable to exploring on his own or pursuing his goals for Africa. His family and the domestic setting of the 'home' were clearly not as important to Livingstone as his calling or his career. After his family departed for Britain in 1851, he spent all but three of the next twenty three years of his life in Africa. The length of time he spent away from home may have been precipitated by Mary Livingstone's death in 1862 and the growth of his children. Nevertheless, it is clear that once Livingstone was separated from his family, he exploited his freedom from the everyday responsibilities of domesticity. For example, instead of taking the planned two years to explore the Zambesi and find a mission site, he took five years and criss-crossed the continent. Moreover, he saw more of his eldest three children during the first years of their lives than he did at any time after 1851.

Yet, Livingstone's life also reveals the complexities that should be seen to be inherent

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<sup>166</sup> John Tosh, "Imperial Masculinity in Britain and the Flight from Domesticity," in *Gender and Colonialism*. Also see Tosh's *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, Yale University Press: New Haven, 1999.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

in the 'flight from domesticity' model. Despite his concentration of his personal ambitions and his grand schemes for Africa, Livingstone did not abandon the concept of family exploration. His decision to send his wife and children home in 1851 was not based on a 'masculinist' assumption that women did not have the constitution and character necessary to act as explorers. He was always confident that his wife Mary had both the ability and the desire to join him on his explorations. In 1858, for instance, she was to be an integral part of his 'Zambesi Expedition.' However, her pregnancy stalled her participation in the expedition until late 1861. Then, three months after joining Livingstone and his crew on the Zambesi, Mary Livingstone succumbed to the effects of malaria.<sup>168</sup> After her death, Livingstone continued to laud her capacity to withstand the physical and mental rigours of exploration. In telling his daughter Agnes that she too could become an explorer, he declared: "Your mama was famous for roughing it in the bush, and was never a trouble. Oswald was born under a camel thorn tree on the River Zouga.... I have no doubt ... that in other circumstances you could have shown no less pluck than your mother."<sup>169</sup> For Livingstone, exploration did not preclude women, nor did it necessarily imply a 'flight from domesticity.' However, Livingstone's post-1851 devotion to his struggle to bring 'civilization' to Africa clearly transcended his commitment to his family. He applied his enduring energy and incomparable work ethic to the challenges offered by life in Africa. What little time and energy Livingstone had left after this struggle, he gave to his wife and

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<sup>168</sup> See Chapter Six.

<sup>169</sup> David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 3 September, 1869, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184. Underline in original.

children.



### Chapter Three

#### Racial Politics in the Cape Colony, the Colonial Frontier and the Transvaal: Livingstone Fights for African Interests Against White Power in Southern Africa, 1845-1852

In a statement from an unpublished 1852 article on the British wars against the 'Caffres' (Xhosa), Livingstone was clear about which side he supported in the Eighth Frontier War, then raging in the Cape Colony and along its eastern frontier. "We are no advocates of war," he declared, "but would prefer perpetual war to perpetual slavery. No nation ever secured liberty without fighting for it. And every nation on earth worthy of freedom is ready to shed its blood in its defence. We sympathize with the Caffres, we side with the weak against the strong..."<sup>1</sup>

In adopting a position in support of the Xhosa against the colonial interests of his own nation, Livingstone defended a cause that was indefensible for most Britons of the

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<sup>1</sup> This passage is cited in Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 66. There is only one known copy of this article, found in the National Archives of Zimbabwe. According to Holmes, it is "an as yet unpublished seventy eight page pamphlet" on the 'Caffre Wars.' Holmes, however, provides no further reference for this document in his biography. Another copy may have existed. As I examine below, 'official' Livingstone biographer William Blaikie was aware of the views Livingstone espoused about the 'Caffre Wars.' He may have had access to a copy of the article owned by the Livingstone family. Blaikie cites a Livingstone letter in which he mentions the article. Livingstone referred to the article in several other letters. See, for example David Livingstone to William Thompson, 24 November 1852, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence, 1841-1856*, p. 235. Curiously, in editing *Livingstone's South African Papers* (1976), Isaac Schapera chose not to include or could not find the article, although the collection contains many previously unavailable Livingstone's documents. In *Livingstone's Private Journals*, Schapera does say that the article was "rejected" for publication by Robert Vaughan, editor of the *British Quarterly Review*. See Schapera, *Livingstone's Private Journals*, p. 92, note 2; Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 106.

period.<sup>2</sup> Since regaining control of the Cape Colony from the Dutch in 1805, the Crown's battles with the Xhosa had served to unite white settlers in the Cape Colony and had become a growing source of British patriotism 'at home.' As Britain tightened its control over South Africa's peoples and their land throughout this period, the Xhosa in particular were seen as an irritating menace in the onward march to British supremacy in an expanding Cape Colony. A March 1852 editorial in *The Times* captured some the public enmity towards the Xhosa. Although British troops, led by a series of vengeful Governors, had used brutal tactics in fighting the Xhosa (and their 'rebellious' Khoikhoi allies) in the war, the editorial writer cast the Xhosa as the more vicious, but ultimately weaker, side. "[W]e are convinced," the writer declared, that "if the colonization of South Africa is to be continued, the savage tribes of our frontier can only successfully be countered, like the savages of all other regions, by acts resembling their own. The backwoodsmen of Kentucky pursued the Red Indian as the Red Indian pursued them, and the victory in the end fell to the superior race."<sup>3</sup> The writer argued that the Colony needed to adopt the 'commando' fighting strategy used by the Transvaal Boers in their attacks on Africans. To this end, the writer pointed out that far more "Kaffirs" had been "destroyed" in a single "expedition" under the Boer Commandant Pretorius, than by "our troops" in the last three wars against the Xhosa.<sup>4</sup> For the Boers, both before their Great Trek and since their arrival in the Transvaal, the Xhosa had also been an impediment to colonization that needed to be subjugated or destroyed. The editorial writer was

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<sup>2</sup> See Andrew Ross in "David Livingstone: The Man Behind the Mask," pp. 44-45.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 17 March, 1852.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

undoubtedly aware that British and Boer forces - separately and occasionally in tandem - had battled Southern Africa's black populations for control of valuable farm lands, cattle and other resources.<sup>5</sup>

Livingstone, as I discussed in the previous chapter, had quickly become aware of the racial politics of the Cape Colony and colonial frontier after his arrival in Cape Town and stay with John Philip in 1841. At the time, he had warned his friends in England about the 'Colonial feelings' or settler mentality of the British and Boer inhabitants of Southern Africa.<sup>6</sup> After Livingstone's departure from Cape Town, John Philip continued to campaign in support of African land and civil rights, as the settler population pushed its own anti-African agenda with the Colonial Government. But, as the Eighth Frontier War and its concomitant anti-Xhosa propaganda raged, Philip died in August, 1851. So when Livingstone arrived in Cape Town in mid-March 1852, the LMS was missing its unofficial political leader and pro-African gadfly. After an absence of more than a decade from the growing port town, Livingstone filled some of the void left by the death of Philip and again became engrossed in the complex racial politics brought by the war and other longstanding grievances between white and black in Cape Colony and along the colonial frontier.

Livingstone had travelled to Cape Town with his family for practical reasons: to

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<sup>5</sup> The Xhosa were traditional cattle herders. Both the British and the Boers regularly raided Xhosa cattle and used instances where Xhosa attempted to recapture this cattle as justification for attacks. For the Boers, Africans themselves were seen as a 'resource' to be captured, preferably at a young age, and forced into a life of indentured labour. The desire to continue this practice was one of the main reasons the Boers had fled British law and the Cape Colony after Ordinance 50 and the 1833 anti-slavery law.

<sup>6</sup> David Livingstone to T. L. Prentice, 3 August, 1841, *Letters and Documents*, p. 14.

gather supplies for his return to the Zambesi, to receive medical attention for a nagging throat ailment, and to send Mary and their four children to Britain. After their departure in April, Livingstone remained in Cape Town for another two months. It was during this time (and in the intervening weeks he spent at Kuruman immediately after) that he produced some of his most passionate observations about race relations and the rights of Africans, including the anti-British/pro-Xhosa statement that begins this chapter. Livingstone did not replace Philip as the pre-eminent figure in Cape Town in the crusade against the racial injustices championed and practised by white settlers.<sup>7</sup> His stay in Cape Town was brief and much of his radical opinion from the period went unpublished at the time for him to be recognized as Philip's successor. Nevertheless, this was a key period in Livingstone's political life. In Cape Town, he was in the capital of the Cape Colony, the centre of British political and judicial authority in South Africa. Although, he was not a witness to fighting at the war's front, he had kept informed about the war and the associated 'Hottentot Rebellion' even before his arrival in Cape Town. In reading the settler newspapers and talking with the town's residents (including other liberals who opposed the war), he kept abreast of the actions of Cape Colony Governor Cathcart and other leading European and African actors in the war and rebellion. In the days after his family had departed, he also attended the trial

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<sup>7</sup> In his thorough study of the Xhosa and their relationship with the British, Noel Mostert identified three possible successors to Philip and fellow radical James Read, who died in May 1852. (Livingstone was not among them). They were: Andries Stockenstrom, a Boer humanitarian, John Fairbairn, Philip's son-in-law, and Charles Lennox Stretch, a longtime Cape Colony settler and critic of the 'spirit of revenge' found among his fellow settlers. According to Mostert, none of these men was "driven by quite the same actively radical and passionate commitment that had set Philip and Read so apart from everyone else. See Mostert, *Frontiers*, p. 986-989.

of Andries Botha, a ‘Hottentot rebel’ accused of treason. As a result of the verdict (announced by a drunk presiding judge), he wrote letters and journal entries in which he expressed his outrage with the British justice system. He also wrote his brother in the United States hoping that a speech by Sandile, the paramount leader of the Xhosa people, could be printed in America. His plan was to publicize the Xhosa’s grievances and reveal the Crown’s misdeeds in the colony. On a personal level, he also enjoyed the recognition that he believed he had achieved in Cape Town as result of the stir caused by his anonymously written article on native agency published the year before in the *Quarterly Review*, discussed in the previous chapter. Energized by this experience, on his return to Kuruman he wrote the unpublished article (cited above) as well as other important writings that have largely been ignored or gone unnoticed by Livingstone’s biographers.

Interestingly, the writings Livingstone produced during this period do not seem to have been suppressed after his death. In his authorized Livingstone biography, William Blaikie cited a Livingstone letter to a friend in which he spoke of his “Caffre War paper” - proof the article actually existed. Livingstone had hoped to publish the article in the *Quarterly*, but it seems to have been rejected, possibly because he had taken a highly critical stance towards the Crown in a piece written for a British audience.<sup>8</sup> Unlike future biographers, Blaikie actually discussed Livingstone’s anti-British comments from the period. In the biography he explained, for instance, that during his stay in Cape Town, Livingstone

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<sup>8</sup> Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 107. See also note #1 of this chapter.

was “regarded as ‘unpatriotic’” by the British colonial authorities.<sup>9</sup> “He had a very poor opinion of the officials,” Blaikie noted, “and their treatment of the natives scandalized him. He describe[d] the trial of an old soldier Botha, as ‘the most horrid exhibition I ever witnessed.’ The noble conduct of Botha in prison was a beautiful contrast to the scene in court. The whole Caffre War had exemplified the blundering the British authorities...”<sup>10</sup> With this commentary, Blaikie had left an important historical nugget concerning Livingstone’s stay in Cape Town for later biographers to pursue. Yet, the myriad of simplistic and derivative biographies that followed through the years of British colonialism in Africa, had no room for the anti-colonial opinions of a British imperial icon. Even the centenary of Livingstone’s death failed to produce a biography that re-examined his defence of Xhosa and Khoikhoi rebellion against the British. Of the dozens of contributions to this 1973 reassessment, only Andrew Ross pointed to “the fact that Livingstone clearly was willing to support African people in a struggle for independence against the British.”<sup>11</sup> Jeal, as I noted in the introduction, failed to research this period of Livingstone’s life and erroneously proclaimed that 1852 marked a phase when the explorer was particularly intolerant with Africans. Timothy Holmes, who unearthed Livingstone’s ‘Caffre Wars’ paper almost a century and a half after it was written, has been the only biographer to expand

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>11</sup> Ross, “Livingstone and Race,” pp. 73-74. Ross also makes a similar point in his recent article on Livingstone, “David Livingstone: The Man Behind the Mask.” See, for example, pp. 44-45.

somewhat on Blaikie's original analysis.<sup>12</sup> Post-colonial theorists, meanwhile, remain unaware that a colonial hero of the stature of Livingstone supported a violent African nationalist movement.

Livingstone writings about the Boers have been, to an extent, another matter in the historiography. Biographers from Blaikie to Jeal have attempted to explain Livingstone's attitudes towards the Trek Boers, particularly in relationship to the 1852 Boer offensive against Sechele and the Kwena. When Livingstone arrived in Kuruman after his time in Cape Town, he was immediately informed that the Boers, led by Pretorius, had acted on their longstanding threat to attack Sechele (both for his refusal to submit to their 'rule' of the Transvaal and because of his relationship with Livingstone). This history led the authors of more scholarly biographies to produce sections analysing both Livingstone's reaction to the attack and to the Boers in general.<sup>13</sup> More popular biographies, meanwhile, often noted the attack (as a sign of Boer brutality and African weakness) as well as Livingstone's denunciation of Boer slave raids. But for the mass of Livingstone biographers, the Boers were an easy target. They had escaped British authority to live on the frontier. Free from Crown laws, they could practice with impunity the slavery that Livingstone had detailed.

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<sup>12</sup> Holmes wrote that Livingstone "declared that the colonial authorities were wrong in their forward policy of conquest, epitomized in the long succession of wars on the eastern frontier [and] that African peoples were entitled to fight for the land and for freedom." Holmes also quoted one of the passages in which Livingstone denounces the behaviour the drunken judge Welde during the trial of Botha. See section 4.1(B) for more on Livingstone's attitude to Welde. Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>13</sup> Blaikie actually quoted a letter in which Livingstone castigated "foolish John Bull [for] paying so many thousands a year to the suppression of the slave-trade and allowing Commissioner Aven to make treaties with Boers who carry on the slave-trade." See Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 112.

And most importantly, after the 'First Anglo-Boer War' in 1880-1881, they were enemies of the British. This last factor may have inspired Blaikie, writing during this war, to join Livingstone in labelling the Boers "savages."<sup>14</sup>

The studies marking the centenary of Livingstone's death (1973) added little to the previous hundred year's understanding of his conception of Boer racial attitudes. Some, whose studies appeared just after the centenary, even ignored a recently published source that would have enabled them to provide new insight into his relationship with his Boer neighbours in the Transvaal. In editing Livingstone's *South African Papers, 1849-1853* (1974), Isaac Schapera presented an opportunity for scholars to examine a number of issues relating to Livingstone and the Boers. Schapera himself tackled a question that had been avoided in the Livingstone historiography. In the late 1840s, while stationed at Kolobeng Livingstone was accused by the Transvaal Boer leaders Pretorius and Potgeiter of arming Africans to attack their settlements, if not British targets in the Cape Colony. Through meticulous research Schapera demonstrated that Livingstone had supplied guns and ammunition to various Africans for different purposes. However, his task was largely empirical, to prove one way or the other whether Livingstone was a gunrunner. Schapera was not, for example, interested in connecting Livingstone's 'gun running' with the larger issue of his support for the Xhosa in war and the Khoikhoi in rebellion against the Crown.

My purpose in this chapter is to examine Livingstone as a supporter of African rebellion against white racial oppression, as a critic of British rule in the Cape Colony, as a fierce opponent of the Trek Boers in the Transvaal, and as a modest gunrunner who provided

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 114.



guns to Africans for 'protection' against whites. It is divided into four sections. Sections 3.1 (A & B) together examine the nature of Livingstone's support for the Xhosa in the Eighth Frontier War and the Khoikhoi in the Kat River Rebellion. Section 3.2 explores his complex analysis of Boer racial intolerance as a form of savagery and racial degeneration. The final section (3.3) investigates the Boer charge that Livingstone was a gunrunner. In relation to this question, I examine the evolution of Livingstone's belief that African resistance to colonial oppression (either with guns, 'traditional' weapons or other methods) was honourable and manly. Livingstone's perceptions of the gendered nature of resistance and oppression underlie each section in this chapter. For Livingstone, manliness was exhibited by Africans who stood up to whites who enslaved their people, or took their land by force or degree, or stole their resources. Alternatively, he considered it unmanly, and in many cases 'uncivilized,' for whites to perpetrate these offences.

### 3.1(A) Siding With The Enemy: Colonial Oppression and Xhosa Manliness in War and Rebellion in the Cape Colony and the Colonial Frontier

What were the political and racial factors in mid-nineteenth century South African history that inspired Livingstone to support the Xhosa in their struggle against the colonial subjugation practised by his fellow Britons? What led him to write and hope to publish a clear denunciation of his compatriots during wartime, a time of heightened patriotism when government critics often turned to support their country's war aims? During Livingstone's time in Africa (from 1841-1852), the Cape Colony continued to consolidate its land holdings

and expand its authority over the peoples who had greeted the first white (Dutch) settlers two hundred years before. From talks with LMS veterans like Moffat, Philip and Read, Livingstone learned about the history of white settlement and colonization in South Africa. He and his family had in fact pushed the inhabited boundaries north of where Britons had previously lived and worked. Kolobeng itself was contested terrain, nestled amongst territory coveted by the Transvaal Boers to the west. But, the 1850-1853 war and all others were fought far to the south of any mission village where Livingstone had been stationed. The wars between the Xhosa and white colonial forces were centred on the eastern borders on the Cape Colony, a diverse geographical area marked by a string of rivers flowing into the ocean which served as frontier boundary markers for the expanding colony. (See Map 1, Appendix 1). The battlegrounds on which these adversaries had fought had gradually moved east, paralleling the movement of settler interests and the expanding borders of the Colony. The territory that whites gained, in what eventually became South Africa, corresponded with land and resources that Africans fought to protect and eventually lost. Compared with the late-nineteenth century 'scramble for Africa,' this was not a rapid conquest. It was a colonization marked by prolonged Khoikhoi and Xhosa resistance.<sup>15</sup> As Livingstone learned more about the history of South African racial politics, it was a type of resistance that he came to respect and support.

Beginning in the late-seventeenth century, the early settlers in South Africa had

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<sup>15</sup> The Zulu, as is popularly believed were not "the principle African opponents" of the British during the nineteenth century, or before. The British did not engage in a war with the Zulus until 1879, which followed the Ninth and final Frontier War with the Xhosa, 1877-1878). See Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, MacMillan Press: London, 1994, p. 321 for an example of this misinterpretation.

gradually strayed away from the Cape at the south-western edge of the continent, trading with the Khoikhoi for cattle, and later coercing them to surrender their lands so that white farms could be established. Moreover, the Khoikhoi who offered resistance in the southwestern Cape were decimated by Boer weapons and an epidemic of small pox brought by the settlers. Other Khoikhoi moved further north into the interior and maintained a degree of independence, defending their land and resources through guerilla-style resistance against the settlers. In the Cape, a growing early-eighteenth century Dutch community imported slaves to work alongside the Khoikhoi and San (in some cases), leading to the development of clear racial hierarchies enshrined in practice, if not in law. In the meantime, white colonists continued to move east where they gradually settled amongst the Xhosa north of Algoa Bay, between Sunday's River to the west and Great Fish River to the East. The area became known as the Zuurveld and served for a time as the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. By 1779, the Xhosa had been temporarily driven from the Zuurveld by the Dutch East India Company, resulting in the first Frontier War and a second war which followed three years later. When a Dutch magistrate later attempted to regulate black-white relations in the colony and along the frontier, the settlers - primarily Boers - rebelled against provisions that would have protected Khoikhoi, San and Xhosa land and civil rights. In the process, the Boers expelled the magistrate and proclaimed a republic centred in the Zuurveld. In 1795, the British seized the Cape and the areas along the frontier, lost control again to the Dutch in 1803 and reclaimed the territory in 1806. Along the colony's eastern frontier, the Xhosa were deemed a threat to white homesteads. After several Dutch farmers and their Khoikhoi servants were killed by Xhosa cattle raiders in 1811, the Crown led by a

commando of Dutch, British and Khoikhoi recruits attacked the Xhosa in the Zuurveld.

However, the Xhosa were not a people united against the threat of colonial rule.<sup>16</sup> Ngqika, a senior leader among the Xhosa, declared his neutrality in the war. In essence he collaborated in the successful British attempt to force the Xhosa from the frontier zone stretching from the Gamtoos to the Great Fish river, a 4,000 square mile territory extending well beyond the borders of the Zuurveld. In the process, the newly established British army forcibly drove off 20,000 Xhosa from the area, confiscating most of their cattle and destroying their homes and crops. This allowed the British to create a 'buffer zone' between themselves and the Xhosa, with valuable lands available for white settlement. To guard the frontier, thirty small forts were established along the Great Fish river, with orders to shoot any Xhosa who attempted to cross the river.<sup>17</sup>

In 1818, a coalition of Xhosa chiefs attacked Ngqika and entered the buffer zone to reclaim their cattle. In the process they also stormed Grahamstown, the military of the eastern Cape settler community. The Colony responded, however, by driving most of the Xhosa even farther east across the Keiskamma river, with their cattle confiscated as a reparation for the attack. After the war, the British established a new 'buffer zone' between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers, although Ngqika's sons, led by Maqoma refused to leave and were reluctantly allowed to live in the northern portion of the territory, which included the Kat River valley. Dutch-speaking colonists were allowed to settle in the zone in the 1820s.

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<sup>16</sup> For more analysis of the divisions between the Xhosa during the Cape-Xhosa wars, see Les Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society: The Ciskei Xhosa and the Making of South Africa*, The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, 1992, pp. 41-65.

<sup>17</sup> Switzer, p. 53.

In 1829, after Ngqika's death, Maqoma and his followers were forced to join the other Xhosa east of the Keiskamma. This led to the establishment of the Kat River settlement, as 'loyal' Khoikhoi citizens were allowed to settle in the territory vacated by Maqoma. Although Kat River was established because of the efforts of Cape humanitarians, the Crown viewed the Khoikhoi as a human shield against the Xhosa, as well as a potential force ready to defend the Colony.<sup>18</sup>

In 1834, after his campaign to protect the rights of Khoikhoi and other Africans in the Cape Colony had resulted in Ordinance 50, John Philip was sent to the new frontier to explain to the Xhosa chiefs that the Crown planned to enact a set of policies that would protect Xhosa land rights. The Cape Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban, however, stalled in implementing the plan, deemed the Xhosa "irredeemable savages" and then caved in to the settler demand to drive the Xhosa even further from their homeland.<sup>19</sup> These actions resulted in a full scale Xhosa rebellion and the Sixth Frontier War. During the war, the Xhosa were temporarily pushed even further east to the Great Kei River. However in 1836, this land (west to the Keiskamma) was given back to the Xhosa when Britain decided it would be too expensive to defend. This decision provoked a large number of Boers - who had hoped to settle permanently in the area - to join earlier trekkers north of the Orange River in the Transvaal.

When Livingstone arrived in Africa, the Xhosa had fought six wars against colonial

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<sup>18</sup> See Mostert, pp. 621-625 for an examination of the founding of the Kat River Settlement.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 736.

forces and had steadily been expelled from their lands to overcrowded areas in the eastern Cape. Valuable farming territory in the Zuurveld and areas to the north, meanwhile, had been annexed and incorporated into the Cape Colony. The Seventh Frontier War (1846-47) or 'The War of the Boundary,' as the Xhosa called it, had been fought while Livingstone was at Kolobeng (and later while he visited at Kuruman). But, unlike the previous war, when LMS members like Philip and Read were joined by Cape liberals in denouncing the actions of D'Urban and the Crown, the Xhosa had few white partisans in their battle against the British. The support of Philip and Read had been lost because the Xhosa had attacked and raided the Khoikhoi at the Kat River settlement (where Read was stationed).<sup>20</sup> In addition, LMS and other mission stations had been destroyed by Xhosa forces in what was widely deemed an unnecessary war.<sup>21</sup>

However, as the war dragged on, British actions began to offset the anger of many Cape liberals. Although fighting had yet to end and there was no clear victor in the war, Britain dictated a solution to the 'Caffre Question.' The contested territory between the Keiskamma and Great Kei Rivers, previously ceded to the Xhosa, was to be brought under

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<sup>20</sup> For further analysis of the reasons why the usual 'pro-African' contingent did not support the Xhosa in the war, see Mostert, pp. 870-874.

<sup>21</sup> Although he was removed from the fighting and had little to say about the war in his writings, Livingstone was concerned about the attacks on missions. He was particularly upset that Dyani Tshatshu, the Christian Xhosa chief who had visited Hamilton with Read in 1837, had joined in the fighting against the Crown. In the letter to his mother, Livingstone showed his disappointment: "They came down on the Colony just like the Highlanders of old in the forays, burned nearly all the mission premises in the country and carried off immense herds of cattle and sheep. Jan Tszoe [Dyani Tshatshu] who came to Hamilton with Mr. Read, joined what he thought was the strongest [Xhosa] party.... This is a great blow to our missionaries there, he had been a professor for so long." See David Livingstone to Mrs. Agnes Livingstone, 4 May, 1847, *Family Letters*, vol. I, p. 198.

British colonial authority and control. The British decreed that the area was “to be ruled as a form of British protectorate and dependancy called ‘British Kaffraria.’”<sup>22</sup> The Governor of the Cape was made High Commissioner of what became known popularly as ‘Caffreland’ and was given extra authority to determine the “affairs” of the territory and new frontier.<sup>23</sup> The plan was aimed partly at cutting the costs associated with colonialism, but was also intended to curtail the direct authority of Xhosa chiefs. Many of the leading Xhosa chiefs who had not already been sent to Robben Island were soon imprisoned in an effort to assert British supremacy, both in the new Kaffraria and in those Xhosa lands that had long been incorporated in to the Cape Colony.<sup>24</sup> Sandile, who had just become the paramount chief of the Xhosa, was first branded a rebel and was later tricked into imprisonment by the British after he had been invited to negotiate peace terms with colonial officials.<sup>25</sup> This act in itself helped precipitate the Eighth Frontier War, before the Seventh had even been concluded.

By the war’s end, Sir Harry Smith had been jubilantly welcomed as Cape Governor and supreme leader of Kaffraria by South Africa’s settler society. Noted for his arrogance in his role as Governor, he immediately took his position of colonial ‘authority’ over the

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<sup>22</sup> Mostert has explained why the Crown imposed a ‘Protectorate,’ rather than annex the territory to the Cape Colony. See Mostert, pp. 907, 911.

<sup>23</sup> Proclamation cited in Mostert, p. 911.

<sup>24</sup> Sandile’s Ngqika had, for instance, remained in their traditional home in the Amatolas, in the ‘buffer zone’ first ceded to the Cape Colony in 1819. This was in the same geographic area as the Kat River settlement.

<sup>25</sup> Sandile was also Ngqika’s son. His brother Maqoma had served as regent until he came of age to assume the paramountcy.

Xhosa to a paternalistic extreme.<sup>26</sup> Smith considered himself the ‘Great Chief’ and ‘father’ of the Xhosa and cast the Xhosa chiefs as his ‘children.’<sup>27</sup> To illustrate this point, Sandile was released from prison, summoned by the gun-waving Smith and told: “I am your Paramount Chief and the Kaffirs are my dogs! I am come to punish you for your misdoings and treachery. You may approach my foot and kiss it, but not until you repent your past will I allow you to touch my hand.”<sup>28</sup> A week later, Smith held another of the “braggadocio ceremonies” he was noted for to announce the end of the war.<sup>29</sup> Surrounded by British troops and several thousand Xhosa, including Sandile and other paramount chiefs, he declared the official annexation of the territory that would become Kaffraria. As a token of submission, each of the Xhosa chiefs then had to come forward and kiss Smith’s boot as he sat on a horse holding a stave. When Sandile refused to attend another of these degrading ceremonies, Smith stripped him of his hereditary leadership of the Ngqika and declared him an outlaw among his own people.<sup>30</sup>

In the most comprehensive historical study of the Xhosa to date, Noel Mostert has explained that despite their wars and resistance against colonial forces, the Xhosa “hated war

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<sup>26</sup> Smith had served directly under D’ Urban and had himself “picked up and repeatedly used” the phrase “irredeemable savages” to characterise the Xhosa. See Mostert, p. 736.

<sup>27</sup> Mostert, p. 967.

<sup>28</sup> Harry Smith, cited by Mostert, p. 932.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 934.

<sup>30</sup> Switzer argues that “Smith ... bears a major share of personal responsibility for manufacturing events which led to [the Eighth Frontier] war...” Switzer, p. 63.



and the havoc and suffering it brought them.”<sup>31</sup> They were a people who craved stability and were not “an aggressive, menacing or imperial-minded people like the Zulu.”<sup>32</sup> Yet, Smith’s bellicose relationship with the Xhosa and with Sandile in particular, soon led to an escalation of hostility between the two sides. In the aftermath of Smith’s actions, Sandile issued a series of statements about black-white relations that were seen by the settlers as highly antagonistic. As a result, “he had induced a hatred and loathing among the colonists that few, if any, other Xhosa chiefs had inspired.”<sup>33</sup> By the outbreak of the Eighth Frontier War, in December 1850, “the entire colonial establishment regarded him as the arch-villain.”<sup>34</sup> In fact, Smith used Sandile’s resistance in the face of his authority to launch the fighting that began the war.<sup>35</sup>

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When Livingstone arrived in Cape Town in March 1852, with this long, violent history of white colonialism behind him, he no longer had any qualms about supporting the Xhosa in their struggle against his compatriots. In *Missionary Travels* (the only source most biographers have used to examine his views on most subjects), Livingstone delicately

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<sup>31</sup> Mostert, p. 1109.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 943.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1003.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1010.

<sup>35</sup> On the eve of the war, Smith told Sandile’s people that it was their duty to ‘turn in’ this rebel against British authority, if they wanted to avoid war. When they refused, he sent the first troops in to begin the war in the Amatolas, the homeland of the Sandile’s Ngqika.

criticized the Crown for wasting money in fighting for settlers interests against the Xhosa.<sup>36</sup>

Why then, apart from the profligacy of Crown money used in the frontier wars, had he become a vociferous critic of the British? What particular Xhosa grievances led to his support for their cause? In one of his earliest comments on the war (from a letter written before his arrival in Cape Town), Livingstone blamed the eastern Cape's white settler population - centred in the heart of the Zuurveld at Grahamstown - for both inciting and profiting from the war.<sup>37</sup> As he told his sister Agnes:

The Graham's Town [sic.] merchants who are the principal getters up of the war, sell their goods to the troops at enormous profits, and then when the war is concluded they supply the Caffres with guns and gunpowder and call for a war again, and that great idiot John Bull has to pay the piper. This system has gone on for years. And who bares the blame for all these wars? Would you believe it, the missionaries. In a section of the country called the Sovereignty [sic.], 1,500 square miles of territory have been unceremoniously filched from one chieftain, and large sections of fertile lands from others, and then the gentlemen who have been the perpetrators of these wrongs turn around and say the missionaries are the causes of the subsequent dissatisfaction.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See the next chapter for a full analysis of why Livingstone tempered his views of the 'Caffre Wars' on other racial issues in *Missionary Travels*.

<sup>37</sup> Mostert asserts: "It was into Grahamstown that most [British settlers] flocked. It was their capital, the most populous place in the east, second only to Cape Town in size and scope of its activities. In many respects it was the focal point of the colony; because of its military importance and the cost of this to the British Treasury, and because of the rising ideological conflict that was to centre upon it during the next thirty years or so [beginning in the 1830s]; it was to be in British Grahamstown, specifically in its newspaper the *Graham's Town Journal* and the voice of its editor, Robert Godlonton, that white South Africa first became powerfully vocal in defence of itself, and of its outlook, and its attitudes and policies towards the country's indigenous inhabitants." Mostert, p. 656.

<sup>38</sup> David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 29 December, 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 161. The Orange River Sovereignty had been annexed by Governor Smith in 1849. This was not actually Xhosa territory, but it belonged primarily to another Ngoni people, the Basutho, a Sotho speaking people related to Livingstone's friend Sebituane.

Livingstone thus had come to believe that the mix of British and Dutch colonists in the Cape Colony was responsible for perpetuating a state of war with the Xhosa. It was these settlers who inherited the lands and resources that had once belonged to Africans and who stood to capitalize financially when the Crown used British resources to battle the Xhosa.<sup>39</sup> Some of these settlers - Livingstone's Grahamstown 'merchants' - had sold or traded guns and ammunition to the Xhosa and had made great profits from the war. Moreover, many of these same settlers, led in print by Robert Godlonton the editor of the *Graham's Town Journal*, had blamed missionaries (and Cape humanitarians) for inciting rebellion in the Africans who had lost their land or were threatened by colonial encroachment.<sup>40</sup>

Like the Xhosa (and seemingly unlike the British in South Africa), Livingstone preferred peace to war. He expressed this in the remark that begins this chapter as well as in a number of letters.<sup>41</sup> However, by the time he left Cape Town in June 1852, peace seemed like a distant dream, crushed by the profiteering of settlers and vengefulness of a colonial administration which hoped to push the Xhosa even further east or decimate them in the process. Frustrated and angered by the warmongering of the settlers he told William Thompson, a friend and LMS agent at Cape Town, that something had to be done to stop the

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<sup>39</sup> In another letter written before his arrival in Cape Town, Livingstone was even more explicit in his denunciation of the settlers' war profiteering: "They have supplied the Caffres with guns and ammunition, and always want a war, because they can sell everything to the military at enormous prices. A war enriches them." David Livingstone to David Watt, 29, September, 1851, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 227, note #2.

<sup>40</sup> See Mostert, pp. 874, 1102-1105 for examples.

<sup>41</sup> See, for instance, David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 2 April 1852, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 170.

settlers. "It is high time that we speak out," Livingstone declared; "we must pitch into them. It is infamous to see our Cape Government scraping and bowing to the Mobocracy of that cesspool called Graham's Town."<sup>42</sup>

The way that Livingstone hoped to 'pitch into' the settlers was to disseminate the grievances of the Xhosa to a wider audience. In sending a speech by Sandile to be published by his brother in Boston, Livingstone's aim was to enlighten American humanitarians about the war. As he told Thompson: "I send a letter to my brother containing Sandillah's [Sandile's] speech to Renton, to be printed in America. We all learn the Caffre war is one-sided. We must hear both sides."<sup>43</sup> Livingstone seemed to believe that in America - or at least in Boston - he would find an impartial audience, free from the type of colonial propaganda that had long swayed the British public to side with the settlers and the Crown in their wars against the Xhosa. The cause of the Xhosa would then, he hoped, be taken up

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<sup>42</sup> David Livingstone to Rev. William Thompson, 12 October, 1852, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 227. Thompson was also a strident critic of the mentality of the colonists and of Godlonton in particular. In an 1851 statement he took aim at Godlonton's role in the racial politics of period. For Thompson, Godlonton was a man "who for years availed himself of his position as the editor of a public journal, to misrepresent facts to promote the circulation of falsehood, and by the most cringing servility to men *in* power, and by the very excess of insolence to men *out* of power ... most pertinaciously to abuse the coloured races and all who have dared to appear as their friends. It may be doubted whether there ever was [anyone] more deserving of public opprobrium than the editor of the *Graham's Town Journal*... He is ... the representative of a class, alas both numerous and influential in the eastern province [of the Cape Colony], who appear to be strangers to every principle of integrity and honour, who know no law but that of selfishness, and whose motto is ... 'Bow down that we may pass over.'" This statement is cited by Mostert, p. 1105.

<sup>43</sup> David Livingstone to William Thompson, 6 September 1852, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, pp. 217-218. Henry John Renton, a Scot, had been sent to South Africa in 1850-1851 to inspect the mission stations of the Glasgow Missionary Society. It turned out, many of these stations were located near Sandile's homeland and the centre of the fighting in the war.

by American abolitionists who would presumably see a correlation between the Xhosa's long fight against colonial oppression - which he termed a form of "perpetual slavery" - and the struggle of American blacks against slavery.<sup>44</sup>

Considering the content of Sandile's statement to Renton, Livingstone's decision to champion his cause demonstrates just how dedicated he had become to the anti-colonial struggle of the Xhosa. There is no copy of the precise statement that Livingstone attached in his letter to his brother. Moreover, because the Xhosa of the nineteenth century have received limited scholarly attention, there has been little historical discussion of Sandile's statement, or of Sandile himself for that matter.<sup>45</sup> Mostert, however, does cite some of Sandile's remarks while Livingstone gives some indication of what was recorded. It should be noted that Renton was not the only member of Sandile's audience. Others were present when Sandile arrived at the Tyumie mission station in January 1851.<sup>46</sup> Missionaries John Forbes Cumming and George Brown, as well as Brown's family were present, as were the Xhosa who lived at the mission, including a number of converts. Sandile was accompanied by his 'warriors.' Moreover, he had personally invited the Khoikhoi rebels from Kat River so that he could meet and talk to his new anti-colonial allies.

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<sup>44</sup> David Livingstone, as cited in Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 66. See also the note #1 of this chapter.

<sup>45</sup> As an example, George Theal makes no mention of Sandile or the statement to Renton in his nine volume *Records of south-eastern Africa; collected in various libraries and archive departments in Europe*, C. Sturit: Cape Town, 1964, reprint of 1898-1903 edition.

<sup>46</sup> The Tyumie mission was situated on former Xhosa territory and was in the middle of the battle area during the first weeks of the war. It was located between the Kat River region and the Amatola mountains, where the Ngqika lived.

Sandile's speech was a key moment in the historically overlooked early Xhosa (pre-Apartheid) nationalist movement. According to Mostert: "Nothing heard from [Sandile] before or after was more explicit in expressing what he felt about the white presence [in the eastern Cape] and its impact on his people. It all tumbled out in the disorder of a great rage, but it rang with Xhosa logic, and with the nationalist passion of a dynastic leader who not only had watched his patrimony shrivel, but had seen the traditions of his people proscribed, himself deposed."<sup>47</sup> Sandile directed both his rage and his passion to each segment of his audience. The missionaries were first addressed. (He also spoke directly to the Khoikhoi rebels). He was particularly incensed that Renton wanted the Xhosa converts of Tyumie to remain at the mission rather than join the Xhosa in their struggle. This "triggered a tirade" against all missionaries in Africa, as he asked: "Who are these teachers? Are they not men who at home have people of their own, and they come here to take my people from me? .... They only take my people and give them to [the] Government.... I have always spared the teachers; but now I think I will just kill them too! What do they do? - only teach men that they are not to fight, even although their chiefs be in danger."<sup>48</sup>

Despite Sandile's threat to add missionaries to his list of white enemies, Livingstone found great merit in these comments. He firmly believed that the Xhosa people, whether Christian or 'heathen,' should not be forced to fight against each other during a time of war. In his view, the converts that Renton wanted to protect deserved the right to join their fellow Xhosa in the war, while at the same time the Crown needed to be prevented from forcing

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<sup>47</sup> Mostert, p. 1087.

<sup>48</sup> Sandile, as cited in Mostert, p. 1087.

them to fight on the side of the colonists. He believed it was wrong for the British to use Christianity as a tool to break the bonds between Christian and non-Christian Xhosa. Despite their conversion, Christian Xhosa had not somehow become British, loyally willing to fight against and kill their own people. He feared, for example, that “the gospel must appear to the Caffres as an instrument in the hands of the politicians to draw men off from their legal chiefs.”<sup>49</sup> In his view, Sandile was thus justified in denouncing the British practice of forcing Xhosa converts “to bear arms against their own countrymen.”<sup>50</sup> In fact, Livingstone praised Sandile’s stance towards the mission converts. “It is well Sandillah speaks out so nobly,” he asserted; “bringing out converts to assist the English is infamous. We must either preach passive resistance, or fighting for one’s own country.”<sup>51</sup>

Inspired by the Xhosa chief’s nationalist rhetoric, Livingstone had decided that it was the duty of missionaries to teach Africans to resist the yoke of British authority and power. In witnessing the oppression faced by Africans, they had a role to play in fostering African nationalism. In taking this radical stance, Livingstone was informing his compatriots that he was siding with the enemy. In invoking concepts of passive resistance, armed rebellion, freedom and liberty, Livingstone was essentially calling on the Xhosa to fight for their independence from the Crown. If these comments had found their way into print during Livingstone’s time, or perhaps even any time during the colonial period in Africa, he could

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<sup>49</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s Private Journal*, p. 83. The journal entry was dated from his arrival in Cape Town in March 1852.

<sup>50</sup> Mostert, p. 1087.

<sup>51</sup> David Livingstone to William Thompson, 6 September 1852, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, pp. 217-218.

have been open to a charge of 'treason' made by a critic of his or a Briton offended by these views. Why was Livingstone willing to stake his reputation on this defence of Sandile and the Xhosa?

At this point in his life, Livingstone had little to lose in supporting the Xhosa against the British. Although he had received some acclaim for his discovery of Lake Ngami and his voyage to the Zambesi, he was anything but a household name in 1852. After his cross-continental journey and the fame and influence that came after it, he was more guarded in his opinions concerning the racial politics of the Cape Colony (although not necessarily about other racial issues in Africa). Moreover, at this stage in his career, he was part of a missionary culture, following the tradition of Philip, Read and others who spoke their mind on the racial politics of the day. Like these influences, Livingstone was guided by his evangelicalism, the gospel and an associated belief - inspired in some Christians - in siding "with the weak against the strong."<sup>52</sup> Although Sandile was not a Christian and had threatened to kill missionaries, Livingstone discerned that the Xhosa leader understood the gospel and had perhaps also been inspired by it in his fight against the British. As he realized, Sandile had interpreted parts of the Bible in a way that explained why it was the British who had transgressed the white god's laws in fighting the war. The Xhosa chief had explained that he was not a sinner according the biblical teachings, but that the British in South Africa were guilty of flaunting God's word in colonizing Xhosa lands. To bring out the contradictions he saw in what Christians taught and how they acted, Sandile asked

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<sup>52</sup> David Livingstone, as cited in Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 66. See also note #1 of this chapter.



Renton and the others: “What brings white men over the sea? Has God not put [the sea] between us and them? Why not, then, keep to their side of the water?”<sup>53</sup> As Sandile understood, the whites in South Africa had claimed that God had given them England and blacks Africa, but they now wanted to undo what God had done. Moreover, he stated that God had made him the chief of the Ngqika and Victoria queen of England, but she, not God, had made Smith the governor of the Cape. Thus, he wondered what Godly right Smith had to call himself the chief of the Ngqika. In colonizing South Africa for themselves, he argued that the British had crossed both the established geographical and more abstract biblical boundaries established by God. According to their own basic teachings, they were the sinners, not the Xhosa. But, Sandile went even further in casting out the transgressions in the white interpretation of the Bible. He used the ‘white’ treatment of Jesus to show how whites could be wrong about their interpretation of morality. “The white men,” he declared, “put the Son of God to death, although he had no sin: I am like the Son of God, without sin, and the white men seek to put me also to death.”<sup>54</sup>

Livingstone seemingly agreed with Sandile about what whites had done in the Bible, about how they had used Christianity to demand that Xhosa converts fight against their own people, about how they had exploited the gospel to give credence to their authority.<sup>55</sup> In a

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<sup>53</sup> Sandile, as cited in Mostert, p. 1087.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> In Livingstone’s view, the young African was thus justified in comparing his plight at the hands of whites to the example provided by Jesus. Sandile had made no claim that he was a black Jesus, only that the persecution he faced as an enemy of whites was akin to the oppression Jesus had endured in the Bible. As Livingstone wrote: “He remarks in his speech to Mr. Renton ... that God sent his Son into the world and white men killed him. He was not

sense, Livingstone saw Sandile's fight against the British conquest of South Africa as something of a David versus Goliath struggle between good and evil, pitting honourable and manly Africans against their white colonial oppressors. Although, he had not met Sandile, his analysis of the contents of his speech and desire to publicize it in America demonstrated his admiration for the Xhosa leader.<sup>56</sup>

In many ways for Livingstone, the British war against the Xhosa was a public trial of both African and British manliness. In fact, Livingstone perceived African rebellion against white colonial/racial oppression as proof of manliness in itself. He supported the idea of Africans - the Xhosa in this case - fighting as a way to counteract the colonization of white settlers. Conversely, he viewed the actions of most of his white compatriots in South Africa - from the warmongering and profiteering of the Grahamstown settlers to the vengeful tactics used by British soldiers in battle against the Xhosa - as disgraceful and indicative of a lack of honour and respectable manhood in war. For instance, he pointed to Sandile's 1847 arrest by devious colonial officials as an example of dishonourable behaviour on the part of the Cape administration. "And how despicable the Government must appear," he pronounced, "when they reflect that after a solemn promise of safe conduct made by Colonel

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killed by black men. God had made boundaries and white men had crossed them. It was they who broke God's laws. He was a chief made so by God, but Smith the Governor was made chief by the Queen." See David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Private Journal*, p. 83.

<sup>56</sup> During his speech, Sandile had moderated his views. He decided, for example, not to go through with his threat to force the Xhosa converts at Tyumie to join his army. After completing his speech, he also offered to provide an escort for the missionaries and their families out of the danger zone. For Livingstone, these were the acts of an honourable man.

Somerset to Sandillah [sic.], as soon as he made his appearance he was thrown in jail.”<sup>57</sup>

Shortly after his 1852 arrival in Cape Town, Livingstone witnessed Governor Smith’s departure for Britain. Smith had been recalled by Earl Grey - the British Secretary of State for War and the Colonies - after the Cape’s effort to defeat the Xhosa had stalled and hundreds of white soldiers had been killed. Livingstone used this opportunity to comment on Smith and the white honour lost in the Colony’s effort to defeat Sandile. “Saw Sir Harry Smith returning ... a worn-out old man,” Livingstone remarked; “the *Graham’s Town Journal* said [their] watchword is, ‘Send away Sandillah,’ and Sir Harry Smith was fool enough to try it. After spending 2 millions [sic.] of money in the attempt, he himself was recalled with dishonour.”<sup>58</sup> In a letter to family in Scotland, he added that “the English as a nation ha[d] lost character and honour” in the war, first in instigating the Xhosa to battle through poor leadership and then in waging a merciless war of vengeance.<sup>59</sup> Despite what the March 1852 editorial in *The Times* had claimed, from the outset of the war the British army had used brutal tactics to subdue the Xhosa (and Khoikhoi rebels). As the war dragged on, both sides were guilty of pitiless attacks against their enemies, but it was the Colonial ‘Command’ that ordered its forces to use particularly barbarous methods to defeat, or at least terrorize, the

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<sup>57</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s Private Journal*, p. 83.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83. During his last expedition, Livingstone himself became concerned about being perceived as a ‘worn-out old man.’ As I discussed early in Chapter One - and will again in Chapter Seven - Livingstone was anxious that the burdens of age would act as a form of emasculation. The quote that I used to title this dissertation is only one of number of statements Livingstone made in which he tried to assert that he could maintain his masculinity in the face of age and a (self) perceived decline in his abilities.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

Xhosa. Lieutenant-Colonel William Eyre, for example, commanded the soldiers of his 73<sup>rd</sup> Highland Regiment to shoot or hang any Xhosa or Khoikhoi rebels they captured.<sup>60</sup> Presumably to show the vengeful might of the British army, “Xhosa corpses were [also] hanged from trees as a warning to their fellows”<sup>61</sup> Livingstone was aware of some of the tactics Colonial forces had used in the war. “Our army, I am afraid to say,” he told his brother Charles, “is as cruel as were the French in Algeria or the Spaniards in Mexico.”<sup>62</sup> In Livingstone’s view, the chain of colonial inhumanity was clear: profiteering colonists had sold guns to the Xhosa and still more to the army; to appease these warmongers, Smith was named Governor; the Xhosa were driven to war by continued colonial tyranny; Sandile was branded an incendiary force and pursued like a biblical calumniator; and, British troops had become barbaric in an effort to conquer the Xhosa, paralleling the inhumanity of other oppressive European colonial regimes. Branded as ‘despicable,’ ‘worn-out’ and ‘cruel’ - and lacking in ‘character and honour’ - the whites who fought against the Xhosa clearly failed to meet Livingstone’s vision of proper manliness.

In comparison, Livingstone was prepared to pronounce “the Caffres [Xhosa] much braver than the Colonists,” adding that their courage was all the more noble because they were fighting with “right on their side.”<sup>63</sup> The Xhosa had not incited the war, but had been

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<sup>60</sup> Mostert, p. 1152.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 1153.

<sup>62</sup> David Livingstone to Charles Livingstone, 10 September 1852, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.

<sup>63</sup> David Livingstone to the Livingstone Family, 14 November (continued from October) 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 153.

ignobly drawn into fighting by the actions of the Crown and the Cape Colony settler population. Confronted by a long history of colonial oppression, they were fighting with honour to defend their land, their resources and themselves. Keenly aware of Sandile's plight, Livingstone praised the loyalty of a people who stood behind their leader. In fact, he invoked his Highland heritage in illustrating the heroic qualities of the Xhosa. He compared their character as an oppressed people to that of his Highland ancestors, including his great-grandfather, whom he believed valiantly fought in support of Charles Stuart against the British Crown in the Jacobite rebellions and had been killed at Culloden. Writing in the aftermath of the 1850-1853 conflict, he was alarmed about the threat of another war and cautioned that further strife could result in the "crushing of men who have for years shewn a devotion to their chiefs only equalled, not surpassed, by the Scottish Highlanders to the Pretender."<sup>64</sup> Just as his ancestors had been routed by a land-seeking colonial power, he warned that the colonial administration was considering the forced "removal of 100,000 Caffres by 8,000 whites" in Natal.<sup>65</sup> In response, Livingstone took aim at the masculinity of

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<sup>64</sup> David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 12 October 1855, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 295.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296. The people of Natal were Zulus, rather than Xhosa. Livingstone and others of period referred to both of these groups as 'Caffres.' Later historians have classified the Xhosa and Zulu in a similar way. Both are now considered part of a large 'Bantu' speaking language group, which itself is subdivided into 2 smaller groups, the Sotho (Livingstone's 'pure' Makololo) and Nguni (Xhosa and Zulu). As Mostert explains, before whites arrived the Nguni-speaking peoples (Xhosa and Zulu) "lived in widely scattered homesteads and lacked the sort of populous and centralized urban settlements that the Sotho and Shona established. The Sotho were less exclusively concerned with cattle than the Nguni, for whom their beasts were the central focus of their existence. Theirs was a cattle culture of maximized ritualistic intricacy, the foundation of their whole social structure, so intertwined throughout their lives and customs that no aspect of their existence remained without direct influence.... When whites first arrived in South Africa, the Nguni were

the white men who campaigned for such a policy in the eastern frontier and he condemned “the killing modesty of the Colonial bravadoes ...the men who say, ‘I would drive the 100,000 [Africans] over the border by force,’ [or] ‘I would make a law to compel them to give their young men to us to labour...’”<sup>66</sup> Livingstone later denounced this type of mentality with reference to the words and actions of Governor Cathcart, Smith’s replacement. His remarks indicate that he believed colonial whites acted with a conviction that they could demonstrate qualities like fortitude, courage and might - thereby proving their manliness - through the process of violent colonization. Drawn by the opportunity to amass wealth and land at the expense of the Xhosa and other Africans, the masculine bravado that they exhibited was based on the wanton decimation of African societies, including the abrogation of African rights through slavery and/or ‘forced’ labour. For Livingstone, this type of male bravado was a dishonourable and unchristian form of behaviour that was clearly at odds with the moral character that he associated with manliness.

After his 1852 experience in Cape Town, Livingstone had seen qualities that he feared in other white men and other - often antithetical - characteristics that he respected in black men. This motivated him to speak out against colonial oppression and write in support of Xhosa rebellion. Yet, despite the stance he took towards the war, after his death colonialists much like the ones he denigrates here would perpetrate similar acts against the peoples of East and Central Africa, claiming to have been influenced by his heroic career in

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distributed from around the Kei river [Xhosa] all the way to northern Natal [Zulu].” See Mostert, pp. 78-81.

<sup>66</sup> David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 12 October 1855, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 295.

Africa. If Livingstone's radical call to 'sympathize with the Caffre' and to 'side with the weak against the strong' had been published, perhaps his ideas about Africa would have been understood differently by his contemporaries, perhaps his fears about the 'the killing modesty of the Colonial bravadoes' would not have been realized in future colonial wars against Africans.

3.1(B) 'So much for the alleged incapacity of the Hottentots': Livingstone and the Racial Politics the Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Cape Colony, 1850-1853

After Sandile had addressed Renton and the missionary contingent at Tyumie, he turned his attention to his new Khoikhoi allies from Kat River and told them:

I am glad to see you, my friends. I am an oppressed man. I fight for my head, my country, liberty, my grass and water. What fight you for? At any rate, if you aid me I shall re-establish the Kingdom of Chama [an ancient Khoikhoi dynasty].... I see that notwithstanding all the assistance you have given the government to fight against us in every war, and all your toil for the white man, you are very poor ... and you have been starved and oppressed.... If you will join me ... you shall be completed with cattle and all that a man should have.<sup>67</sup>

In his struggle against British colonialism, Sandile was able to transcend the knowledge that the Kat River Khoikhoi had 'loyally' sided with the British in two previous frontier wars. These were Africans who had taken up residence on Xhosa lands and had been rewarded by the Colony for then taking up arms against his own people. Yet, Sandile could look beyond more recent history to see a time when both the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi had been free from the white man. Their cause had become a common struggle against colonial oppression.

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<sup>67</sup> Sandile, as cited in Mostert, p. 1088.

Like Sandile, Livingstone saw a common cause between the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi in fighting against settler interests and British colonialism. Moreover, the Kat River Khoikhoi were a cause close to his LMS brethren. Read - whose congregation was at Kat River - and Philip - a longtime supporter of the Khoikhoi - had dedicated great energy to the settlement. They had quarrelled with settlers and colonial officials in combatting the injustices perpetrated against the Kat River inhabitants. In their final days, they had seen the settlement ravaged and almost destroyed by a vengeful magistrate.<sup>68</sup> In Cape Town, Livingstone witnessed the aftermath of the rebellion. In attending the trial of Andries Botha, he learned firsthand about the injustices the Kat River settlers faced within the colony. As Cape Colony citizens they had patriotically served the Crown, but as years passed they received little recognition for their efforts and they lived with few of the rights and privileges that white citizens enjoyed. In commenting on the trial, Livingstone produced some highly censorious characterizations of the colonial justice system. These observations, ignored in most biographies (and all of those written before 1973), arguably rank as some of the most trenchant criticisms of Cape colonial judicial and administrative authority during the mid-Victorian period. They reveal a fervent critic of the racial intolerance found at the highest levels of Cape Colony rule. They show a man incensed that his compatriots, fellow Scots in many cases, could abuse their power and mistreat Africans to the extent they did in representing Britain.

The Kat River settlement had been established in 1830 in the aftermath of the

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<sup>68</sup> Before his death, Read had tried to stop the Khoikhoi from rebelling, realizing that it would mean the end of the settlement in addition to the deaths of many of the 'rebels.'



Ordinance 50 to provide the Khoikhoi settlers with land, a wealth of natural resources and a previously unheard of level of autonomy in the Cape Colony. Founded at the behest of the Boer philanthropist Andries Stockenstrom, Kat River soon built a close relationship with a number of influential LMS members.<sup>69</sup> Shortly after its inception, for example, the community invited James Read to establish a Congregationalist church at the settlement.<sup>70</sup> John Philip also worked closely with the settlers and saw Kat River as symbolic of his fight for racial equality in the Cape Colony. As ‘free’ British citizens, many of the settlers fought loyally alongside British colonial troops against the Xhosa in the frontier wars of 1835 and 1846. “First to be summoned and the last to be released,” as historian Elizabeth Elbourne asserts, “the entire male population of Kat River between the ages of sixteen and sixty was called into service during the war of 1835-36.”<sup>71</sup> During the 1846-47 war, close to 90% of the adult male Khoikhoi population in Cape were joined by only 3% of the white population in serving in the Colonial forces fighting the Xhosa<sup>72</sup> Despite this show of Khoikhoi patriotism, white Cape citizens continued to pressure the colonial administration to allow European settlement at Kat River. After the ‘War of the Boundary,’ both longtime residents

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<sup>69</sup> In addition to his humanitarian motivation, Stockenstrom’s objective in creating the Kat River Settlement was to provide a military buffer zone between the Xhosa white settlers along eastern frontier of the Cape.

<sup>70</sup> A smaller congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church was also established at Kat River.

<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth Elbourne, “‘Race’, warfare, and religion in mid-nineteenth-century Southern Africa: the Khoikhoi rebellion against the Cape Colony and its uses, 1850-1858,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, June 2000, p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

of the settlement and their white supporters recognized that the future of Kat River as a haven for its African citizens was in jeopardy. The Cape government was unwilling to protect the rights of settlers and a sequence of administrative actions worked to undermine the stability of the long established and successful community.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the constriction of Xhosa land caused by the 1846 war and by drought had led to an inflow of Xhosa into the Kat River valley “looking for ... pastures where they could settle as squatters.”<sup>74</sup> In June 1850, Cape magistrate Holden Bowker, long hostile to both Khoikhoi and Xhosa, used a complaint made by white farmers who lived around the settlement to forcibly evict the settlers from the Kat River community.<sup>75</sup> Joined by a division of the newly formed ‘Kaffir’ police, Bowker laid waste to the settlement, indiscriminately evicting both squatters and a

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<sup>73</sup> After the ‘War of the Boundary’ the settlers were deprived of livestock, seed, clothing and blankets that had been promised for their service to the war effort. Moreover, although 900 of the 1000 male adults at Kat River had served the Crown in the war, they received no pay for their war pains. Beginning with the appointment of T.J Biddulph in 1847, a series of ‘magistrates’ sent to Kat River summarily worked to ruin the settlement and the morale of its inhabitants. As historian J. S. Marais wrote in his 1939 study *The Cape Coloured People, 1657-1937*, instead of receiving support for their grievances from Biddulph, “the settlers got abuse.” The magistrate questioned their work effort and character and refused to compensate the settlers for the loss of their homes, livestock and agricultural produce during the war. When the Kat River settlers attempted to sell the forest products they derived from their land to help offset their impoverishment, Biddulph raised the Crown tax on the industry. See J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1657-1937*, London: Longman’s, Green and Co., 1939, pp. 231, 234.

<sup>74</sup> Mostert, p. 990.

<sup>75</sup> Governor Smith had replaced Biddulph with J.H. Bowker, a member of a powerful settler family, a man whom Marais argues “proved as ill-fitted for the position as his predecessor had been.” Elbourne describes Bowker as “another member of the vocal British anti-missionary and pro-war settler lobby centred at Grahamstown.” Bowker had publicly supported Biddulph’s actions and he quickly exacerbated tensions at Kat River through his actions. See J. S. Marais, p. 234 and Elbourne, p. 25.

number of longtime residents, burning their homes in the process.<sup>76</sup> When he protested the injustice done to his people, Andries Botha, the seventy year-old military leader and pillar of the Kat River community, was summarily dismissed from his post by the magistrate.<sup>77</sup> Six months later, a group consisting primarily of younger Kat River settlers were joined by other Khoikhoi from across the Cape Colony in open rebellion against the Colony. Many settlers from Kat River and elsewhere also united with the Xhosa - their longtime enemies - in the early days of their war against the Crown.<sup>78</sup> Led by Hermanus Matroos, a one-time interpreter for the British Government, the Kat River rebels had first attacked white farmhouses outside of the settlement.<sup>79</sup> In an unsuccessful assault on Fort Beaufort, in January 1851, Matroos was shot and killed. Willem Uithaalter, who had served the Crown

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<sup>76</sup> “No attempt had been made to decide who had a legitimate right to live in the area or who was a recent squatter.... Some of those burned out had been residents in their communities for more than thirty years.” See Noël Mostert, pp. 991 and 989-992 for more details.

<sup>77</sup> As a result of his loyalty to the British cause, Botha had been a specific target of the Xhosa police in the destruction of the community. For example, as they torched the homes of longtime residents, the police were reportedly heard shouting: “Today we burn Botha out of the Blinkwater as he burnt us out of Amatola last war.” A number of the ‘Kaffir’ police later joined Khoikhoi and their fellow Xhosa in the war/rebellion. See Mostert, p. 991.

<sup>78</sup> The population of the settlement at this time was estimated to be 6,000, of whom just more than 1,000 were adult males. One observer argued that 266 of these men were rebels, while 818 remained ‘loyal.’ Elizabeth Elbourne offers no concrete numbers for the number of Khoikhoi involved in rebelling against the Colony during 1850-1853. However, her analysis reveals that many other Khoikhoi and mixed-ethnicity communities in the Colony joined in the rebellion/war. Of these, she says “the landless demonstrated a greater propensity than the landed to rebel; rebels were poorer than loyalists and more likely to be drawn from the ranks of ‘squatters’ and landless labourers.” See Mostert, p. 1082 and Elbourne, p. 30.

<sup>79</sup> Elbourne, pp. 20-21.

in the Cape Mounted Rifles, was then chosen to lead the Khoikhoi rebel force.<sup>80</sup> However, in searching for a scapegoat for the Khoikhoi rebellion, the colonial administration focussed on Botha, a 'Gonaqua' (of mixed Khoikhoi, Xhosa and perhaps even Boer descent) who had been honoured for his military service during the wars of 1835 and 1846.<sup>81</sup> After only a brief involvement in the rebellion - he admitted that he had shot at "Englishmen and farmers" - Botha had actually attempted to stop the revolt of his people.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, he became the tool for colonial vengeance and was tried for high treason on dubious charges.

Livingstone's support for the 'reluctant' rebel Botha, should not be seen as an indication that he was critical of those who were more dedicated to the rebellion. Nowhere in his writing does he denounce the actions of the rebels. It is clear from his commentary that he saw the Kat River Rebellion as the result of longstanding racial tensions in the Cape Colony and that he believed the rebels were justified in reacting to continued colonial

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<sup>80</sup> Uithaolder remained 'at large' for the remainder of his life. He committed suicide in 1865. See Mostert, p. 158; Elbourne, p. 21.

<sup>81</sup> Mostert writes that the Gonaqua were "one of the first great miscegenations of the South Africa melting pot." Elbourne remarks that 'Gonaqua' rebels from Kat River - such as Uithaolder - "continued to identify as Khoikhoi" in fighting the British. See Mostert, p. 990 and Elbourne, p. 19.

<sup>82</sup> Andries Botha, as cited in Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1992, p. 180. Crais remarks, that "in the years before the war, Andries Botha - who had once been one the wealthiest inhabitants of [the Kat River settlement and the surrounding area] - had only been able to cultivate a muid and a half [roughly 4.5 bushels] of sorghum, a few buckets of barley, and a few pints of corn. His stock had dwindled over the years where, not more than two miles away, white farmers pastured thousands of sheep and cattle. In debt, his life thus became like that of the other people around him." Crais adds that Botha "was something of a reluctant rebel," but that at least two of his sons were more dedicated rebels. See Crais, pp. 180-181.

injustice. He had commented in the past on the white reaction of Ordinance 50 and believed that the myopic racial views of Cape settlers and colonial officials had led to the outbreak of the rebellion. In his view, Cape officials steered by the opinion of the boisterous settler population had refused to recognize the rights of the Khoikhoi in the colony, despite the changes brought by the Ordinance. Although the racial laws in the Cape had changed two decades earlier, the colonists had remained mired in long-held notions about African inferiority and savagery. Livingstone argued that many Cape Colony whites - particularly those in the eastern Cape - held the Khoikhoi to be the unreflective and 'soulless' pawns of liberal missionaries, incapable of mounting or even conceiving of a rebellion. This belief had, in turn, caused the colonial authorities to dramatically underestimate the disenchantment and anger of the Kat River community. After years of mounting provocation, the legacy of colonial hostility and indifference had inspired an unexpected rebellion. "So much for the alleged incapacity of the Hottentots," he wrote deriding long held settler racial attitudes.<sup>83</sup>

As he had in relation to the Xhosa war, Livingstone again lashed out at Cape settlers for blaming missionaries for the anti-colonial actions of Africans. Because of the role played by the LMS at Kat River, Livingstone recognized that his liberal-minded cohort within the Society would be held accountable for inciting the rebels. "We missionaries come in for a large share of the blame of the rebellion of the Hottentots," he asserted in denouncing the mentality of Godlonton and his supporters.<sup>84</sup> "One newspaper the *Graham's Town Journal*

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<sup>83</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Private Journals*, p. 82.

<sup>84</sup> David Livingstone to the Livingstone Family, 14 November (continued from October) 1851, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 153.

[sic], is quite rabid against us, but it always has been. The Colonists generally hate us. They never forgave the emancipation of the Hottentots," he added, referring to Ordinance 50.<sup>85</sup> Livingstone clearly relished the opportunity to mock the narrow-mindedness of these LMS opponents in offering his support to the Khoikhoi cause. In one of his most trenchant condemnations of white attitudes towards the Khoikhoi, he wrote:

We ... long insisted that the Hottentots had souls, and our statements were looked upon as the blarney of silly enthusiasm. A few hundred of them, however, take it into their monkey heads to rebel, and they actually kick the ossa coccyges [tails] of our dragoons and minié rifle men. No wonder that great was the wrath of the government officials. Hottentot rebellion! What next? .... If we had hinted at a Hottentot rebellion I believe they [colonial officials and settlers] would have believed that a cow could handle a musket as well as a [the Khoikhoi]. The rebellion however is a great fact, and the condemnation of Botha has sown a seed that will yet vegetate. Everywhere there is a strong feeling of independence springing up.<sup>86</sup>

In ridiculing the attitudes of white colonists in this statement, Livingstone identified some of the important racial principles underlying the dominant white view of the Khoikhoi in mid-nineteenth century South Africa. He saw, for example, that the Khoikhoi were perceived as animalistic and sub-human by Cape whites. In referring to Khoikhoi 'monkey heads,' he mocked the nineteenth-century ethnological notion that Africans - Khoikhoi in this case - shared more physical traits with apes than they did with humans. For Western ethnologists of the time, 'Hottentots' were a favourite subject, primarily because they were among the Africans peoples best known to Europeans. Because of their long history of contact with whites, Khoikhoi men and women often served as the most convenient models

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> David Livingstone to William Thompson, 30 November 1852, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 220.

for ethnographic comparisons of ‘whites’ and ‘blacks.’ As historian Philip Curtin writes: “As early as 1713 naturalists began looking for a ‘missing link’ between men and apes and speculated on the possibility that Hottentots and orang-outangs might be side by side in the ‘scale of life,’ separated only by the fact that orang-outangs could not speak.”<sup>87</sup> In the early-nineteenth century, Saartjie Baartman - the ‘Hottentot Venus’ - was a prized live ethnographic ‘specimen’ largely because of the shape and size of her genitalia. When he studied her corpse, the French anatomist Georges Cuvier also marvelled at how her ears and lips resembled those of an orang-outang. “I have never seen a human head more like an ape than that of this woman,” Cuvier remarked.<sup>88</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, the Khoikhoi along with their San neighbours were regarded by some ethnologists as the lowest form of humanity, ranking below other ‘dark races’ on the evolutionary scale.<sup>89</sup>

Other ethnologists argued that Khoikhoi (and other Africans) were not members of the ‘human’ race at all, that they had more in common with apes than with human beings. Robert Knox, an influential anatomist/ethnologist of the period, maintained that Africans were a separate species destined to be annihilated by whites.<sup>90</sup> Writing in 1852, he seemed

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<sup>87</sup> Philip Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*, The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, 1964, p. 42.

<sup>88</sup> Cuvier, as cited in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, revised and expanded edition, W. W. Norton: New York, 1996, p. 81. See also Sander L. Gilman, “Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature,” in *Race, Writing and Difference*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1986.

<sup>89</sup> See Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, p. 413.

<sup>90</sup> See Chapter Four for a thorough examination of Knox’s theories.

to see the racial conflict in South Africa as a way for whites to slaughter the Khoikhoi and Xhosa. He queried his readers, many of whom were likely sympathetic to his cause, about the fate of the South African 'dark races': "Who cares particularly for the Negro, or the Hottentot or the Kaffir? These latter have proved a very troublesome race, and the sooner they are put out the way the better."<sup>91</sup> In many ways what ethnologists wrote about the Khoikhoi was a reflection of settler beliefs. An October 1850 editorial in the *Graham's Town Journal* expressed a view similar to Knox's, asserting that as the Cape Colony was "growing" in wealth, power and importance, "the black man is melting away before the white man" because of "a law of nature."<sup>92</sup> Later, white settlers parading through the Kat River settlement after it had been brutally recaptured in early 1851, carried a red flag with 'extermination' written on it, again echoing Knox's call for the annihilation of the Khoikhoi.<sup>93</sup> Knox, although not a settler, had in fact served as a doctor with the British army in the Cape Colony in the late 1810s and early 1820s.

As I discuss in detail in the next two chapters, as a result of his cross-continental journey Livingstone became immersed in the ethnological debates of the 'unity' of the human species and the differences between 'races.' However, in 1852 he was already prepared to counter the claims about the Khoikhoi made by other ethnologists. Livingstone believed that the Cape settlers, as well the colonial Government, conceived of their Khoikhoi

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<sup>91</sup> Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment*, Lea and Blanchard: Philadelphia, 1850, pp. 23-24.

<sup>92</sup> As cited in Elbourne, p. 26.

<sup>93</sup> See Elbourne, p. 21.



enemies as a separate and unequal species, as creatures with both human and animalistic characteristics. In his view, many Cape whites decided that the Khoikhoi, as a result, were not capable of organizing themselves to rebel. For these whites, the Khoikhoi lacked the 'human' characteristics - particularly the 'soul' - necessary to react to continued persecution. Early in the war/rebellion, for example, Governor Smith had cast the Khoikhoi as "cows" - easy, if unwitting, targets for Crown soldiers (many of whom had been Khoikhoi in previous wars!).<sup>94</sup> However, as Livingstone found apparent pleasure in recounting (in the long statement cited above), these 'cows' proved to be adversaries with often superior combat skills. Moreover, it is clear that he saw the Khoikhoi rebels as an organized force working with full agency to combat their oppressors and spurred by the goal of eventually (re)gaining their independence in South Africa. In his view, the organized rebellion of many of the Kat River citizens and other Khoikhoi from across the Cape Colony, had proved that the dominant racial representation of the Khoikhoi was erroneous. The drive to secure human rights for the Khoikhoi, led by LMS members like Phillip and Read, had not been misplaced. In fact, he believed if these men had been listened to, rather than scorned by Colony, the rebellion could have been avoided. They had attempted to change the way the Khoikhoi were perceived by their detractors, but their arguments had been overpowered by white settler interests and anti-Khoikhoi organs like the *Graham's Town Journal*. With the rebellion, however, Livingstone believed that Cape settlers and their Crown allies had finally

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<sup>94</sup> In lamenting government sponsored cuts in the number of soldiers available to fight the combined Khoikhoi- Xhosa force, Smith had declared that the British army could "only carry on a petty, pilfering, marauding, garden-destroying sort of contemptible warfare against Cows." This is from a letter from Smith to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, as cited by Elbourne, p. 28.

realized that they had been wrong about the Khoikhoi. These were soul imbued humans with the capacity not only to fight for a purposeful cause, but also to defeat the British army. Embarrassed, shamed and discredited by both the Khoikhoi and their missionary defenders, the Crown, in his view, turned vicious in reaction to the rebels - to regain lost authority and a sense of superiority. As Livingstone wrote: “No wonder that great was the wrath of the government officials.”<sup>95</sup>

Whether Livingstone was accurate or not in his analysis of the reasons behind the Colony’s response to the rebellion, there was no question that the British army was guilty of brutally attempting to put down the rebellion. As Kat River was conquered by the Crown army, British and Mfengu<sup>96</sup> soldiers “brutally looted and burned the settlement, including loyalist areas, and shot some loyalists, including children and an elderly woman with leprosy.”<sup>97</sup> However, in Livingstone’s view, it was in sentencing Botha to death that the colonial administration had created a martyr to the Khoikhoi cause. As Livingstone’s remarks above indicate, he believed the injustice committed against Botha would only further inflame the Khoikhoi and would function to motivate further struggle against British/settler forces. Having lost Kat River early in the rebellion, Livingstone sensed they would continue

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<sup>95</sup> David Livingstone to William Thompson, 30 November 1852, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 220.

<sup>96</sup> The Mfengu, known during the nineteenth century as the ‘Fingo’ were a group of Ngoni, first thought to have fled Natal during the *mfecane*. However, more recently, historians have challenged this settler version of Mfengu history and have argued that these peoples had actually been brought to the Cape Colony by the Crown to work as indentured labourers. They served on the side of the Colony during the last four wars against the Xhosa. See Switzer, pp. 58-60 for an analysis of this complicated debate.

<sup>97</sup> Elbourne, p. 29.

to fight for control over land and resources on a much larger scale in an effort to regain what had been lost to the Crown and the Cape's white settlers.

Many of Livingstone's comments concerning the rebellion revealed his indignation with the British Crown. Many of these remarks centred around the actions of high ranking colonial officials in administering 'justice' to the Khoikhoi rebels. He was specifically upset about the injustice meted out to Botha by the Colony's highest ranking judge, Sir John Welde, and the vengeful stand taken against the Khoikhoi by the Governor of the Cape Colony, Lieutenant-General George Cathcart. In Livingstone's view, the colonial representatives sent to minister justice in the colonies lacked the character and compassion necessary to represent the British in the Cape. Reflecting the anti-Khoikhoi sentiments of the Colony's settler community, he believed these men had forsaken the evangelic-abolitionist ethic that had edified the Colony in the 1830s under the influence of the abolitionist movement in British and LMS members like Philip and Read in South Africa.

For Livingstone, the Supreme Court trial of Andries Botha was more a trial of the character of the colonial administration than it was of the aged Gonaqua leader's role in the Kat River rebellion. During his 1852 stay in Cape Town, Livingstone dutifully attended Botha's "trial for eight days' duration," offering his support for the wronged African.<sup>98</sup> In his view, the same racial mentality in the Cape that had provoked the Khoikhoi uprising had produced a malicious and vindictive show trial designed to display the authority of white

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<sup>98</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Private Journals*, p. 83.

power in the Cape.<sup>99</sup> He believed the case exposed the racial intolerance of his compatriots and damaged the good reputation of Britain in the realm of international racial politics. “We English feel very complacent with ourselves when we compare our way of treating people of colour with that of the Americans,” he declared, comparing British and American attitudes to the treatment of blacks in the lands they controlled. Livingstone loathed the American slave system, but after his experience in South Africa he had been convinced that vestiges of the British slave mentality continued to have a powerful presence in the Cape Colony. After his arrival in Portuguese Angola during the first leg of his cross-continental journey, he became aware that some colonial powers enjoyed better race relations with Africans than the British. He believed, for example, that “the Portuguese would stare as much as I did to see (as in the case of Botha) a judge treating with levity a case of life and death, and a brandy bottle beside him in full view of the court.”<sup>100</sup>

In Livingstone’s view, the trial had been a farce, with the drunken judge clearly intent on delivering a guilty verdict:

The conduct of the court was extremely indecorous through[ou]t, and at last

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<sup>99</sup> Writing to Robert Moffat before the trial, Livingstone summarized the intrigue, rumour and the political motivation surrounding the impending trial: “It is rumoured that the Government has come out with the instructions to make an example of him, and the small fry about the Colonial Office speak about it as certain to take place. They will strain every nerve to incriminate him, and they will hang him if they can. The whole affair is aimed as a blow at the London Missionary Society and Sir Andries Stockenstrom.” David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 26 April 1852, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 178.

<sup>100</sup> In passing through what is now Angola, Livingstone was particularly impressed that a black man had rose to the rank of church canon in the Portuguese territory and was “universally respected for his virtues, and [that he had] had an order conferred on him by the King Portugal.” David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 14 January 1855, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 273.

a bottle of wine was brought in. Sir John Welde took several swills, pretending he was so much fatigued he needed it, pursed up his mouth after each glass as if he did not like it, and then when he passed sentence, which had been previously written, he brightened up till even the foam came out of the corners of his mouth. His tirade in passing the sentence was half an hour in length, and was the most horrid exhibition I ever witnessed..... The jury, a stupid looking set, gave a verdict of guilty on all counts.<sup>101</sup>

Despite Livingstone's invective against them, the jury had recommended 'mercy' because of Botha's loyal service to the Colony. However, Welde was determined to make an example of the accused and sent him to be hanged.<sup>102</sup>

In contrast to Welde's disgraceful conduct in the courtroom, Livingstone lauded the sense of honour and integrity shown by Botha during the trial and its aftermath. Writing in his journal during his time in Cape Town, Livingstone praised the convicted man's strength of character after his death sentence was handed down by Welde. "Botha in prospect of death spoke nobly afterwards in the prison," he wrote. "He forgave those who had witnessed against him falsely. I admired the old man's composure and faith..."<sup>103</sup> It is clear that for Livingstone, Botha, as a proud and dignified African, was the moral superior of Judge Welde, the supposed embodiment of British 'justice' and 'truth' in the Cape Colony. Like

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>102</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal, 1853-1856*, 2 Vols., University of California Press, Berkeley, 1963, pp. 207-208. Botha's death-sentence was later commuted by Governor Cathcart to a lifetime of hard labour. After spending over three years as prisoner, he was eventually pardoned, but died not long after regaining his freedom. Livingstone kept informed about Botha's fate and took no solace in Cathcart's decision to commute Botha's death sentence, describing a life of hard labour as "worse than death." See David Livingstone to William Thompson, 6 September 1852, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 217.

<sup>103</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Private Journals*, p. 82.

Sandile, he was a wronged man, demonstrating his honour and dignity in the face of British injustice and white racial intolerance.

After the ‘success’ of Botha’s trial, Governor Cathcart turned to capturing the Kat River rebel ‘leaders.’ Livingstone stayed informed about developments in the war and rebellion after leaving Cape Town in June 1852 and he continued to be highly critical of the Governor and the methods his forces employed in subduing both the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa. For example, he ridiculed Cathcart’s taste for violent retribution, including his seeming desire to hang his adversaries. “[I]t would be unspeakably pleasing to Sir George to hang us all on one gibbet,” he wrote LMS Foreign Secretary Arthur Tidman in London.<sup>104</sup> Cathcart, he added, “will never forgive the Hottentots, for completely foiling him in war, nor us missionaries, because of our belief that Hottentots have souls has turned out ... true all the world over.”<sup>105</sup> Livingstone posited that Cathcart’s malicious acts of reprisal against his African enemies were an example of bravado or hyper-masculinity. Frustrated and alarmed by the mettle demonstrated by the Khoikhoi in rebellion, the Cape military-leader had attempted prove his own fortitude in battle by maliciously annihilating his enemies. As he had with the white Natal settlers, Livingstone mocked the masculinity the Governor tried to demonstrate during the war/rebellion. In a biting sarcastic tone, he ridiculed Cathcart’s colonial bravado in repeating many of the wartime threats that had been aimed at Xhosa fighters and Khoikhoi rebels. “Boohoo, O thou mighty man of valour,” he scoffed; “That’s

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<sup>104</sup> David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 12 December 1852, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 237. A gibbet is an upright post with a projecting arm for hanging the bodies of executed ‘criminals’ in chains or irons.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

‘extermination,’ ‘driving over the Kei,’ ‘unconditional submission,’ ‘complete subjugation,’ and £500 for Uithaalder’s head too.’<sup>106</sup> In reply to these words of intimidation, Livingstone facetiously announced that he would “offer £5,000 for the Lion’s Head which looks down at Church Square” in Cape Town.<sup>107</sup>

After his scathing denunciations of Welde and Cathcart, Livingstone still had anger to direct at the actions and character of another Cape Colonial administrator during the war-rebellion. However, the subject of this ire, Henry Calderwood, also happened to be a former LMS missionary and a fellow Scot. After his arrival in Africa in 1838, Calderwood had worked as a missionary among the Xhosa at an LMS mission station north of the Kat River settlement. In 1846, he left missionary work and accepted the post of Commissioner to the Ngqika, becoming the defacto ‘chief’ of the tribe he had tried to Christianize over the previous six years.<sup>108</sup> Calderwood had long been an antagonist of Sandile. In his new

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<sup>106</sup> David Livingstone to William Thompson, 24 November 1852, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 234. Livingstone had captured some of the important racially based discourse of Crown rule. ‘Extermination’ related to the flags carried by white settlers calling for the liquidation of the Xhosa after the Kat River settlement had been conquered. The Kei River constituted the eastern border of British Kaffraria, territory which had been annexed to the Cape Colony in 1847. ‘Unconditional submission,’ and ‘complete subjugation,’ were examples of the rhetoric used by Crown Governor’s and Cape settlers to ‘rally the troops’ against the Xhosa and Khoikhoi. ‘£500 for Uithaalder’s head too,’ pertained to the ‘bounty’ that Cathcart imposed in an effort to capture Kat River rebel leader Willem Uithaalder.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* Lion’s Head is a prominent peak immediately to the right of Table Mountain (as seen from Table Bay) in Cape Town.

<sup>108</sup> The Cape Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, had invited Calderwood to take the post of administrator of all the frontier Xhosa, but he had declined the offer. Calderwood had been an unofficial advisor to the Governor before his appointment to the position of Commissioner to the Ngqika. According to Mostert, at this time, the majority of missionaries were sympathetic to the settlers, but Calderwood’s appointment nevertheless

position as colonial official he played a lead role - along with Governor Smith - in provoking the Xhosa leader into war.<sup>109</sup> Much to Livingstone's dismay and indignation, in a letter published in the *Cape Town Mail*, June 15<sup>th</sup> 1852, Calderwood expressed his belief in Botha's guilt. In response, Livingstone attacked Calderwood, both for the stance he took against the Khoikhoi and for aiding and abetting the colonial cause in his role as a high-ranking official. As he told LMS friend William Thompson: "Well, that is a fine letter from his Reverence Calderwood. I look upon it with mingled feelings of scorn and shame. With scorn, when I think of an English professor of Christianity so unutterably mean as to join in the hue and cry against the poor Hottentot, and so dead to the same of infamy as to confess at the same time that it has been his practice to act the part of a common informer, a salaried Government spy."<sup>110</sup>

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was met with "unanimous disapproval" by his missionary brethren on the frontier. Both Read and Philip, for example, argued that Calderwood was hated by the Ngqika and Sandile and that his appointment would end any chance of peace between the Xhosa and the colonists. Calderwood later became the Magistrate of an even larger area to the west of Kaffraria that had once belonged to the Xhosa. In this position, he was still in a position of authority over Sandile and the Ngqika. See Mostert, p. 906.

<sup>109</sup> Mostert writes that: "No white man on the frontier at this point [1850] was loathed as much by the Ngqika as Henry Calderwood was." Some missionaries complained that he made Christianity "odious" and they blamed him for a lack of converts. In his role as a colonial official he imposed floggings on Xhosa suspected of cattle theft, often on dubious evidence. Missionary John Forbes Cumming (mentioned above) was told by some Xhosa that because of Calderwood's actions, missionaries would not be spared in battle if there was a war. See Mostert, pp. 1009-1010.

<sup>110</sup> But, Livingstone saw some good in Calderwood's letter. He believed that in revealing that he was a colonial informant, any further "statements ought to cover him with lasting infamy." Moreover, in his published letter, Calderwood had also disclosed that he did "not know the [Xhosa] language sufficiently well to know exactly the statement of a native without an interpreter." As a result of these language deficiencies, Livingstone realized that Calderwood was not only a incompetent missionary, but would also make a poor spy. David



Acutely aware of the important role played by his Scottish compatriots both in the LMS and the Cape Colonial administration, Livingstone lamented the actions of men like Calderwood and Cathcart. He claimed to “blush up to [his] ears” when reading Calderwood’s letter and later told Thompson that he bemoaned the “unutterable meanness this Sir George ‘Gibbet’ Cathcart can be guilty of, and [the fact that he was] a Scotchman too.”<sup>111</sup> While Philip and other Scots had keyed the effort to win and protect the rights for South Africa’s native population, a wave of Scottish administrators had systematically worked to overturn the earlier changes brought by their radical countrymen. “Didn’t I tell you we Scotchmen are a bad set,” he added, momentarily remorseful about his ethnicity.<sup>112</sup> For Livingstone, these colonial officials were not men with the character of his Highland ancestors. Nor were they men who, in his view, demonstrated a laudable form of Christian manliness, influenced in the actions by Britons like Wilberforce or Buxton who - paternalistically or not - fought for the rights of ‘the weak against the strong.’

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In condemning the racial politics practised by Crown officials and Cape settlers, Livingstone had clearly identified different and competing voices in the mid-nineteenth century discourse of colonialism in Africa. The place of missionaries within this discourse

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Livingstone to William Thompson, 6 September, 1852, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 215.

<sup>111</sup> David Livingstone to William Thompson, 24 November 1852, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 234. Gibbet here is a play on Gilbert, Cathcart’s middle name.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

has been subsumed in recent post-colonial histories of empire, so that the generic 'missionary' had often been placed in the same colonizing group as other whites, including the 'settler,' the 'explorer' and the 'government official.' To a degree, all were 'agents of conquest and colonialism,' whether their impact was cultural, economic or political. But, as Livingstone's comments about Cape racial politics demonstrate, it is too simplistic to approach and characterise all whites in Africa the same way. At the time, these whites certainly did not see themselves fighting for the common goal of colonialism and the subjugation of Africans. The Grahamstown settlers, for example, saw a clear political distinction between themselves and the whites who opposed them, whether these antagonists were missionaries or friendly towards 'missionary' politics. Conversely, Livingstone was part of a subsection of Europeans in South Africa who challenged the racial politics advocated and practised by British settlers in the eastern Cape. Arguably, missionaries had converts to gain in supporting the aims of those in their 'flock' who fought against the Colony. In showing their loyalty to their congregation - rather than to their Crown - missionaries might convince once hostile Africans that their intentions were honourable and their religion worth adopting.

What could Livingstone gain from the position he took towards his compatriots in giving his support to the Khoikhoi and Xhosa? Since he had given up traditional missionary work, he could not hope to win the respect of the people he hoped to convert to Christianity. In fact, he stood to gain little or nothing from the stance he took during the 1850-53 war and rebellion, except perhaps the label of 'traitor.' From the point of view of historians, however an analysis of his pro-African position provides important insight into Livingstone himself,

in addition to the racial politics of the Cape Colony. Like Read (who differs in that he has yet to be the subject of a biography) and Philip (who had received more attention), Livingstone must be seen as a radical figure in the racial politics of the Cape Colony, with views at odds with other whites in South Africa at the time. Although he championed the cultural superiority of British 'civilization' as a missionary, he was able to transcend ideas of racial difference to support Africans whose aims were to defeat his fellow Britons in war and rebellion. It was anything but the norm for nineteenth century missionaries in Africa to support the killing of their compatriots by rebellious Africans. Yet, in part because the position he took during this period was largely unknown at the time and has been ignored since, his views on race and colonialism are not seen as particularly distinct from those of other mid-Victorian Britons in Africa. As I discuss in the next section of this chapter, Livingstone's attitude to the Boers - a more socially acceptable group to criticize than his compatriots - has received more historical attention. Yet his views on the Boers are much more complex than biographical and other studies have shown, particularly when examined in the context of his attitudes to the Xhosa, Khoikhoi and the manliness of African rebellion.

### 3.2 Livingstone and the Transvaal Boers: European Savagery and Racial Degeneration

After his time in Cape Town, Livingstone travelled to Kuruman where he soon became engrossed in a frontier dispute between Sechele and the Transvaal Boers. Arriving at Kuruman at the end of August 1852, Livingstone discovered that during his long absence from Kolobeng a well-armed force of Boers had attacked Sechele and the Kwena, killing a

number of Tswana and taking others as prisoners. He also received several reports that his home at Kolobeng had been damaged and ransacked in the attack and he suspected the Boers had destroyed or seized many of his possessions. Livingstone had long been hostile to the Trek Boers and with this new provocation his anger only increased. In his writings, he took aim at the character, social customs and political principles of these primarily Dutch colonists. The Boer leadership in the Transvaal, in turn, accused Livingstone of gunrunning and of arming the Tswana, and Sechele in particular.

Livingstone, the Tswana and the Boers had been brought into conflict on the western frontier of the Transvaal after the region had been settled by a progressive influx of Boer trekkers from the south. A number of factors led to the Great Trek, but taken as a whole, the movement “was undoubtedly a revolt against the more liberal racial policies of the British government at the Cape.”<sup>113</sup> Blocked on the eastern frontier by the Xhosa and the new settlement order brought by the *mfecane*, the Boers journeyed north over the Orange River hoping to re-establish racially hierarchical farming communities in the grazing lands of the interior. Well-armed and with fresh reinforcements, the trekkers (14,000 in the first decade) defeated the powerful Ndebele under Mzilikazi and then the Zulus under Dingane to take control of Transorangia and Natal respectively.<sup>114</sup> Gaining jurisdiction over vast tracks of land and valuable resources, the Boers re-imposed a system of land tenure which forced

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<sup>113</sup> J. D. Omer-Cooper, *History of Southern Africa*, James Currey: London, 1987, p. 71.

<sup>114</sup> After the reported loss of 9,000 of his ‘warriors’ at the hands of the Boers, Mzilikazi subsequently established a new state in the northern territory of modern Botswana, just south of the Makololo at Linyanti.

Africans into tenant farming and indentured labour. After Natal was annexed by the Crown in 1845, most Boers in the area joined already established settler communities to the north, or highveld. In 1847, Governor Harry Smith annexed the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers and proclaimed the area the Orange River Sovereignty. Among Smith's stated aims was the protection of the African population then subject to the Boer trekkers in the new Sovereignty.<sup>115</sup> This left Western Transvaal as the only area occupied by the Boers beyond the political control of the Crown.

During his time at Mabotsa and later among the Kwena, Livingstone made several trips into the Transvaal, hoping to place native agent and church deacon Paul amongst a willing Tswana tribe.<sup>116</sup> In this process, he entered into direct conflict with the highest levels of the Boer political and military leadership, including Commandant-General Andries Pretorius and Chief Commandant Andries Potgeiter. In December 1848, Livingstone and Paul met these powerful leaders in the Transvaal and were told they could not settle a missionary among the Tswana near present-day Rustenburg, or anywhere else in Boer territory. Potgeiter alleged that Livingstone planned to occupy this territory on behalf of the British. The Boer leader also threatened to attack any African chief who allowed a LMS

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<sup>115</sup> Livingstone praised Smith's "pure benevolence" in offering to build churches, schools, and roads for the Boers if they accepted the terms of the annexation. See David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, p. 17.

<sup>116</sup> No family name for Paul is provided in Livingstone's writings or in Schapera's often helpful footnotes to various Livingstone publications. Schapera does note that Paul was related to Mebalwe - another native agent associated with Livingstone. Paul was also "one of Moffat's earliest converts and the 'oldest deacon' of the church at Kuruman." He was employed as a native agent as early as 1834. See *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, note 2, p. 81.

mission station in the Transvaal.<sup>117</sup> Shortly after this meeting, Potgeiter petitioned the LMS for Livingstone's immediate recall from Kolobeng, threatening that the Boers would take action to expel him if their request was ignored.<sup>118</sup> The Commandant reasoned that Sechele had acquired guns and a canon and was defiantly planning to attack the Boers. He also hinted that Livingstone's role in the Kwena's bellicosity was not coincidental. Moreover, Potgeiter was angry that Livingstone had earlier labelled the Boers "rebels" and had challenged their right to inhabit 'British' land.<sup>119</sup> As a result of these accusations and Livingstone's subsequent refusal to leave Kolobeng, both he and Sechele expected that the Boers would launch an attack against them.<sup>120</sup> Amid these threats, Livingstone left on his first journey to explore Lake Ngami. On his return, his successful trek only further provoked Boer hostility. The Boers recognized the strategic importance of the north-west route to the Ngami and saw it as a gateway to possible expansion north of the Kalahari. However, all travellers and traders taking the pathway north would have to pass through Kwena territory and Sechele refused to let any Boers use the route. The Boers were particularly concerned that British colonists would use the road to establish settlements in areas surrounding the Transvaal. Sechele later dismissed a Boer "order" that he "stop all English travellers and

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<sup>117</sup> See Livingstone's *South African Papers*, p. 21.

<sup>118</sup> See David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 23 March 1849, *Family Letters*, vol. II, pp. 21-24.

<sup>119</sup> See Livingstone's *South African Papers*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>120</sup> "They are determined to attack, seize my person & reduce the Bakwains to a state of eternal vassalage," Livingstone told his sister Janet. David Livingstone to Janet Livingstone, 20 April, 1849, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 35.

traders proceeding to the North,” further promoting the Boer view that he was a meddling supporter of British initiatives.<sup>121</sup>

In January 1852, the British signed the Sand River Convention, handing the Boers the right to political independence from the British Government in the Transvaal.<sup>122</sup> Shortly after the agreement was reached, Sechele and other Tswana chiefs along the Transvaal frontier were called to meet with the newly autonomous settlers. However, the Kwena leader refused to attend the meeting, stating that he and his people were not Boer subjects.<sup>123</sup> In July 1852, Sechele became engaged in a quarrel between some Boers and a neighbouring Tswana tribe, with its chief Mosielele fleeing to the Kwena village of Dimawe for protection. This was the ‘official’ pretence that led to the Boer attack on the Kwena at the end of August 1852. In the battle, sixty Tswana were killed and two hundred women and children were taken captive.<sup>124</sup> The Kwena also lost three thousand cattle, their waggons, a canon and forty-seven guns. Thirty-five Boers were reported killed in the attack, but the total was likely

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<sup>121</sup> David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 24 August, 1850, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 162.

<sup>122</sup> Not surprisingly, Livingstone condemned Cathcart for this change in Crown policy and clear reversal of former Governor Smith's colonial initiatives to counteract Boer power in the frontier. The Boers, he wrote, “owe their independence to the ferocious and feeble policy of the Governor of the Cape. It is just such a measure as might be expected from one whose plans alternatively oscillate between a gibbet and bride for a Hottentot's head.... The Governor cannot be ignorant of the policy of England with respect to slavery, yet his policy is in effect this.” David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, p. 86.

<sup>123</sup> See Livingstone's *South African Papers*, p. 50.

<sup>124</sup> Among the 124 children taken was Sechele's son Khari, but he was returned after negotiations with his captors. Khari's mother, Mokokon (whose ‘adulteress’ affair with Sechele had produced Khari and had led to the chief's suspension from the church) was also captured and returned. See Livingstone's *South African Papers*, p. 90-92, 145.

lower.<sup>125</sup> On a personal level, Livingstone was deeply saddened by the loss of life. He had lived among the Kwena and counted many among them as his friends. “Some fine young men whom I knew and loved had fallen,” he reflected; “my heart is sore when I think of them.”<sup>126</sup> Through second hand accounts, Livingstone also learned that his library and medicines had been destroyed and that his family’s furniture, clothing and other items had been pilfered from his house at Kolobeng, even though it was eight miles from the battle scene.

As his letters and journals attest, Livingstone did not quickly forget the Boer killing of Kwena or the plunder of his house. Long before the attack, he had an impression of the Transvaal Boers that seemed to have been reinforced by their assault on the Kwena. As early as 1843, he pegged the Boers as slave holders who had moved north “in open rebellion against” the Crown and the abolition of slavery.<sup>127</sup> He suspected that as a result of the freedom from British authority, the Boers were “again stealing the children of the natives in order to make them slaves.”<sup>128</sup> Importantly however, even after the attack, Livingstone refused to paint all Boers with the same brush and he insisted on differentiating between Boers who had remained in the Cape Colony and those who had migrated to the Transvaal. For example, in an unpublished article written in 1853, he argued that “Boers of the higher

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<sup>125</sup> In *ibid.*, pp. 57, 90.

<sup>126</sup> David Livingstone to William Thompson, 30 September, 1852, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence*, p. 219.

<sup>127</sup> David Livingstone to Henry Drummond, 29 July, 1843, cited in *South African Papers*, pp. ii-iii.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*



ranks” in the western Cape “and portions [from] other districts [were] equal in manners, intelligence, and wealth [to] our English gentleman farmers.”<sup>129</sup> He would even grant that “lower grade” Boers living “far from the centres of wealth and civilization ... [were] a body of industrious, well-meaning, and most hospitable peasantry.”<sup>130</sup> Many of these people were, in his view, also “decidedly more gentlemanly in their deportment” than their British neighbours.<sup>131</sup>

Livingstone placed the blame for the gradual ‘fall’ of other Boers, particularly those in the Transvaal, “at the door of the [Dutch Reformed] Church.”<sup>132</sup> For Livingstone (and other British evangelicals), this was a Church mired in immorality and impiety. Its cardinal sin, in his view, was its continued sanction of the Dutch slave industry, first in the West Indies and later in Boer South Africa. Some educated ‘liberal’ Boers in the Cape, he maintained, had transcended the influence of their Church by adopting English as their first

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<sup>129</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, pp. 74-75. Schapera reports that Livingstone had intended to publish a paper “on Trans Vaal Boers and slavery, for the *Quarterly*,” but may have changed his mind after offering it to a friend to read. No manuscript of the article remains. In his 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, Blaikie added what may have been close to the complete version of the paper as an appendix. Schapera includes Blaikie’s version in Livingstone’s *South African Papers*. Livingstone clearly used portions of the text in *Missionary Travels*.

<sup>130</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, pp. 75. Livingstone continued to maintain this view after his cross-continental journey. In an 1857 letter he differentiated between the Transvaal Boers (whom he here termed “the general scum of colonial society”) and “the Boers of the Cape Colony who live under English law.” He described these non-Trekkers as a “rather intelligent class of people.” See David Livingstone to Rev. Dr. Dick, 17 January, 1857, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20314.

<sup>131</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, pp. 75. Livingstone makes many of these same points about the Boers in *Missionary Travels*. See p. 97.

<sup>132</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, p. 77.

language. But others, who remained under the direction of the Church had begun to descend into a state of heathenish savagery. In trekking north, away from a centre of British cultural and political influence in the Cape, he believed that the Transvaal Boers were in fact reverting to a pre-Christian form of primitivism. He theorized, for example, that “as a body, every year they become worse. This is the necessary result of living remote from all civilizing and humanizing influences. The young especially make rapid strides to downright savageism...”<sup>133</sup> Livingstone viewed the Boers at their savage worst as ignorant, brutal tyrants who had perverted the message of the Bible to serve their own bloodthirsty goals. A vivid passage from an 1851 letter encapsulated this view: “Each has his bible which he never reads. Each has his horse and gun with which he can kill blacks. They look upon themselves as the peculiar favourites of Heaven - That they resemble the children of Israel when led by Moses. And the blacks are the descendants of Cain and may be shot as so many baboons.”<sup>134</sup> In Livingstone’s view, there was little more offensive than a people who used a story like the Exodus to justify the exploitation of Africans. It was integral to Livingstone’s thinking that the Bible (and evangelicalism more specifically) be used to ‘peacefully’ edify Africans. He saw Christianity as a tool to bring a form of racial equality to Africa and as an instrument to ‘raise’ Africans to the cultural and educational level reached by the West. As a result, he saw only villainy in a people that would use the holy word to rationalize the plunder, if not the murder, of another.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>134</sup> David Livingstone to W. Fairbrother, 14 January, 1851, *Letters and Documents*, p. 36.

For Livingstone, evangelicalism and ‘civilization’ worked hand in hand. Just as the gospel could bring the racially uplifting benefits of ‘civilized’ culture to Africa’s ‘heathens,’ a false form of Christianity practised in an unenlightened land could carry a once ‘civilized’ people into barbarism. Based on this perception, he conceived that Africans could become ‘Europeanized,’ while whites such as the Boers could take on the racial characteristics of a traditionally ‘heathen’ people. Livingstone, for example, approached this concept in a literal sense in arguing that the religion, racial principles and way of life of the Transvaal Boers were actually prompting a change in their physical appearance. This meant that these once ‘white’ Europeans were slowly becoming darker skinned and were gradually acquiring some of the racial characteristics of the Khoikhoi whom they enslaved. “When seen bathing, they are observed to be a shade darker than Europeans,” he remarked, pointing to the preponderance of dirt in their lifestyle.<sup>135</sup> Equally striking in his estimation, was that some had also “developed a tendency to the steatopyga, or natural ‘bustle,’ which ... attained such striking dimensions in the Hottentot and other races of Africa.”<sup>136</sup> Both the Boers and British in the Cape had long deemed a ‘wide’ or ‘protruding buttock’ to be a racial feature of the Khoikhoi. Livingstone found irony (if not humour) in the racial changes he perceived in the Boer body. His comments also reveal something of the complexity with which he viewed the concept of race. Here Livingstone attempted, albeit perfunctorily, to escape racial

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<sup>135</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, pp. 83.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. Livingstone made a similar comment about Boer steatopyga in *Missionary Travels*. He did not specifically associate the condition with the Khoikhoi in this passage, although did add Arab-African to his list of those with the trait. He wrote: “There is a tendency to the development of steatopyga, so characteristic of Arabs and other African tribes.” See David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 98.

essentialism. Unlike Richard Burton (who also commented on steatopyga),<sup>137</sup> Livingstone viewed the ‘racial’ characteristics attributed to peoples of different skin colours as malleable, rather than as the innate criterion of difference. However, while he challenged the notion of inherent white superiority and racial progress, by default in this example he also associated blackness with barbarity and whiteness with ‘civilization.’ As a result, his characterization of Boer decline reinforces the Victorian conception that blackness (African or otherwise) was an intrinsically inferior state of ‘racial’ being in comparison with European whiteness.

For Livingstone, the principal expression of Transvaal Boer savagery was their treatment of Africans. Rather than work to introduce the gospel or to initiate legitimate trade among the Tswana, Khoikhoi or Xhosa as he hoped, the Trek Boers had attempted to subjugate the Africans in the midst. In renouncing the humanizing influences of ‘civilization,’ they had embraced slavery and lawlessness, using superior firepower to overwhelm their African neighbours. For Livingstone, these whites were not fighting for survival or to protect their dignity. They were battling to protect a way of life brought from the Cape and based on their malevolent use of captured Africans as a source of unpaid labour. Livingstone explained that the Boers justified the enslavement of Africans by

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<sup>137</sup> Burton went much further than Livingstone and attributed steatopyga to most Africans. According to him, the condition was a ‘normal’ characteristic of the African body: “The fatty cushions, or steatopyga, upon the glutei muscles, belong to almost all Negro tribes, but in women they are most remarkable, especially after the first child. In men they appear as rounded projections of the nates. The Somal are said to choose their wives by ranging them in line, and picking her out who projects furthest *à tergo*. Possibly it is a compensation for the long narrow African pelvis, and nothing can be hateful to a Negro than a thin rumped woman; it is like ... thinness in Spanish eyes.” See Richard Burton “Notes on Waitz’s Anthropology,” *The Anthropological Review*, No. VII, November, 1864, p. 237-238.

conceiving of “themselves as vastly superior to the blacks.”<sup>138</sup> Providing insight into his own understanding of the history of racism, he reasoned that “the dominant race always explains its ascendancy and excuses its tyranny by the same self-complacent inferences.”<sup>139</sup> Elsewhere, he made a similar argument about Boer racism, stating that these “conquerors endeavoured to excuse their own tyranny by deprecating the character of their victims and represented them as scarcely if at all above the level of brutes.”<sup>140</sup> In citing another example of this historical phenomenon, he pointed to the Irish, who “were for five centuries deemed an inferior race by their English conquerors, but [had] have since vindicated their characters in every department, and more especially in war.”<sup>141</sup> Despite his observations about the 1850-1853 war, he added that the Xhosa, long subject to this type of prejudice, were similarly gaining the respect of the British because of the character they had shown in war.<sup>142</sup>

Five years after the Boer attack on the Kwena, as Livingstone prepared *Missionary Travels* for publication, it was clear that his contempt for the Transvaal Boers had yet to diminish. In the book, he again painted the Boers as racially intolerant ‘whites,’ degraded Christians and nefarious slavers. To this end, he derided the Boers’ “stupid prejudice against

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<sup>138</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, p. 79.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> David Livingstone, “Notes for the Bulletin,” a draft of an article dated, 22 August, 1854. This may have been part of an article that appeared in translation as “Letter to the Paris Geographical Society,” in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, May, 1854 (earlier in the year). See NLS, 10777, folio 17 and James A. Casada, *Dr. David Livingstone and Sir Henry Morton Stanley: An Annotated Bibliography*, Garland, New York, 1976, p. 17, #12.

<sup>141</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, p. 79.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

colour” which, in his view, led them to “claim” that “the coloured race” were inhuman “creatures” who deserved nothing more than to be “black property.”<sup>143</sup> Arguably, his portrayal of the trekkers’ cruelty was also meant to generate outrage concerning their treatment of Africans. For example, his accusation that the Boers captured and enslaved small African children was sure to spark anger amongst abolitionists and concerned humanitarians. To support this allegation, Livingstone claimed to have “conversed with [African] children in the houses of Boers who had by their own and their masters’ account been captured.”<sup>144</sup> The Boer reason for stealing “children so young,” he explained, was that these youngsters would “soon forget their parents and their native language.”<sup>145</sup> Based on the number of copies of *Missionary Travels* that sold, stories of exploited children likely had a consequential effect in fostering British public indignation with the trekkers. In fact, Livingstone scholar Isaac Schapera argues that: “What he wrote about the Boers in [the book], and what he said about them [subsequently] in his lectures (notably at Cambridge) did very much indeed to establish among the British people a markedly unfavourable stereotype

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<sup>143</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31. The subject sub-headings listed at the beginning of the second chapter of *Missionary Travels* provide a clear view of Livingstone’s aims with his discussion of the Boers. The first three headings are: “The Boers - Their treatment of the natives - Seizure of native children for slaves.” See p. 29.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* Livingstone first made the accusation that the Boers captured and enslaved young Africans in a letter to Margaret Sewell in November, 1852. He wrote that the Boers had “attacked and plundered” a number of Tswana villages since his arrival in the frontier along the western Transvaal border. In these attacks, they had “carried off large numbers of ... captive children and killed great numbers of their parents.” David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 22 November, 1852, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20312.

of the Boer character.”<sup>146</sup>

The Boers, however, were not without their supporters in Britain. Explorer Richard Burton was one Briton who noticed the effect that “missionaries” - like the unnamed Livingstone - had had on the way Boers were perceived by Victorians. Although he had not travelled through Boer territory on any of his treks across Africa, Burton had read *Missionary Travels* and had noted Livingstone’s characterization of the Boers.<sup>147</sup> Taking aim at what he saw as the dominant representation of the Boers, he complained that “the ‘cruelty and barbarity of the Dutch boers on the Cape’ is rapidly passing into a formula.”<sup>148</sup> For Burton, the racial degradation of the Boers had been overstated. Any slavery or ‘colour prejudice’ they practised had been misrepresented by British philanthropists who were simply looking for another race related ‘cause’ in order to support downtrodden Africans. “But we have hitherto had only the accounts of their enemies,” Burton declared, “especially the missionaries, and I suspect that the proneness to exaggeration has been palmed upon the public. It is an unfair remark to suppose the Boers ... could not distinguish between good and

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<sup>146</sup> Isaac Schapera, in Livingstone’ *South African Papers*, p. iv.

<sup>147</sup> I examined Burton’s copy of *Missionary Travels*, held by the Huntington Library. As was his practice in most of the books he read, Burton marked and often commented on passages from the text in the margins of the book. He made several marks and several comments in his copy of *Missionary Travels*, some relating to Livingstone’s section on the Boers. Take, for example, Livingstone’s comment: “It is difficult for a person in a civilized country to conceive that any body of men possessing the common attributes of humanity (and these Boers are by no means destitute of the better feelings of our nature) should with one accord set out, after loading their own wives and children with caresses, and proceed to shoot down in cold blood men and women, of a different colour, it is true, but possessed of domestic feelings and affections equal to their own.” Next to the statement that I have underlined, Burton wrote “No.” This passage appears in *Missionary Travels*, p. 31.

<sup>148</sup> Richard Burton “Notes on Waitz’s Anthropology,” p. 239.

bad actions....”<sup>149</sup> For Burton, the enslavement of African children and the purported murder of their parents was an overstatement, if not a fabrication, and it was not a cause that merited British involvement. He also asserted that past British actions against the Boers had been a missionary inspired waste of money and lives. “[D]espite its philanthropy,” he argued, “the English Government ha[d] wasted more lives of the enemy, and certainly more blood of its own servants, than the Boers ever did.”<sup>150</sup>

Burton liked to cast his racial views as unorthodox and those of missionaries like Livingstone as doctrinaire. However, the opinions Burton offered here were in a sense already reflected in the ‘laissez-faire’ colonial policy practised by the Crown in South Africa after 1852. If *Missionary Travels* fostered British popular ill will towards the Transvaal Boers, the book did little to change official Crown policy north of Vaal after its publication, or during Livingstone’s lifetime for that matter. An event like the ‘First Anglo-Boer War’ of 1880-1881 likely generated anti-Boer propaganda that transcended any public resentment Livingstone had engendered against the Boers years earlier.<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to note that he published and found a largely accepting audience for his views on Boer

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. In many of his books, Burton derided the efforts of missionaries in helping Africans, whether through converting them to Christianity or assisting them through other projects. However, rather than attack them personally in print, he often argued that the ventures that missionaries (and evangelicals) had convinced the Crown to fund, had been a waste of public funds. He pointed, for example, to Buxton’s Niger Expedition and the funding of anti-slave patrols off the coast of West Africa as publicly funded failures.

<sup>151</sup> The Transvaal was annexed by the Crown in 1877 as part of a colonialist effort to unify the ‘white’ states of Southern Africa. Soundly defeated in the 1880-1881 war, the British lost direct control of the territory as result.



savagery and racial degeneration, although Livingstone scholars other than Schapera have failed to recognize this. In comparison, the same can not be said for what Livingstone wrote in relation to the racial politics of the Xhosa, the Khoikhoi and the British Crown. As I discuss in the next chapter, in writing *Missionary Travels* Livingstone made the decision (with the help of his editor and others) that it was acceptable to condemn publicly the actions of Dutch settlers in South Africa, but not the behaviour of the British in the Cape Colony. In addition to ignoring this distinction, the vast majority of Livingstone scholars have failed to examine the important issue of whether he supplied guns to Africans in support of the anti-colonial cause.

### 3.3 Manliness and African Resistance Against White Tyranny: Was Livingstone a Gunrunner?

Boer leaders Potgeiter and Pretorius were keenly aware of Livingstone's low opinion of their people. After their failed attempt to have Livingstone removed from Kolobeng in 1847, his Boer adversaries endeavoured to sully his reputation as a missionary by charging that he was working as an illegal gunrunner, supplying arms to the Tswana that could be used to attack Europeans. Most of Livingstone's biographers have avoided the issue of whether he supplied guns to Africans to fend off or even to strike at whites, just as they have ignored his support for the Xhosa or the Khoikhoi. George Seaver, one of the few biographers to tackle the question, concluded that "[t]here is no foundation whatever to the assertion, which has sometimes been made, that Livingstone was guilty of arming the

natives.” Writing in 1957, Seaver was undoubtedly aware that to infer that Livingstone might have helped to supply arms to Africans to fight Crown forces, or even other whites such as the Boers, would have only have served to question his patriotism and racial loyalties. This was particularly true in the case of biographies written during the height of British colonial control in Africa. During Livingstone’s time in Africa, gunrunning was thought to be the business of unprincipled European traders, immorally trying to profit from the often violent racial politics of the frontier. Thus to suggest that he was in a league with such a nefarious group was to assail his good character and archetypal Christian manliness. As Andrew Ross remarks, during the heyday of missionary biographies (from the 1880s to the 1940s), it was crucial that key figures like Livingstone “presented no challenge to the imperialism current in Britain at the time.”<sup>152</sup>

Although Livingstone’s centenary biographers continued to ignore the issue of his gunrunning, evidence had long been available to make conclusions about the extent to which he armed Africans. In editing Livingstone’s *South African Papers*, Isaac Schapera finally surveyed this evidence, in addition to other documents he had uncovered. He was led to conclude that “there is ample evidence in Livingstone’s own writings to prove that he did occasionally supply Sechele and other natives with firearms.”<sup>153</sup> He demonstrates, for example, that Livingstone

gave a gun each, and ammunition, to Mosielele [the Tswana chief at Mabotsa] and Sechele (1845), in return for land on which to build mission

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<sup>152</sup> Ross, *John Philip, 1775-1851: Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa*, Aberdeen University Press: Aberdeen, 1986, p. 2.

<sup>153</sup> Schapera, Livingstone’s *South African Papers*, p. 41.

premises; he sold several rifles to Sechele on behalf of Moffat, and gunpowder to the Kwena generally on behalf of [British hunter Gordon] Cumming; and he once traded some of his own gunpowder to the Bakwena generally for ivory which he then used as part payment for the purchase of a wagon. He also mended guns for the Kwena, or gave them firing-pans and gun-locks, in exchange for sheep to slaughter.<sup>154</sup>

There was thus some credence to the Boer accusation against Livingstone; although, his 'gunrunning' seems to have been on a "relatively insignificant" level and was not intended to arm the Kwena for a full-scale insurrection against the Boers.<sup>155</sup> As Schapera argues, Livingstone's "attitude was that they needed firearms both for hunting and for *protection* against the Boers."<sup>156</sup> The 1852 Sand River Convention prohibited the trade in guns and ammunition between whites and Africans on both sides of the Vaal River. Yet, even before the signing of the Convention, the Boers considered African gun ownership to be a breach of the laws they had 'established' in the Transvaal. Schapera shows that most of the guns that the Tswana acquired came from traders like Wilson and from wealthy 'gentleman' hunters like Gordon Cumming who were willing to trade guns for ivory.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, his research demonstrates that some frontier Boers had themselves sold guns to the Tswana,

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., emphasis added.

<sup>157</sup> In 1929, Boer General Jan Smuts (a moderate who led Boer troops in the 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War), admitted that Potgeiter and the other Transvaal Boer leaders of the time had concluded "erroneously" that Livingstone was responsible for supplying the Tswana with guns. According to Smuts, Cumming was the actual culprit, though Livingstone had suffered the consequences. This comes from Smuts' *Africa and Some World Problems* and is discussed by Schapera in Livingstone's *South African Papers*, p. 41.

(mirroring the practice of Cape Colony settlers who sold guns to the Xhosa).<sup>158</sup>

Livingstone was aware that gunrunning was a severe accusation which, if proven, could seriously damage his reputation as a missionary, if not the cause of the LMS in Africa.<sup>159</sup> In a number of letters, including one to his parents, he thus denied the charge that he had procured guns for the Kwena or any other Tswana group.<sup>160</sup> While in Cape Town in 1852, he even wrote a short article, published the following year in the *Cape Town Mail*, to defend himself against the Boer accusation that he was a gunrunner. “The Story of the Black Pot, alias, The Story of Selling the Gun” was clearly intended to ridicule the nature of the Boer charges against him. In the article, Livingstone reported that high ranking Boer officials believed that he had supplied Sechele and the Kwena with a powerful canon and five hundred guns. At his behest, this arsenal was then to be used to attack Boer positions in Western Transvaal. In recounting the ‘story,’ he mocked the Boers’ penchant for exaggeration by declaring that the ‘canon’ they claimed he had supplied to Sechele was in fact a black iron pot he had lent the Kwena in order to cook elephant meat.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> See Schapera, Livingstone’s *South African Papers*, p. 40, note 16.

<sup>159</sup> After the charges levelled against him by Potgeiter in 1849, which included gunrunning, Livingstone’s behaviour was investigated by LMS Foreign Secretary J.J. Freeman. Freeman concluded: “The charges brought against him of having supplied the Natives with firearms and [gun]powder is [*sic*] totally groundless. They must have been invented by some parties anxious to create a reason for expelling him.” See Livingstone’s *South African Papers*, p. 41.

<sup>160</sup> Livingstone told his family: “I had no hand in procuring the guns of the Bakwains...” David Livingstone to the Livingstone Family, 28 July, 1852, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 95.

<sup>161</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, pp. 28-33. Schapera includes a published Boer response to the ‘Black Pot Story,’ in which the authors claimed that “Dr.

Although he was held accountable for ‘arming’ the Kwena and fought against the charge, Livingstone was pleased that the Boers believed that Sechele and his people were well stocked with guns and ammunition.<sup>162</sup> In his view, guns (as opposed to traditional native weapons like spears) showed power and authority and were the Kwenas’ best defence against Boer aggression. For Livingstone, Africans who were prepared to show their might - real or fictitious - by brandishing evidence of gun power had a much better chance of remaining independent and autonomous in a land dominated by a powerful Boer minority. “Moral suasion and the law of love are very fine in their places,” he told his parents, but the Boers conquered tribes that posed no threat and “reduced [them] to a bitter state of slavery.”<sup>163</sup> In the same letter, he cast armed opposition to Boer oppression as a heavenly calling. He reasoned that missionaries had a duty to work with Africans to safeguard LMS interests through a show of force - real or otherwise: “Resistance to such tyrants and murderers is I think obedience to God... The only means with which the divine blessing has preserved our independence as a people are those very guns which you think the people would have been better off without. The tribe would never have enjoyed the gospel but for the firearms.”<sup>164</sup> Perhaps to assuage his parents’ concerns, he told them: “No one ha[d] ever

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Livingstone’s story ... [was] quite new to us.” *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48. Schapera shows, moreover, that Sechele likely did not have a canon (or 500 guns) during the Boer attack, (or if he did, he was not able to use canon because of a lack of ammunition).

<sup>162</sup> David Livingstone to the Livingstone Family, 28 July, 1852, *Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 95.

<sup>163</sup> David Livingstone to his parents and sisters, 28 July, 1850, *Family Letters*, vol. II, pp. 94-95.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

been killed by [guns]” at any of the mission stations where he had worked. Moreover, in the letter he equated the real guns he and others furnished to the Tswana with dummy guns made of wood, called ‘Quakers’ by the sailors who sometimes used them. Although the guns the Tswana had could kill, they would only be used like these dummy guns to ward off potential attackers. Livingstone thus saw the gun as a form of God-sanctioned strategic defence rather than as an offensive weapon of death. Non-violence was clearly not a tenet of his Christianity. This attitude to guns had allowed him to transcend any theological concerns that might have condemned the use of weapons to kill. It also permitted him to support the Xhosa and Khoikhoi in the armed battle against the British.

Schapera indicates that early in Livingstone’s relationship with the Kwena he seemed to adhere to a personal policy of preventing gun violence by Sechele and his people against their enemies. In 1846, for example, when Sechele informed Livingstone of the prospect that a neighbouring Tswana tribe might launch an attack, Livingstone immediately informed him that he would banish all gun powder “and never mend a gun, while there was any possibility of its being used in shedding blood.”<sup>165</sup> Importantly, however, the type of gun-violence threatened in this attack was black on black, rather than oppressed black against tyrannical white. Livingstone occasionally became involved in violent inter-tribal skirmishes during his time in Africa, particularly in clashes related to the slave-trade, but he was never an open advocate of black on black violence.<sup>166</sup> In contrast, as he became increasingly immersed in

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<sup>165</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Papers*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>166</sup> Not directly anyway, in battles that pitted independent African groups against each other. In the wars between the Xhosa and the British, the Xhosa often fought against and killed Khoikhoi and other Africans who had been called to battle as members of the British

South African racial politics in the early 1850s, he came to regard African armed resistance against repressive whites, not only as morally justifiable, but as a test of manliness.

As with the Xhosa, Livingstone saw manly honour in Tswana men who were willing to audaciously stand to protect themselves against more potent white aggressors. After the 1852 Boer attack on the Kwena at Kolobeng, he was thus pleased that Sechele and his people had “fought bravely and killed about thirty” of their attackers.”<sup>167</sup> Despite brandishing a much smaller artillery, the Kwena had courageously fought to protect their land, resources and autonomy. Although they had lost the battle and a number of their people had been killed or captured, Livingstone believed that these Tswana had exhibited the manly character (and the European weaponry) necessary to maintain their independence from the Boers. Nevertheless, by the time *Missionary Travels* was published, Livingstone had become critical of the type of resistance offered by the Tswana (including Sechele and his Kwena) against their Boer oppressors. While he praised Tswana intelligence, he now concluded that they had been overly passive in their relationship with the Boers in the Transvaal. He argued that as the ethnic majority and the native inhabitants of the Transvaal, the Tswana had a responsibility to band together as a people to force the Boers off their land (and presumably back to Europe). “How is it that the natives, being so vastly superior in numbers to the Boers,” he wondered, “do not rise and annihilate them?”<sup>168</sup> In 1857, Livingstone could

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army. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, Livingstone was morally opposed to the idea that Xhosa converts should be forced to fight on the side of the British.

<sup>167</sup> David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 22 November, 1852, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20312.

<sup>168</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 32.

foresee the continued expansion of Boer power in the Transvaal and into what is now Botswana. As a result, he asserted that the best and most manly path for the Tswana to follow was not to demonstrate a brave 'defence,' backed up with limited firepower, as in the case of Sechele and the Kwena. Instead, he maintained the Tswana needed to take their destiny into their own hands in an offensive war against their oppressors. With a courageous show of defiance, the Tswana could attack the Boer villages and settlements that were scattered across the Transvaal and reclaim what had been taken from them. To demonstrate the virtues of this tactic, he pointed to the Xhosa as a model of manly resistance. In contrast to the Tswana, he argued that the Xhosa had gone on the offensive against the British. They had refused to passively stand by while their "country, liberty, ...grass and water" were usurped by colonists.<sup>169</sup> In the 1850-1853 war, the Xhosa had strong leadership, experience in battle and arms acquired specifically to fight the British. In marrying these factors with a willingness to fight for their freedom they had proved a formidable and honourable adversary. Moreover, he maintained, they had demonstrated that they were unwilling to share their land and resources with colonists intent on eventually displacing them. In *Missionary Travels*, he contrasted the 'passive' approach used by the Tswana with the 'aggressive' tactics used by the Xhosa in combatting aggressive European colonization:

...history does not contain a single instance in which the Bechuanas [Tswana], even those of them who possess fire-arms, have attacked either the Boers or the English. If there is such an instance, I am certain it is not generally known, either beyond or in the Cape Colony. They have defended themselves when attacked, as in the case of Sechele, but have never engaged in offensive war with Europeans. We have a different tale to tell of the Caffres, and the difference has always been so evident to these border Boers,

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.



that, ever since ‘those magnificent savages’ obtained possession of fire-arms not one Boer has ever attempted to settle in Caffreland, or even face them as an army in the field.<sup>170</sup>

Livingstone maintained that as a result of the manly resistance offered by the Xhosa, the Boer aggressors had trekked north, “sidling away in their emigrations towards the more *effeminate Bechuanas...*”<sup>171</sup> Confronted with a choice between settling and subduing a fierce and combative people, he believed that the Boers had moved north of the Vaal to prey on the peaceful and submissive Tswana.

On one hand, Livingstone’s call for armed African rebellion against whites was a radical position to take for a Victorian (if not for later generations of whites in Africa). However, his criticism of Tswana manliness in *Missionary Travels* raises several questions and possible contradictions about his attitude towards the Tswana and the issue of armed African resistance. For example, why did Livingstone go from praising Kwena bravery soon after the Boer attack, to suggesting that these Africans (or implicitly Tswana men as the warriors of the culture) were effeminate and lacked the courage to pick up arms to fight their white enemies? Did feelings of bitterness lead him to disparage the character and male gender attributes of the Tswana? Did he use the Kwena as scapegoats to mask his sense of personal failure as a missionary? After living for close to a decade amongst the Tswana, Livingstone had only converted one person (the ‘lapsed’ Sechele) and he may have been looking for justification for leaving the Kwena in order to pursue his new explorative goals. In belittling the ‘effeminate’ nature of the Tswana in the pages of *Missionary Travels*, he put

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., emphasis added.

the onus on his (male) African hosts for what could be perceived as his futility as a missionary. Lacking the manliness to fight their oppressors, Tswana men thus lacked the type of character required to accept the gospel and to become good Christians. On this basis he could contend that until the Kwena and other Tswana developed the courage and combativeness to rise up against their Boer oppressors, it was not safe for a missionary family to work and live amongst them.

Moreover, as one of the few missionaries working among the Tswana, was it not his role to act as a catalyst for resistance and/rebellion if he believed strongly in the cause? If he wanted to provoke armed Tswana attacks against the Boers, perhaps he had to take a more active role in gunrunning, joining the white traders and hunters in the trade, but with an aim other than financial profit. On the other hand, he had done nothing to motivate the Xhosa or Khoikhoi in their battles with the British. He saw these Africans as autonomous agents, free from missionary influence, acting in pursuit of their own goals. To his credit, perhaps, he wanted the Tswana to organize independently to mount an armed rebellion without his guidance or interference. In this scenario, African rebellion was a cause he could champion in his writing, but it was not one in which he could take an active role.

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Livingstone had departed on his cross-continental journey before the Eighth Frontier War or the Khoikhoi Rebellion had reached their conclusions. In February 1853, Sandile, Maqoma and other Xhosa chiefs made peaceful overtures to Governor Cathcart. "After

protracted negotiations,” the Xhosa surrendered the following month.<sup>172</sup> On Cathcart’s orders, the Ngqika lost their home in the Amatolas and were expelled, not across the Kei, but to a location to the west of the river. The Amatolas were then proclaimed a Crown Reserve and were first occupied by the military and then by white as well as some ‘loyal’ Mfengu settlers.<sup>173</sup> Unlike Smith - and despite Livingstone’s attacks on his character - Cathcart attempted to pacify the Crown’s prime enemy. In ‘pardoning’ Sandile, he rescinded the role that Smith had usurped during his stint as Governor and Sandile was again recognized by the British as the supreme chief of the Ngqika Xhosa. However, any overtures that Cathcart had made to quell hostilities between the Colony and the Xhosa were lost with the appointment of Sir George Grey to the role of Governor in December 1854. He continued earlier efforts to subordinate the authority of the Xhosa chiefs. Many Xhosa leaders subsequently spent years imprisoned at Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela and many later Xhosa nationalists were sent<sup>174</sup>). The ninth and final Frontier War which marked the final conquest of the Xhosa, was not fought until 1877-1878. In the battle, Sandile, who had again been “divested of all authority” as a Xhosa chief, was killed.<sup>175</sup> As Mostert writes: “Sandile was nearly sixty, and with him died the military resistance of the Xhosa chiefdoms, who for one

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<sup>172</sup> Mostert, p. 1154.

<sup>173</sup> British Kaffraria remained under martial law and as a separate territory, not open to white settlement. After the “cattle-killing” movement, white settlers were allowed into the territory and Africans were moved out. British Kaffraria was formally incorporated into the Cape Colony in 1866.

<sup>174</sup> Mandela is a Tembu Xhosa. The Tembu were sometimes involved in the nineteenth century wars against the British, but their role was not prominent.

<sup>175</sup> Mostert, p. 1238.

hundred years had fought through nine wars of gradually increasing ferocity for their territorial birthright, which was forfeited in ever greater portions until, after this last resistance, none at all was to be left."<sup>176</sup>

The rebellious Khoikhoi did not capitulate along with the Xhosa in 1853, realizing that they would be tried for treason, rather than pardoned. They also knew that those rebels who were caught by Cathcart's forces were publicly hanged in Grahamstown. Rebel leader Willem Uithaalder and a small crew of Khoikhoi escaped into Xhosa territory across the Kei after their hideout in the Amatolas was lost in the war's peace settlement. Despite pardons from the Cape Colony, many rebels remained in hiding as late as 1858. Those who had made their lives at Kat River had no home to return to. During the rebellion, the Kat River settlement was confiscated by the Crown and the land sold to whites who took control of the valuable Kat River valley. Andries Stockenstrom, who had played an important role in the founding of Kat River thirty years earlier, successfully campaigned for a 'commission of inquiry' into the seizure of the settlement's lands by the Crown. However, the inquiry decided that the dispossessed settlers no longer met the 'terms' upon which they had originally been granted land at Kat River.<sup>177</sup>

The Tswana remained in an uneasy relationship with the Transvaal Boers in the years after the Sand River Convention. (In the previous chapter I noted what happened with Sechele after Livingstone's departure north). Many moved across the Limpopo (into what is now Botswana) and away from the formal borders of the Boer republics in the Transvaal.

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 1252.

<sup>177</sup> See Elbourne, p. 39.

After *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone had little more to say about the Tswana or the Boers, or the peoples of South Africa for that matter. With his cross-continental journey, his focus in Africa shifted away from the conflicts in Southern Africa and towards the peoples and the problems of Central and East Africa. He had many reasons for embarking on a journey far beyond the frontiers of the borders established by the Cape Colony and the Transvaal Boers. Because Livingstone's biographers ignored his 1852 experiences in Cape Town and the writings he produced as a result, they failed to see his disenchantment with white colonization in South Africa as the reason why he hoped to establish a Christian colony along the Zambesi, free from the racially divisive influences of Grahamstown, Cape Town and the Transvaal. As I discuss in Chapter Six, Livingstone hoped to find a suitable spot along the Zambesi where he could found a small colony in which African and British Christians could live peacefully together, trading with their neighbours, rather than taking up arms against each other. As he trekked across Africa, he came into contact with other frontier models of colonial contact. In the Portuguese colony of Angola, he witnessed and described inter-racial families living together, African Bishops with authority in the Catholic Church and benevolent Portuguese administrators with power in the colony. In East Africa, he found a land decimated by the slave industry and fostered by Portuguese colonial officials and Arab (Omani-Zanzibari) merchants. Livingstone's anti-Crown, pro-African nationalist politics made him a fierce critic of British colonialism in the Cape Colony. But, these views did not stop him from envisioning a different form of colonialism, inspired in part by the 'liberal' racial politics of Philip and Read, with equal rights for Africans. If Livingstone had his way, this colony would be a place free from future Grahamstown settlers, Robert Godlontons,

**Harry Smiths, Judge Weldes and Governor Cathcarts. It would be a land where honourable Africans like Sandile and Botha could live - albeit as Christians - without the need to revolt against ruthless colonial officials and greedy white settlers.**

## Chapter Four

### Situating Livingstone's 'Missionary Travels' in the Mid-Victorian Debates About Race and African Manliness (Part 1): The Production of *Missionary Travels* and the Racial Politics of Livingstone's Contemporaries

At the end of his cross-continental journey, in April 1856, Livingstone came to an important conclusion about the inherent similarities between human beings. “Some reach conclusions with wonderful facility,” he declared, criticizing his contemporaries who made quick judgements about the racial differences between Europeans and Africans. “For nearly fifteen years, though living among them,” he wrote of Africans in general, “I did not know what to make of their many wonderful good actions and many extraordinary bad ones.” But, after his long journey and his time with the Tswana and other Africans in the years leading up to his trek across the continent, he was prepared to announce: “I have come to the conclusion that they are a wonderful compound of good and evil, as man appears to be everywhere else.”<sup>1</sup> Here was a statement that directly challenged the idea that Africans and Europeans or Blacks and Whites were intrinsically different, as members of the human race or as separate species, as some ethnologists then believed.

As I discussed in the introduction, Max Gluckman used a similar statement by

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<sup>1</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal, 1853-1856*, 2 vols, edited by Isaac Schapera, University of California Press: Berkeley, 1963, vol. II, p. 446. Note that the journal entry is from 2 April, 1856. But was this as recent a conclusion, as Livingstone remarked? Eight years earlier, he had written of Sechele: “As most men are he is a compound of good and evil.” See David Livingstone to Thomas Steele, 5 April, 1848, National Library of Scotland, 10777. Note that a similar statement to the 1856 journal entry also appears in *Missionary Travels*, p. 510. This is the passage that Gluckman cited and used as the title of his 1955 article on Livingstone.

Livingstone as the basis for his 1955 review article “As Men are Everywhere Else.” In the article, Gluckman remarked that both scholarly and more popular studies of Livingstone had “neglected” or oversimplified the missionary-explorer’s views on Africans and questions of race.<sup>2</sup> He argued that research revealed that Livingstone’s writings contained a wealth of opinion about different African peoples, African socio-political systems and the differences and affinities between blacks and whites. Moreover, Gluckman concluded that Livingstone brought a “balanced, open mind” to his conclusions about African life and society.<sup>3</sup> As I revealed in the previous chapter, Livingstone championed the rights of Africans against British and Boer interests in the Cape and colonial frontier before departing on his cross-continental journey. He was also highly critical of high-ranking British Crown representatives as well as British and Boer settlers in Southern Africa. Influenced by LMS missionary agitators like Philip and Read, the racial politics he espoused during this period separated him ideologically from many of his fellow missionaries, as well as from much of the white population in the Cape and throughout the frontier. But, aside from South African colonial society, LMS officials in England, and those Britons interested in Cape and frontier racial politics, few were aware that Livingstone championed such radical ideas. The enormous success of his cross-continental journey and *Missionary Travels* catapulted Livingstone to a position of fame and influence within mid-Victorian society. Whereas few had read his anonymous article (on the question of African missionaries) in the *Quarterly* or his letters to Cape newspapers, tens of thousands bought his book and many more read about

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<sup>2</sup> Gluckman, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



his exploits in newspapers around the world. With this audience, Livingstone now had a vast stage from which to preach his racial politics. His 1856 statement about the basic sameness of the world's races was repeated in *Missionary Travels*, yet on the whole the book was not a forum for the radical views he had proffered on the eve of his cross-continental journey.

There is, for example, no clear defence of the rights of Africans to defend their interests against an unjust Cape government. Nor does he explicitly denounce British settler racism (although he is highly critical of the Boers). Had the experience of seeing more of the African continent than any other known person somehow moderated Livingstone's racial politics? Was his new status as a highly influential best-selling author reflective of the fact that his conceptions of race, empire and manliness had become synonymous with the dominant views of his time? Or, did Livingstone achieve this status despite continuing to embrace opinions about Africans that distinguished him from other commentators, including the popular ethnologists and race scientists of the mid-Victorian period?

Most of the lands that Livingstone explored between 1853 and 1857 were unknown to Western Europeans. Areas inland from the West and East coasts of Central Africa were partially under the control of the Portuguese and Swahili-speaking Arabs, but for those who deemed themselves ethnologists and/or race scientists Central Africa was a mystery. Yet, this did not stop members of the organizations such as the Ethnological Society of London, the breakaway Anthropological Society of London, or other independent race theorists from generalizing about the racial characteristics of the inhabitants of this immense swath of land. The prevailing opinion among many ethnologists was that the land was wholly populated by 'true negroes,' all with nearly identical racial characteristics, with each sex exhibiting gender

traits in opposition to their European gender counterparts. However, even after the publication of *Missionary Travels*, the leading ethnologists of the period ignored or scorned the knowledge and insight Livingstone brought to the mid-Victorian understanding of Central Africa and its peoples. Despite his unparalleled feats as an explorer, many of his fellow ethnologists continued to cast him as a missionary and dismissed him as a biased observer furthering pro-African interests. Comments about African “barbarity” or the “effeminacy” of a particular ‘tribe’ can occasionally be gleaned from the pages of *Missionary Travels*. Yet, rather than use remarks such as these to support their own work, armchair ethnologists and race scientists usually chose to use the field studies of other explorers who tended to echo their own perceptions of Africans. For example, in his famed article “The Negro’s Place in Nature” (1863), Anthropological Society President James Hunt, quoted observations by explorers Richard Burton and Winwood Reade (both members of the Society) in support of his work.<sup>4</sup> However, this issue goes further than simple enmity between the Anthropological Society and Livingstone. Historically, the inclusion of these men and their friends and the exclusion of Livingstone from the leading ethnological journals of the period can now be seen as a manifestation of the complex mid-Victorian discourse dealing with race and Africa. While Livingstone could not step outside of this discourse and his views contributed to it, his complex attitudes to Africa and its peoples often challenged the dominant understanding of how Africans were perceived and characterized during the

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<sup>4</sup> James Hunt, “On the Negro’s Place in Nature,” *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society of London*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1863, pp. 1-60. For his use of Burton, see p. 41 of the article. His use of Reade is discussed later in this chapter. Hunt’s paper was also published as a separate pamphlet by the Anthropological Society of London in 1863. There are slight differences between the two articles.

mid-to-late nineteenth century.

As I made clear in the Introduction, Livingstone's place in the nineteenth-century understanding of race and Africa has been either essentialized or ignored in post-colonial theory, and dismissed or dealt with only negligibly by his biographers. In the course of the next two chapters it will become clear that Livingstone's statement that 'man appears to be the same everywhere else' was only one of many remarks that separated him from many of his contemporaries who propounded on the question of 'race' in Africa after his cross-continental journey. In situating Livingstone's 1853-1857 writings in the mid-Victorian discourse of race, in this chapter and the next I will examine how his conceptions of Africans and African (primarily male) gender characteristics differed from those of the leading race theorists of the period. Following Gluckman's suggestion, I argue that Livingstone exhibited a comparatively open mind in his ethnological remarks about the physical, intellectual, moral and social attributes of Africans.<sup>5</sup> The body of this chapter begins with a short narrative account of Livingstone's cross-continental journey (section 4.1). This is followed by an analysis of the factors that went into the 'production' of Livingstone's *Missionary Travels*, with an emphasis on the racial politics of the book (section 4.2). These sections allow me to locate the importance of the 1853-1857 Livingstone era within the dominant strains of racial theory of the period. In the preamble to section 4.3, I situate Livingstone's position within the important 'scientific' debate about the unity of the human race. The question of whether Europeans and Africans were members of the same species was a pivotal issue within the mid-Victorian discourse of race. The 1850s were a period marked by the gradual

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<sup>5</sup> Gluckman, p. 68.

transformation of the way in which Victorians viewed Africans and Africa. When Livingstone had first arrived in Africa, the Buxton abolitionist-inspired Niger Expedition was under way in West Africa and John Philip held considerable influence over the racial politics of the Cape Colony. By the time Livingstone departed for his cross-continental journey, there had been a clear retrenchment in the Crown's policy towards Africans in South Africa, marked by the wars against the rebellious Khoikhoi and Xhosa peoples. During the 1850s and early 1860s, many ethnologists and race scientists characterized these Africans as part of a species that was separate from and inferior to white Europeans. In Section 4.3 (A & B), which accounts for more than half of this chapter, I explore the views of key mid-Victorian figures in ethnology on the question of racial and species difference. The next chapter, "Situating Livingstone's Missionary Travels in the Mid-Victorian Understanding of Race and African Manliness (Part 2)," examines the complexities of Livingstone's own views on ethnology, African society and African manliness. Together, these two chapters confirm that Livingstone was at odds with the growing consensus among ethnologists, explorers and race scientists that Africans were inherently inferior to - and considerably less manly than - Europeans. Moreover, this allows me to demonstrate that there were alternative and often dichotomous understandings of Africans and Africa put forward by white male Victorians. As I argued in Chapter Three, it is a mistake to characterize missionaries, settlers and colonial officials in Africa as generic types holding essentially the same view of Africans and African society. In Livingstone, Philip, Read and their secular colleagues, the Cape Colony's leaders and settlers found an often outspoken and sometimes influential force aligned against racial injustice and colonial authority. When Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* period of

writings about Africa and its peoples are examined alongside those of other mid-Victorian ‘ethnologists,’ it becomes clear that he again provided an alternative vision of how Africans could be perceived in the Western mind.

#### 4.1 Livingstone’s Cross-Continental Journey, 1853-1856: A Short Narrative Account

In November 1853, Livingstone began his path-breaking cross-continental journey.<sup>6</sup> He departed from the Kololo village in Linyanti, just north of Victoria Falls, with twenty-seven Kololo men as porters. He was aware that his earlier discovery of Lake Ngami and the route north to the Zambesi made him “appear to many as more of a traveller than a missionary.”<sup>7</sup> However, in a letter to close friend Thomas Steele, he explained that he made no such distinction between these two ‘callings’ in pursuing his goals for Africa. “I have but one object in view of all I have done,” he declared, “the amelioration of the condition of the

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<sup>6</sup> See Map 2, Appendix 1, for the route Livingstone took on his cross-continental journey. After his arrival in Linyanti in May 1853, Livingstone first wanted to explore the potential of the territory further to the north along the Zambesi. If the area, encompassing the northern limits of Kolololand, proved healthy, Livingstone envisioned it as a potential site for his proposed mission and trading station. To this end, guided by Sekeletu and 160 porters, Livingstone journeyed two hundred miles up the Zambesi in a flotilla of canoes to Naliele, the Kololo’s northern capital. However, this area was also malarious and unsuitable for what Livingstone had planned. Leaving Sekeletu with his court at Naliele, he then continued another hundred miles up the Zambesi with little change in the landscape and similar results. During this pre-cross continental journey before his return to Linyanti in September, Livingstone had seven bouts of malaria.

<sup>7</sup> David Livingstone to Thomas Steele, 24 September, 1853, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10777.

inhabitants of this unhappy country. For this I wish to live and in pursuit of it I hope to die.”<sup>8</sup> He thus approached his long journey with a missionary zeal, casting his path-breaking explorative endeavour as a new chapter in his life’s work. Nevertheless, Livingstone clearly had an eye on the secular glories that could come with exploration. Confident in his abilities, he concluded his letter to Steele stating prophetically: “I think I could do as much in the way of discovery as most men.”<sup>9</sup>

After a difficult 1,200 mile trek (with an ox<sup>10</sup> as his primary form of transportation), Livingstone reached Luanda on the West coast in May 1854, his body severely weakened by dysentery, repeated bouts of malaria and the sheer physical strain of the journey.<sup>11</sup> This initial explorative feat gained considerable attention in Britain and the reports he sent to Roderick Murchison and the Royal Geographical Society revealed that the landscape he had traversed was not the barren region many European geographers and ethnologists had

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> The ox that Livingstone rode on the journey to Luanda was named Sinbad, according to Schapera, “in conscious allusion to the *Arabian Nights Entertainment* story of the ‘old man of the sea’...” After the death of this ox, he named another “Sinbad the second.” See *Livingstone’s African Journal*, vol. II, p. 376, note 1.

<sup>11</sup> Livingstone was greatly weakened and quite ill when he arrived in Luanda. He had lost a lot of weight and was suffering from diarrhoea (which he believed was brought on by malaria). Moreover, the quinine he took to combat the malaria “produced a decided effect on the swelling of the bowel.” By August, he was still plagued by fevers and alternating diarrhoea and tenesmus, and “soon become reduced to a skeleton.” A ship’s surgeon prescribed a regime of “pills of opium, calomel, quinine, ... opium suppositories, sitting over [a] vapor of hot water and a mixture of laudanum, tincture of catechu and magnesia.” This combination of medicines led to his recovery. See David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s African Journal*, vol. I, pp. 145, 150.

imagined.<sup>12</sup> As Livingstone remarked, “the philosophers supposed there was nought but an extensive sandy desert” across Central Africa.<sup>13</sup> But as he demonstrated in great detail in *Missionary Travels*, the newly explored areas he put on the British map were filled with thick forests, verdant plains, roaring rivers, soaring mountains and an array of peoples and wildlife. Some lush and fertile areas, he even predicted, could become vibrant urban centres, comparable to London where ships “plying between the bridges could run as freely as they do on the Thames.”<sup>14</sup> Ignoring the threats posed by malaria and the tsetse fly, he even claimed to be convinced that such areas were “capable of supporting millions of inhabitants,” thus suggesting the possibility of British colonization.<sup>15</sup>

Livingstone spent several weeks recuperating in Luanda and was offered passage ‘home’ on one of the British warships in the town’s harbour. However, he was not satisfied with what he had discovered on the journey west and declined the offer. Despite his discoveries, he had not established an easily traversable trade link between the West coast

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<sup>12</sup> British Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon sent Livingstone a letter praising his feat. Included was a clipping from *The Times* (August 8, 1854) calling his journey to Luanda “one of the greatest geographical explorations of the age.” Livingstone received the letter in late 1854. In May 1855, after a motion by Murchison, the RGS awarded him their gold medal, “the highest medal they had to bestow.” See Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. 143-144 and Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>13</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 265.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264. Elsewhere in *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone compared areas he had passed through on the expedition to more famous natural landmarks. For example, he likened “a most beautiful river” (that today marks the eastern border of modern Angola) to the famed Clyde river that passed through Blantyre. In western Angola, he marvelled at a great valley that he thought might equal “the Mississippi [valley] in fertility.” See *Missionary Travels*, pp. 332, 377.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

and the Zambesi, nor had he found a malaria-free district to place a potential Christian colony. Moreover, he stated that he had a duty to return with his now 'faithful' Kololo to Linyanti.<sup>16</sup> Looking east, he set his sights instead on establishing a trade route into Central Africa along the Zambesi that would originate on the South East coast of Africa. In September 1854, he began the return voyage to the Kololo homeland. His body again ravaged by malaria, he reached Linyanti a year later. Aided by a fresh contingent of 114 Kololo porters, he then set out to follow the Zambesi to its mouth at the Indian Ocean. Early in this leg of the journey Livingstone reached 'the smoke that thunders,' and made perhaps

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<sup>16</sup> Livingstone garnered high praise at the time and subsequently from many of his biographers for his decision to bring the Kololo back to Linyanti. However, the commendations for this 'benevolence' ignored the fact that Sekeletu had provided Livingstone with his crew, trade goods, oxen, canoes and most of his other supplies for the expedition. In return, Livingstone was to bring back trade goods from Luanda and possibly establish a trade link with merchants on the coast. Moreover, he could not have travelled to Luanda, nor have returned to the interior without his crew. Notwithstanding these issues, Livingstone seems not to have even given much consideration to returning to Britain from Luanda.

Jeal suggests that another factor may also have influenced Livingstone's decision to travel across the country from Luanda. On his exploratory trek to northern Kolololand in 1853 (before leaving for Luanda), Livingstone had met a Portuguese trader-explorer A.F.F. da Silva Porto. Silva Porto and another Portuguese man had both travelled from the West coast of Africa to Kolololand. In speaking with these men, Livingstone would have become aware that he was not the first European to travel between Central Africa and the West coast at Angola. Few Britons knew of the feat by the Portuguese, yet Livingstone was likely mindful that his initial journey west was not as groundbreaking as was believed at home. The idea of travelling the length of the continent - before Silva Porto or any other Portuguese - may then have also inspired Livingstone's decision to decline the offer of passage home to Britain. Was his resolution to travel to the mouth of the Zambesi (on the East coast) thus a matter of competition among explorers? Was an obsessed Livingstone intent on beating a perceived rival to the honour of crossing the continent? Jeal only hints at these possibilities in his analysis and Livingstone writings do not indicate that he was overly concerned that Silva Porto might reap the glory about crossing the continent first. For more on Silva Porto see my discussion of the Kololo later in this chapter. See Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. 126, 141, 142.



his greatest 'discovery' as an explorer. Although he had pledged not to rename African landmarks, he later designated this spectacular waterfall Victoria Falls, in honour of his Queen.<sup>17</sup> East of the falls he came upon the Batoka Plateau, a fertile and hilly expanse (in modern Zambia) that he excitedly deemed a suitable, healthy location for his proposed Christian trading colony.<sup>18</sup> However, in exploring the Plateau he was forced to leave the path

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<sup>17</sup> Until his last expedition, when he gave names to lakes he had yet to discover (and which proved not to exist), Livingstone refrained from giving new names to his 'discoveries.' Victoria Falls was the exception. The falls were called Mosi-oa-tunya or 'smoke that thunders' by the Kololo and other names by other peoples who had earlier come upon the falls. As Livingstone explained in *Missionary Travels*, he "decided to use the same liberty as the Makololo did, and gave the only English name I have affixed to any part of the country." Before coming upon the falls, Livingstone had pondered (in an 1855 letter) naming his first substantial discovery after his Queen. "There is a bit of pure loyalty and respect, I being in a line to which royal favour can never come," he wrote to a friend. When he came upon the falls, however, he had doubts about using Victoria's name. "I would fain call them the 'smoke-sounding falls of Victoria," he wrote, but it smacks of impudence, rather, in a private person to make free with her Majesty's name." It should be noted here that few of the mid-Victorian explorers named their 'discoveries,' despite what some post-colonial theorists have hinted. (See for instance, McClintock's *Imperial Leather*, p. 29). Richard Burton, for example, scorned the practice. However, some particularly successful explorers did engage in the practice of re-naming, particularly Samuel White Baker, who gave names to several bodies of water including Lakes Albert and Edward. Stanley, who eventually traversed far more of Africa than any other European, gradually adopted the practice, particularly in King Leopold's Congo. Yet, even he was not always successful in this endeavour. He tried, for example, to rename the Congo River, the 'Livingstone,' but it did not catch on. (Burton was among those who sneered at the idea). Many of the English names for cities, towns, rivers and other landmarks came only after the areas were colonized. See *Missionary Travels*, pp. 518-519; *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. II, p. 326, note 26 for the references to these letters.

<sup>18</sup> In his November 29, 1855 journal entry, Livingstone wrote: "Both yesterday and today we have traveled over an uninhabited tract of beautiful country.... There are no rivers, though water stands in the pools of their beds. The grass is short and well adapted for pasturage. The native corn flourishes. My people magnify it as a perfect paradise. Sebituane was driven from it by the Matibele [sic]. It suited him exactly, both for cattle, corn and health.... Game abounds: buffaloes, eilands and zebras, with hartebeests, gnus, and elephants. All are very tame..." See David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. II, p. 344.

of the Zambesi. In order to save time in getting to the coast, he did not retrace his steps back to the river and instead joined its path 250 miles further east, passing south of a crest in the river. Unbeknownst to him, in following this route he bypassed the Cabora Basa rapids. As he discovered three years later during the 'Zambesi Expedition,' the rapids were impassable, ultimately halting his dream for a colony along the Zambesi on the Batoka Plateau. In completing his celebrated journey, he continued east, left many of his porters at Tete (in modern Mozambique) and reached the coast at Quelimane in late May, 1856.<sup>19</sup>

In December, Livingstone returned to Britain to immediate fame and acclaim. Later in the month he was fêted by the RGS in London and soon after by the London Missionary Society. By the time he left for Africa again a little over a year later,

he had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society and honorary DCL of Oxford University, elected Corresponding Member of the RGS and its counterparts in Paris, Vienna, and New York, awarded the Gold Medal of the Paris Geographical Society and the 'Prize Medal of Honour' of the Society for the Advancement of Arts and Industries, presented with the Freedoms of London, Edinburgh, Glasgow and other places, received in private audience by Queen Victoria, and invited to lecture in many parts of the country.<sup>20</sup>

In this meteoric rise to fame, he also developed friendships and contacts among the elite of mid-Victorian British society. These included Lords Clarendon and Palmerston, philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts, Oxford Bishop Samuel Wilberforce and a number of other influential figures of the period. Two new friends in particular, Roderick Murchison and John Murray, were pivotal in shaping Livingstone's fame and influence. Other than

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<sup>19</sup> On the return journey, Livingstone's health had continued to suffer. For a description see *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. II, p. 428.

<sup>20</sup> Isaac Schapera, "Introduction" to *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. x.

Livingstone himself, they were the key figures in the production of his *Missionary Travels*. Its publication in November 1857 only capped Livingstone's rise to eminence in mid-Victorian society.

#### 4.2 Selling Livingstone: Race, Politics and the Writing of *Missionary Travels*

Although *Missionary Travels* was the story of Livingstone's first sixteen years in Africa, much of the book was dedicated to recounting his cross-continental journey. In close to 700 hundred pages of narrative, the book revealed portions of the world previously unknown to Britons and readers from other countries. It was rich in its description of the natural environment, insect and plant life, exotic animals, rivers, forests and deserts. It described diverse African societies from the Cape Colony to Victoria Falls and from Luanda to Mozambique. For its tens of thousands of readers, the book presented much of the southern half of Africa as a land of possibilities, just waiting for British missionaries, traders and emigrants to bring the benefits of civilization. *Missionary Travels* also revealed its author's indomitable spirit, courage and perseverance and helped establish Livingstone as one of the greatest heroes of the Victorian age.

The narrative of the book differs in style and content from Livingstone's journals, letters and even of his published articles of the period. This is to be expected in a long, detailed narrative account, published by John Murray, one of the great book moguls of the nineteenth century. Yet, the narrative remained personal in its style. Although it masked Livingstone's faults and failures (if not the dangers of malaria), it seemed more revealing,

more effusive and earnest than other grand travelogues of the period. Together these factors only contributed to the book's sales and its author's celebrity and influence. But, to what extent were the book's contents actually reflective of Livingstone's complex opinions about African society, Victorian racial issues and colonial politics?

As mentioned in Chapter One, Andrew Ross has argued that Livingstone toned down his radical opinions about racial matters in *Missionary Travels* because the "purpose" of the book was to gain British support for his missionary and colonial plans for Africa.<sup>21</sup> One of Livingstone's aims (and successes) in writing the book was certainly to attract a tide of eager missionaries and benevolent investors to his cause. As more recent biographers such as Jeal have argued, this led him to conceal and distort some of the health risks associated with travel in many of the regions he explored. But, as these same biographers fail to reveal, it also impelled Livingstone to temper his sometimes radical views on racial issues and Southern African colonial politics. The Livingstone of *Missionary Travels* was thus not exactly the Livingstone who supported Sandile and the Xhosa, championed the rights of the Khoikhoi and Andries Botha, advocated armed African resistance and condemned British colonial justice and settler racism. In the book, in fact, there is no mention of Sandile, Botha or the oppression they faced in the Cape Colony. He did criticize Governor Cathcart - for his decision to give the Transvaal to the Boers - but he avoided again condemning the Governor for the vengeful tactics he pursued against Xhosa warriors and Khoikhoi rebels.<sup>22</sup> Nor, did he make light of Cathcart's bravado or question the Governor's manliness as he had

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<sup>21</sup> Ross, "Livingstone and Race," p.74.

<sup>22</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 106.

in letters just a few years earlier. Similarly, in *Missionary Travels*, he directed only veiled criticism at the British Crown for repeated wars against the Xhosa, casting these conflicts as a waste of British money, rather than as the unjust use of British force against a brave and proud people.<sup>23</sup> While the book contained a clear denunciation Boer racial and political oppression in the Transvaal, there was, for example, no categorical condemnation of British racial attitudes in the Cape or colonial frontier. As Ross states, Livingstone “never explicitly points out prejudice on the part of Britons whether resident in Africa or not.”<sup>24</sup> So while he decried the Boers’ “stupid prejudice against colour,” he presented no similar opinion about British racial intolerance.<sup>25</sup> Criticisms of British racism, at home or in South Africa, were only found in his letters and journals, unpublished at the time.

Livingstone did not work alone in producing *Missionary Travels*. The most important friendship Livingstone made after his return from Africa was with Roderick Murchison, President of the Royal Geographical Society. Murchison had been a strong supporter of Livingstone since becoming aware of his ability to transform the African map with the news of his ‘discovery’ of Lake Ngami in 1850. When he heard that his fellow Scot had reached Luanda he praised the feat as “the greatest triumph in geographical research which has been effected in our times.”<sup>26</sup> A noted geologist in his own right, Murchison took over the Presidency of the RGS in 1843 and held the post until his death in October 1871.

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 679.

<sup>24</sup> Ross, “Livingstone and Race,” p. 75.

<sup>25</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> *The Times*, 8 August, 1854, as cited in Jeal, p. 158.

After Livingstone's cross-continental journey changed the Western geographical conception of south-central Africa, followed soon after by Burton and Speke's search for the Nile's source, African exploration became a romanticized heroic calling. Arguably, by associating his fledgling society with Livingstone's early African successes, Murchison helped propel the RGS to a position of international prominence and influence in the second half of the nineteenth century. As Felix Driver argues, under Murchison the RGS became "a centre for learning and debate over the geography of empire."<sup>27</sup> From its offices on Saville Row, "it provided intelligence maps for a range of government departments, especially the Admiralty and the Foreign Office."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, its "leading Fellows exercised considerable influence in the corridors of Whitehall, largely through informal channels and networks."<sup>29</sup> In Livingstone, Murchison and the RGS had a geographer who appealed to wealthy philanthropic and Christian-humanitarian circles, in addition to various segments of the scientific community, and was sure to attract new subscriptions to the Society. When Livingstone arrived 'home' in late 1856, Murchison "is said to have interrupted his Christmas holiday with Palmerston in order to promote Livingstone's cause."<sup>30</sup> While Livingstone toured Britain on his speaking tour and wrote his draft of *Missionary Travels* during 1856-1857, Murchison was busy boosting the missionary-explorer's reputation and

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<sup>27</sup> Felix Driver, "David Livingstone and the Culture of Exploration in Mid-Victorian Britain," in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Fascination with Africa*, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

career.<sup>31</sup> In addition to introducing Livingstone to his influential circle of friends, he used his connections with Whitehall, to secure State funding and support with Foreign Secretary Clarendon for Livingstone's next expedition.

Through his friendship with John Murray - the doyen of the British publishing industry - Murchison brokered Livingstone's book contract. For Livingstone, this proved to be a lasting and significant relationship. Murray went on to publish Livingstone's next book, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Tributaries* (1865), his *Last Journals* (1874), William Blaikie's 'official' biography of Livingstone, as well as other titles dealing with Livingstone. John Murray had succeeded his father as head of the business in 1843.<sup>32</sup> (The same year Murchison became President of the RGS). In his lifetime (1808-1892) he built the family business into one of the most respected and influential publishing houses of the Victorian period. In London, Murray was at the centre of a politically diverse literary circle that included powerful friends like Gladstone and Whitwell Elwin, editor of the *Quarterly Review*. He printed Gladstone's speeches and pamphlets and the *Quarterly* and the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* were among a number of periodicals published by the

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<sup>31</sup> In his study of Murchison, Robert Stafford overstates his subject's influence over Livingstone's early fame, arguing that the RGS President "transformed the obscure missionary into one of Victorian Britain's archetypal heroes. By creating Livingstone's renown, Murchison made possible the government aid, public subscriptions, and profits from books sales which freed him to pursue further African explorations." See Robert A. Stafford, *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, scientific exploration and Victorian imperialism*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1989 p. 172 and also p. 182. As I assert here, Murchison played a leading role in affecting Livingstone's early eminence; however, Livingstone himself played no small part in the creation of his own reputation.

<sup>32</sup> Murray was the third in a long line of namesakes who continue to run the British publishing house.

firm. Although Murray's father had established the reputation of the company by publishing Byron, its strength during the mid-Victorian period was its non-fiction.<sup>33</sup> Murray had published Murchison's important geological work in the 1840s and continued to publish significant scientific studies, culminating with Darwin's *Origin of the Species* in 1859. An avid traveller himself, as a young man John Murray III was the author of the popular 'Handbooks for Travellers' series guide-books. This interest was consummated in his role as a publisher of many of great works of the Victorian explorers (including the highly popular Isabella Bird and the controversial Paul du Chailly). With an exuberant endorsement from Murchison, coupled with the honours and acclaim he received on his return home, Livingstone must have seemed a sure bet for the publisher. In her study of Murray, Emily Symonds recounts that he "was so eager to secure Livingstone's account of his adventures that he offered £2,000 down in advance of two-thirds of the profits - very high terms for a first book."<sup>34</sup> The sales of *Missionary Travels* undoubtedly exceeded Murray's expectations. The initial printing of twelve thousand copies reportedly sold the first day they were available.<sup>35</sup> The book became one of John Murray's best sellers of the nineteenth century.

Together Murray and Murchison took an active role in the production the book, particularly in shaping its politics. However, in accentuating the role these two men played, Livingstone's part in the writing and editing of the book should not be under emphasized.

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<sup>33</sup> By the end of the Victorian period, the firm again specialized in fiction. See Emily Morse Symonds, a.k.a. George Paston, *At John Murray's; Records of a Literary Circle, 1842-1892*, John Murray: London, 1932, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>34</sup> Symonds, p. 155.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.



He was highly involved in every stage of its editing. In constant contact with Murray and his staff, he made sure that his writing style was not altered substantially and that much of the content that he initially included in his first draft was kept through the editing process. Initially, Livingstone produced a thick manuscript based on his journals, with a focus on the years 1853-1856.<sup>36</sup> He submitted this draft to Murray who had a copy editor make what Livingstone thought were significant cuts and other changes to the text. Livingstone took his concerns to Murray and argued that the editor had excised too much of what he had written and had failed to understand the intricacies of African exploration.<sup>37</sup> Livingstone then pressured Murray to fire the copy editor and hire “a man who has some sympathy with African travel,” by enlisting the help of Murchison, Elwin, and other influential

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<sup>36</sup> These journals were published in two volumes as *Livingstone's African Journal, 1853-1856*, edited by Isaac Schapera in 1963.

<sup>37</sup> See David Livingstone to John Murray, 22, 23, 30 May, 1857, National Library of Scotland, Mss. 10779. Livingstone was also unhappy with the artistic work of the man responsible for the initial rendition of the lion that mauled him in the attack near Mabotsa in 1844. He took an active role in judging the quality of the art work that went into the book. Later during the Zambesi expedition, he was highly critical of Thomas Baines' paintings of Africans. Livingstone aimed for accuracy and deemed the depiction on the lion encounter “absolutely abominable.” In a May 22 letter to Murray, he implored him to work out some sort of solution to rectify this problem: “I entreat you by all that is good to suppress it. Every one who knows what a lion is will die with laughing at it. It is the greatest bungle Wolf [the artist] ever made. I told him the proportions were much too great on the side of the lion. It is like a dray horse over me.... I am quite distressed about it... At least make the lion look smaller.” Ironically, the story of the lion encounter - helped by the accompanying picture of the fierce looking animal in the midst of attack - that appeared in the first chapter of *Missionary Travels* became one of the iconic episodes Livingstone's mythic life. It featured prominently in the plethora of popular biographies that were published in the decades after his death.

acquaintances who had influence with Murray.<sup>38</sup> In a letter to his publisher, Livingstone declared that these men all believed the “long book” that he had written would “sell better than an emasculated one” shaped by the lowly copy editor.<sup>39</sup> Livingstone also campaigned for Murray to ask Francis Galton to go over the book. Galton had recently explored the area around Lake Ngami and Livingstone seemed to feel that he had the knowledge required to edit the text. Murray acquiesced to this request and the copy editor was fired. However, Galton proved to be unavailable and Norton Shaw, a friend of Murchison and Acting Secretary of the RGS was quickly chosen to take charge of editing the book for publication. This decision seemed to please Livingstone and also pointed to the further influence of Murchison in the production of *Missionary Travels*. In fact, Livingstone dedicated the book to Murchison.

The friendship between Livingstone and Murchison brought together two men with notably different political and racial attitudes concerning Africa and Africans. Murchison shared none of Livingstone’s sympathy for African anti-colonial political resistance and proffered simplistic and highly racist views of Africans. In 1865, for example, he joined prominent Victorians like Carlyle, Darwin, Ruskin, Tennyson and Matthew Arnold as a member of the Eyre Defence Committee. Their mandate was to defend the governor of Jamaica against charges that he had unjustly tortured and killed hundreds of black Jamaican

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<sup>38</sup> David Livingstone to John Murray, 31 May, 1857, National Library of Scotland. Mss. 10779.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

'rebels.'<sup>40</sup> Livingstone, however, had great respect for Murchison and clearly realized that the RGS President had the power to advance his career and elevate his influence among the political powerbrokers of mid-Victorian British society.<sup>41</sup> In exchange for this friendship and support, Livingstone appeared to be willing to temper his advocacy for African rebellion and curb his attacks of British settlers and Crown representatives in the Cape Colony in the writing and speeches he produced during his time in Britain in 1856-1858. As a leading representative of Murchison's RGS, Livingstone had to be seen as a marketable symbol of colonial whiteness. From their position in London society, Murchison and Murray realized that a missionary-explorer who hoped to convince British investors to sink their money into

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<sup>40</sup> Livingstone was travelling to Africa at the time of the debate over Eyre, but he later denounced the racist mentality provoked in Britain after the Jamaican Rebellion. Discussing the racial politics confronting post-civil war America, he told his son Tom that Britain would be no help in demonstrating how blacks - whether 'free' or not - should be treated. "England is in the rear," he wrote in reference to the racial tolerance of Western nations; "this affair in Jamaica brought out the fact of a large infusion of Bogiephobia [one of his terms for racial prejudice or racism]. The English ... were terrified out of their wits by a riot and the sensation writers who act the part of the 'dreadful boys' ... yelled out that emancipation was a mistake [and that] 'The Jamaica negroes were as savage as when they left Africa.'" See David Livingstone to Tom Livingstone, 24 September, 1869, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10701. For a similar view, see also the entry dated 7 January, 1866 in Livingstone's unpublished "Bombay Journal," National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10775.

<sup>41</sup> Livingstone had first written Murchison from Africa during his cross-continental journey. Even before he had returned home to Britain he realized the RGS President had the power to influence his future career. In an August 1856 letter to Murchison, he divulged that he was planning to leave the LMS to work as a "private Christian" in Africa. He recognized that he needed Murchison's help in establishing himself amongst potential investors and supporters. This led him to tell Murchison: "I feel anxious to give a few hints [about potential trade markets in Africa] which your influential position may enable you to turn to good account in occasional intercourse with merchants and travellers." See David Livingstone to Roderick Murchison, 5 August, 1856, in *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone, 1858-1863*, 2 volumes, edited by J.P.R. Wallis, Chatto and Windus, London, 1956, vol. I, pp. xviii-xxi.

unknown African markets could not present himself as a critic of both the Crown and British settlers in Southern Africa. Livingstone had to appear as an ‘impartial’ witness to the racial politics of the Cape Colony and colonial frontier. Thus quite early in the production of *Missionary Travels*, Murray asked Livingstone to excise his more critical comments about Cathcart and the Crown’s role in the latest “Caffre War.”<sup>42</sup> According to Livingstone, the revised section on the war that he presented to Murray had been “shortened” and “toned down.”<sup>43</sup> Judging from Livingstone’s letters during the writing and editing of the book, this was the most controversial section of the text. As he continued to work on the final version of the book during the Spring of 1857, he made no further references to Murray’s suggested deletions of contentious racial issues. His publisher and his advisor/friend Murchison convinced him not to challenge the racial and political views of the Victorian ‘establishment’ if he hoped to win their support.<sup>44</sup> In this they were immensely and immediately successful.

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<sup>42</sup> David Livingstone to John Murray, 6 April, 1857, see the entry for this date under John Murray in *David Livingstone: A Catalogue of Documents*, p. 182.

<sup>43</sup> “My full report on the Kaffir Wars denounced the party which became rich by the state of warfare,” he wrote his friend Bevan Braithwaite. There are only a few scattered remarks about the wars in the book. Thus Livingstone’s “report” must have been excised. See David Livingstone to Bevan Braithwaite, 4 April, 1857, National Library of Scotland, Mss. 10769; David Livingstone to John Murray, 7 April, 1857, National Library of Scotland, Mss. 10779.

<sup>44</sup> Murchison and Murray may also have been concerned about Livingstone’s working class background and the proximity of Blantyre to Owen’s New Lanark. Near the end of his autobiographical introduction to *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone made sure to disassociate himself from the taint of radicalism associated with the Scottish countryside (particularly during the 1830s and 1840s) of his youth: “Time and travel have not affected the feelings of respect I imbibed for the inhabitants of my native village. For [in] morality, honesty and intelligence, they were in general good specimens of the Scottish poor.... Much intelligent interest was felt by the villagers in all public questions and they furnished a proof that the possession of the means of education did not render them an unsafe portion of the

In little over a year in Britain, Livingstone amassed a fortune in book sales and subscriptions to many of the causes he championed; he reached the apex of his power and influence while alive; he was given command of a State-funded expedition; and, before he left for his Zambesi expedition, was named British Consul to most of East Africa. This was ‘the power among men’ that he hoped to recapture a decade later with the discovery of the source of the Nile.

Despite the editing of *Missionary Travels*, it remains a crucial - if not the primary - source for investigating racial issues relating to his cross-continental journey. However, other sources help to provide for a greater depth of understanding of his racial views, attitudes towards African society, ethnological remarks and his conception of African masculinities. These sources include his *Cambridge Lectures* (1858), *Private Journals, 1851-1853* (1960), *African Journal, 1853-1856* (1963), several volumes of published correspondence, as well as unpublished letters from the period. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, as well as the next, I use these sources to analyse Livingstone’s views on these issues.

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population. They felt kindly towards each other and much respected those of the neighbouring gentry.... The masses of working people of Scotland have read history, and are no revolutionary revellers. They rejoice in the memories of ‘Wallace and Bruce and a’ the lave’, who are still much revered as the former champions of freedom, and while foreigners imagine we want the spirit only to overturn capitalists and aristocracy, we are content to respect our laws till we can change them and hate those stupid revolutionaries which might sweep away time-honoured institutions, dear alike to rich and poor.” Without mentioning Owen by name, Livingstone had explicitly distanced himself from anything resembling Owenism, Chartism or socialism. Livingstone likely became aware of Owen and New Lanark during his youth, but none of his letters or journals show that he commented on the mill owner or his ideas. See David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, pp. 6-7.

### 4.3 Africans and Europeans - the Same or Different? Ethnology and the Mid-Victorian Debate About Monogenesis and Polygenesis

*Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*, is a significant, but heretofore ignored, source for Livingstone's views on 'the African race' and questions of ethnology.<sup>45</sup> In his lengthy "Appendix" to the book, William Monk worked "to convey valuable information illustrative of the Lectures, drawn mainly from Dr. Livingstone's own sources."<sup>46</sup> According to Monk, the ideas in the appendix were "in reality essentially [Livingstone's] own."<sup>47</sup> Based on conversations with and a reading of Livingstone, he had paraphrased the missionary-explorer's views on a number of subjects, including Livingstone's "labours, explorations, and discoveries considered as to their extent and results in their ETHNOLOGICAL ASPECT."<sup>48</sup> This long section was concerned primarily with citing Livingstone's

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<sup>45</sup> As George Stocking has stated, "in Britain in the 1850s 'ethnology' was in fact the most general scientific framework for the study of the linguistic, physical, and cultural characteristics of dark-skinned, non-European, 'uncivilized' peoples." Now viewed as a branch of anthropology, during the mid-Victorian period ethnology was in many ways synonymous with anthropology. The obvious difference between the two fields was anthropology's focus on the study of humankind's similarity to and divergence from animals. Many of the polygenist race scientists of the period (some of whom are examined in this section) broke away from other ethnologists and used this link to assert that Africans had more in common with animals than with human beings. See Stocking's *Victorian Anthropology*, Free Press: New York, 1987, pp. 47, 239-257.

<sup>46</sup> David Livingstone, *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*, edited by Rev. William Monk, Deighton, Bell and Co.: Cambridge, 1858, p. 51. Rev. Professor Adam Sedgwick provided "A Prefatory Letter" to the lectures. A noted geologist, Sedgwick was a friend of Charles Darwin.

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

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83. Emphasis in the original.

ethnological remarks about a dozen separate African groups he encountered and wrote about during his cross-continental journey.<sup>49</sup> Importantly, for Monk, these observations were also meant to demonstrate Livingstone's belief in "the unity of the human race."<sup>50</sup> In the process, he provided theoretical background to Livingstone's 1856 statement about the sameness of humans in Africa, Britain and "everywhere else."<sup>51</sup>

The belief that all human races descended from a common ancestral type - and were thus united as members of the same human species - was popularly known as monogenesis. As the term suggests, monogenesis also upheld the scriptural unity of humanity in stating that Adam and Eve as the first human pair were the source of human creation. This certainly made the theory acceptable to evangelicals like Livingstone. But as Monk made clear, for ethnologists, monogenesis was essentially a theory that explained external racial diversity and inner human sameness. For example, in outlining this position in his discussion of Livingstone, Monk asserted that "differences in colour, speech, national characteristics, religious belief, moral, social and intellectual condition, [would] stagger some about the unity of the [human] race." Nevertheless, he explained that these apparent "outward differences" could be explained by factors such as "climate, mode of life, geographical situation [and] social status..." Monk attempted to make it clear that what truly accounted for human sameness was the "inward unity" between members of different races. "The same

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<sup>49</sup> Monk, *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*, pp. 83-105 of the book, of which pp. 88-99 are dedicated to Livingstone's ethnological remarks about the dozen individual African ethnic groups.

<sup>50</sup> Monk, pp. 83, 84.

<sup>51</sup> See note #1 from this chapter.

pleasures, anxieties, crimes, virtues, vices, noble or mean actions and influences, affect alike in many instances the soul of the most cultivated philosopher and the most uncivilized savage,” he explained. In a pointed rebuke of monogenism’s opponents he declared: “Different species would not have the same attributes.” Monk made specific reference to Africans to further support this point. Africans, he stated, “have characteristics in common with all others; multitudes of negroes are like Europeans, or Asiatics, in all respects except hair, colour, form, or some other difference. Hence the negroes do not stand alone as a distinct species, for one so distinct cannot pass into another equally so by insensible degrees. Varieties are more of the individual than the race.”<sup>52</sup> Here then, Monk had explicitly placed Livingstone in the monogenist camp, dedicated to a belief in the basic internal unity of humans and opposed to those who alleged that Africans were inherently different, if not morally, intellectually and physically inferior

Over the first half of the nineteenth century (and even for some time after the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* in 1859) the main issue dividing ethnologists (and associated disciplines such as anthropology and physiology) was the question of the biological (and mental) unity of humans. Fusing science and humanitarianism, monogenesis or the theory of human unity was buttressed by the British abolitionist movement of the early Victorian period. Until the 1850s, its advocates held sway over the ethnologists (or anthropologists as some preferred to call themselves) who championed polygenesis or the belief that different races were members of separate (often unequal) species. On the surface, the debate pitted the extreme racist adherents of polygenesis against the often more moderate

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<sup>52</sup> Monk, pp. 83, 85 (for the material cited in this paragraph).



monogenists. However, this did not mean that all of the partisans of human unity were abolitionists or crusaders for racial equality. For example, some monogenists formulated racial taxonomies that could be used to justify racial inferiority (as opposed to others who formulated unranked differences). Other commentators vehemently clung to the basic principles of monogenism while justifying the enslavement of Africans on various grounds. The next two sections of this chapter examine the complexities of monogenesis and polygenesis within the mid-Victorian ‘discourse’ of race. This will provide important context to Livingstone’s own understanding of the racial issues that dominated the Victorian characterization of Africa and its peoples.

#### 4.3(A) Monogenesis Racial Theory: From Black Human Ancestry to a Justification of African Slavery

In his discussion of Livingstone and the concept of human unity, Monk cited the theories of Dr. James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848), the leading figure in Western ethnology during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>53</sup> At the heart of Prichard’s *Researches into the Physical History of Man* (first published in 1813, but fully revised in 1826 and 1848), was his theory that all ‘races’ were part of a single biological species. In merging ethnology, biology, evangelicalism and monogenesis, he offered a complicated taxonomy of outward

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<sup>53</sup> My discussion of Prichard is not a synopsis of Monk’s. It is based on my own reading of the first edition of Prichard’s, *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, reprint of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, edited by George Stocking, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1973. Stocking’s introduction to the book, “From Chronology to Ethnology,” was also very helpful.

racial difference and inward racial unity. The starting point of the theory was the pre-Darwinian belief that all humans had descended from a single God-created pair. However, Prichard presented a surprising hypothesis about the ‘racial’ characteristics of the first human family. In his view, the earliest humans were not the white Europeanized Adam, Eve or Noah imagined by most Victorians. In the first edition of his *Researches*, Prichard made the radical suggestion “that the human originals - created in the image of the Maker - were black.”<sup>54</sup> He declared, for example, that “it must be concluded that the process of Nature in the human species is the transmutation of the characters of the Negro into those of the European, or the evolution of white varieties in black races of men.”<sup>55</sup> (A black Adam and Eve? Not surprisingly, as George Stocking has argued, this “idea was somewhat repugnant” to the Victorian world.<sup>56</sup> As a result, Prichard was considerably more vague about this concept in later versions of the book). Yet, this theory was not as radical as it was perceived to be by many of Prichard’s readers. This was because he argued that humans who advanced from a cultural state of barbarism to one of civilization, had also physically progressed from

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<sup>54</sup> George Stocking, “From Chronology to Ethnology” to James Cowles Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, p. lxvi.

<sup>55</sup> Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, p. 233. Here Prichard dissented from the influential German thinker John Friedrich Blumenbach (1754–1840). In the 1770s, Blumenbach argued that the original (biblical) humans were white and that other races had deteriorated from this ideal or normative type. He argued that factors such as climate and gender accounted for this degeneration.

<sup>56</sup> Stocking remarks that the “most striking change” to the second edition of *Researches into the Physical History of Man* (1826) was “the silent and almost complete disappearance of the hypothesis that ‘the primitive stock of men were Negroes.’” Prichard “posed three alternatives as to man’s original colour (black, white or an ‘intermediate hue’) without committing himself to any one of them, or even noting that he had previously done so.” See Stocking, “Introduction,” p. lxv.

black to white, or from a state similar to the 'typical' early-nineteenth century African to the 'typical' European of the period. In this model of 'evolution,' black humans had been the first to acquire something a civilized culture, but had lost their African or 'Negro' racial characteristics in the process of development.<sup>57</sup> "Wherever we see any progress towards civilization," Prichard stated, "there we also find deviation towards lighter colour and a different form."<sup>58</sup>

Thus, from this standpoint blackness was equated with certain innate 'racial' characteristics. Although, these characteristics were open to change, they remained with the African, but disappeared in the gradual 'advance' from blackness to whiteness. Hence, Prichard maintained that "there are examples of light raced peoples appearing in a darker shade, but not of Negro characteristics in whites."<sup>59</sup> On this basis, he asserted that there were some 'good looking' blacks found in Africa, but no 'ugly' whites with 'typical' African racial characteristics found in Europe. This configuration of racial difference amounted to essentialized qualities that distinguished blacks from whites, or Africans from Europeans. Prichard argued that based on a process of selective adaptation, different races were best suited to their environments. For example, he declared that "the dark races are best adapted by their organization to the condition of rude and uncivilized nations, which we must conceive to have been the primitive state of mankind, and the structure of the European is

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<sup>57</sup> See Stocking, "From Chronology to Ethnology" p. lv.

<sup>58</sup> Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, p. 236.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

best fitted for the habits of improved life.”<sup>60</sup> For Prichard, ‘negroes’ were “tougher and coarser, more perfect in their sensory organs” than whites.<sup>61</sup> This made Africans “much more able to endure fatigue, and the inclemencies of the season” - which, in his view, suited them to their savage state.<sup>62</sup> In comparison, whites were ‘finer and more delicate,’ had ‘more capacious’ skulls, and were in general ‘best fitted for the habits of improved life.’<sup>63</sup> In this world, colour (or race) was equal to culture. Africans were ‘suited’ to their environment and whites to theirs. Yet, this idea had interesting ramifications for colonialists because it implied that Europeans did not have the physical constitution to survive in Africa.

In the third edition of his *Researches*, Prichard further promoted the link between civilization and racial difference. For example, he emphasized the contrast between the “splendid cities of Europe” and the “solitary dens of the Bushmen, where the lean and hungry savage crouches in silence, like a beast of prey.”<sup>64</sup> In Prichard however, the racial and

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 235

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 235. At this stage (1813), Prichard did not distinguish between ‘Negroes’ and other separate ‘races’ of Africans. He included ‘dark’ peoples from other equatorial regions, such as the natives of New Guinea, in the same racial classification. Some later monogenist and polygenist theory explicitly set negroes - as ‘pure blooded Africans’ - apart from other African races from Southern Africa. These included the ‘Bushmen’ (San), Hottentots (Khoikhoi) and Caffres (Xhosa and sometimes Zulus). Some of the literature casts the San (and sometimes the Khoikhoi) as the earliest and most degraded race, (separately developed than the white races).

<sup>62</sup> Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, p. 235, see also Stocking, “From Chronology to Ethnology,” p. lvii.

<sup>63</sup> Stocking, “From Chronology to Ethnology,” p. lvii paraphrasing Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, p. 235-236.

<sup>64</sup> Prichard, cited by Stocking, “From Chronology to Ethnology” p. lxxxii.

cultural dissimilarity between Africans and Europeans did not mean that whites were the intellectual superiors of blacks.<sup>65</sup> Relying primarily on the accounts of missionaries to support this view, he asserted that “the same mental endowments, similar natural prejudices and impressions, the same consciousness, sentiments, sympathies, propensities, in short, a common psychical nature or a common mind [were shared] by all the different branches of the human family.”<sup>66</sup> Any apparent mental differences were the result of climate and social culture, not biology. As a result, he posited that intellectual differentiation between blacks and whites was no greater than the mental differences between “individuals and families of the same nation.”<sup>67</sup>

In the 1840s, in his *Natural History of Man* (1843), Prichard also made his strongest statement on the fertility of interracial offspring. Since the 1770s, polygenists had based part of their attack on monogenism on the concept of hybrid infertility - or the idea that blacks and whites were not members of the same species because the products of interracial unions were (supposedly) infertile. For the polygenists, hybrids were unnatural crosses between two distinct species.<sup>68</sup> However, in Prichard’s view, the concept of hybridity was based on false

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<sup>65</sup> Stocking, p. lxxxii.

<sup>66</sup> Prichard, cited by Stocking, “From Chronology to Ethnology” p. lxxxiii. Prichard suggested that missionaries made better - more accurate - sources of information because they spent far more time in Africa and amongst its people than “naturalists” who made only short visits.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxxxiv.

<sup>68</sup> See Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, Routledge: New York, 1995, for a thorough and interesting discussion of the concept of hybridity and race during the nineteenth century.

premises and the conclusions of the polygenists were easily refutable:

I believe I have asserted without the least chance of contradiction, that mankind, of all races and varieties, are equally capable of propagating their offspring by intermarriages, and that such connections are equally prolific whether contracted between individuals of the same or of the most dissimilar varieties.... If we enquire into the facts which relate to the intermarriage of the Negroes and Europeans, it will be impossible to doubt the tendency of the so-termed Mulattoes to increase.<sup>69</sup>

Despite Prichard's great influence during the first half of the nineteenth century, by the late 1850s monogenist thinking had to be qualified by many of its supporters. The ties between abolitionism, evangelicalism and humanitarianism no longer held sway over the British scientific community.<sup>70</sup> As Stocking has asserted, during this period the theory of the unity of the human species was often tailored to conform to the premise that "in the beginning black savages and white savages had been psychologically one. But black savages had remained 'in the beginning', while whites had acquired superior brains in the course of

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<sup>69</sup> Prichard, as cited in Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 10.

<sup>70</sup> This was symptomatic of a more general decline in the influence of British abolitionists, evangelicals and humanitarians by 1860. Douglas Lorimer, for example, argues that "[b]y 1860 abolitionists were an ageing group, and anti-slavery was a dying cause. At the same time, the anti-slavers' goals were in sight. The trans-Atlantic slave trade had been reduced to a trickle, and the largest and most powerful slave nation faced civil war over its particular institution. With the end of slavery in view, at least in the western hemisphere, British interest in abolition declined." Moreover, he adds that the early "1860s were also a difficult time for the missionary movement. Internal divisions and disputes weakened their cause, just as disagreements and rivalries had frustrated the abolitionists." Furthermore, British "humanitarians were distressed by the supposed failure of blacks [in the West Indies] to respond satisfactorily to freedom. The philanthropists had great difficulty in reconciling the apparent indolence of the freedmen with their former expectations that blacks would be assimilated to English norms." See Douglas Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English attitudes to the Negro in the mid-nineteenth century*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1978; pp. 117, 125.

cultural progress.”<sup>71</sup> After Prichard’s death, for example, the editor of a new edition of his *Natural History of Man* ‘corrected’ his statement about hybrid fertility so that his views on the subject corresponded to those of Robert Knox, a leading British polygenist of the mid-Victorian period. (As I will examine in section 4.3(B), inter-racial infertility was pivotal to polygenist theory).

To demonstrate the diversity within the monogenist camp that existed while Livingstone was writing *Missionary Travels*, Prichard’s (non-posthumous) theories can be contrasted with those of Theodor Waitz, a monogenist thinker and a contemporary of Livingstone’s. In his *Introduction to Anthropology* (published in German 1859, translated into English in 1863), Waitz defended the unity of the human species, while at the same time comparing (black) Africans to apes and declaring that ‘Negroes’ were physically and mentally suited to a state of slavery. Following Prichard (and using some of the same sources), he argued that the “skeleton of the Negro is heavier, the bones thicker and larger in proportion to the muscles than in the European.”<sup>72</sup> But, Waitz went further in attempting to provide a physical basis for racial difference. The ‘Negro’ skull, he argued, was also heavier, “hard and unusually thick.”<sup>73</sup> As a result, he believed “that in fighting, Negroes,

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<sup>71</sup> Stocking, “From Chronology to Ethnology,” p. cv.

<sup>72</sup> Theodor Waitz, *Introduction to Anthropology*, edited by J. Frederick Collingwood, Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts: London, 1863. The book was published for the Anthropological Society of London. The copy that I examined was from Richard Burton’s library held at the Huntington Library, California. Burton made notes in the margins of the book and later wrote a review “Notes on Waitz’s Anthropology,” published in *The Anthropological Review*, No. VII, November, 1864.

<sup>73</sup> Waitz, p. 93.

both men and women, butt each other like rams without exhibiting much sensibility.”<sup>74</sup> Ostensibly, for Waitz, the ‘negro’ brain was not affected by this action because it was already at a base level and could not fall any further and remain part of the ‘human’ anatomy. In his view, brain power and size were ranked with (most) white European men at the top. However, in his taxonomy, white European women were placed at the bottom of the scale with their children, both male and female. Here they were also joined by Africans, with whom they shared a “brain type ... approach[ing] that of the superior apes.”<sup>75</sup>

Waitz’s research also indicated that blacks were suited to and content in the African environment with whites acclimatized to European culture and civilization.<sup>76</sup> However, he went much further than Prichard in stating that as a result of climatic factors, physical capacity and (a lack of) “psychical” sensitivity, “the Negro easily becomes reconciled to a state of slavery.”<sup>77</sup> Waitz reasoned that in the southern United States, as in Africa, blacks had demonstrated an ability to work in a hot and sunny climate. At the same time, they had maintained their sex drive and thus continued to produce future slaves. In contrast to Africans, he claimed that “the [American] Indian seems unfit [and] depressed by” slavery.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> He wrote: “The negro brain thus possesses the type of the female and the child’s brain, and approaches that of the superior apes.” Waitz, p. 94.

<sup>76</sup> For example, he argued that “civilized man desires no change in his mode of life, nor does the primitive man desire to emerge from the state of nature. Nature acts equitably towards both.” See Waitz, p. 383.

<sup>77</sup> Waitz, p. 119.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



Induced to labour, the 'Indian' "sinks into a state of melancholy, and thus perishes from psychical rather than physical causes."<sup>79</sup> Writing from Europe on the eve of the American Civil War, Waitz's ethnological theories provided yet another 'scientific' justification for the enslavement of Africans, whether they had long been in the United States or had recently arrived in the Americas.

Although he cast Africans as little more than brutish primitives, only slightly more intelligent than apes, Waitz still believed they were members of the same species as Europeans and all other 'races.'<sup>80</sup> In his view, 'the unity of man' was manifest in human diversity, with differences not innate in all, but rather open to change. "For everywhere have the various differences which we have mentioned proved not to be fixed," he reasoned, "but fluctuating, and dependant on changes of external and internal conditions."<sup>81</sup> Moreover, he differed from Prichard in stating that once cultured and enlightened whites could fall into a condition of savagery. (In some ways this mirrored Livingstone's arguments about the Transvaal Boers, which I discuss in Chapter Three). According to Waitz: "The civilized European is accustomed to look so much down upon the so-called savage, that he deems it an insult to be compared with him; and yet, even in the midst of civilization we find the traces of customs, manners and the modes of thinking, which, like the relapse of civilized

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Like the early Prichard, Waitz also argued the first humans were black. According to Waitz: "Negroes [were] the "most imperfect and oldest species." He explained that their 'blackness' was due "to the greater quantity of carbon contained in the air of primeval times." Waitz, p. 193.

<sup>81</sup> Waitz, p. 143.

men into a savage state, prove their intimate connection.”<sup>82</sup> To corroborate this point he pointed to Europeans who had settled in New Zealand, Australia and North America. In making contact with the aboriginals of these places, some whites had ‘gone native’ and adopted the savage customs of their fellow humans. Blacks meanwhile, were not “irreclaimable.”<sup>83</sup> He argued that some Africans and African-Americans were in fact more ‘civilized’ than whites. For example, he posited that the free blacks of Philadelphia were more civilized than the Irish immigrants who lived in the city. Similarly, he asserted that Africans who had served in the Greek and Turkish army were superior to the Russian soldiers in the army.<sup>84</sup>

For Waitz, any black cultural ‘advancement’ was only temporary, a brief and possibly fatal interlude into the white world of ‘civilization.’ In his view, positive racial change was a process that was too slow to impact human history. To attempt to transcend this process was to challenge the laws of nature. He declared:

Where the necessary transitional stages, which a primitive people has to pass through to arrive at a higher development, are wanting, it will, after a short apparent elevation, relapse again into the original state, and, as so frequently occurs when primitive and civilized peoples come in contact, the former will unavoidably perish. Civilization may then continue to spread in the habitable world, but it will crush these peoples, for a sudden transition from the natural state of Christianity and European civilization is opposed to the laws of nature. The attempt to effect it resembles the attempt of the ignorant pedagogue, who expects by one powerful effort suddenly to transform the character of his pupil. Civilization must progress slowly, or it will retrograde [sic.]; the history of revolutions yields the same results in this respect as the

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

history of the missions.<sup>85</sup>

In the end for this monogenist, the slave in America or the African from Central Africa might have shared a common ancestry with most Western European white males, but as members of the same species they shared little else. If blacks for Waitz were not separate beings, they were akin to children, racially set in opposition to (if not sometimes owned by) Saxon, Germanic and French white males. In many ways, there was little difference between Waitz's monogenist theories and those of his polygenist adversaries. In fact, his translated *Introduction to Anthropology* was published in Britain by James Hunt and the mainly polygenist Anthropological Society of London. Hunt and the theories of his mentor Robert Knox figure prominently in the next section.

#### 4.3(B) Polygenesis: Pseudo-Scientific Justification for Racial Domination and African Male Effeminacy

Like the theory of human unity, polygenism had long had its advocates. The notion that humanity was divided into several species was put forward by Swiss alchemist Paracelsus in the sixteenth century, French archeologist Isaac de la Peyrère in the seventeenth century, and philosophical luminaries Voltaire and Hume in the eighteenth century.<sup>86</sup> Like monogenesis, it found a more 'scientific' biological foundation in the 1770s, with the work

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>86</sup> See Stocking, "From Chronology to Ethnology," p. lxxv. See also Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, pp. 28-57.

of Anglo-Jamaican planter and slave-owner Edward Long.<sup>87</sup> But, it was not until the 1850s that the advocates of polygenism began to seriously challenge monogenism and all other biological, ethnological or humanitarian theories that could be used to defend the racial equality of blacks and whites.

The polygenist movement of the mid-Victorian period was divided between religious skeptics, non-believers and Christians. Many of the leading British polygenists of the period were agnostics (although they shared a hostile relationship with Darwin, Huxley and most other evolutionists - whom they saw as akin to monogenists after 1859). James Hunt, for example, asserted that because the origins of humanity were unknown and seemingly unknowable, arguments about the biblical unity of 'different races' were merely "idle speculations."<sup>88</sup> Declining to debate their adversaries on the basis of theology, he and others declared that monogenism could be 'scientifically' discredited through modern ethnological and phrenological 'evidence.' Despite their secularism, these polygenists were joined in their attack on Prichard and his allies by some Christian scientists who contested the notion that an original couple or the sons of Noah were responsible for producing both whites and blacks. For example, the Swiss-American craniologist Louis Agassiz argued that the story of Adam (Eve was not a concern) concerned only the origin of Caucasians. Pointing to the

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<sup>87</sup> In his *History of Jamaica* (1774), Long based his theory that blacks and whites were a separate species on his own observations about the offspring of unions between interracial couples. He argued that though these unions seemed to produce fertile offspring, this fertility declined with later generations to produce what he called "defective and barren" mulattos. Because Long believed these "hybrid" peoples could not perpetuate themselves, he concluded that blacks and whites were a separate species. See White, *Colonial Desire*, pp. 7-8, 150-151, Curtin, pp. 43-45.

<sup>88</sup> Hunt, *On the Negro's Place in Nature*, p. 2.

Bible itself, he maintained that “different races of men were descended from different stocks.”<sup>89</sup> On this basis, as separate biological species, different races had their origins in different Adams and Eves.

Despite their differences, most non-religious and Christian polygenists, shared the conviction that racial (or species) differences, such as skin colour, skull size, body structure and intelligence, were permanent and had been transmitted by their ‘original progenitors.’ In attempting to refute Prichard, they generally posited that the influences of climate, heredity and culture had no effect on racial typology.<sup>90</sup> Most also followed Long’s contention, fostered by further ‘research’ in the area, that the offspring of different ‘hybrid’ races were infertile. The effort to counter Prichard’s 1840s assertion that ‘mulattoes’ produced fertile children (who themselves spawned fertile offspring, if not a new ‘race’), was a main element of mid-Victorian polygenism. Together these principal components of the theory of separate racial species were used to argue that Africans were a different form of life, akin to animals and hence did not deserve ‘human’ rights.

As a number of studies have stated, Robert Knox was the key influence fostering the polygenism of the 1850s and early 1860s.<sup>91</sup> Before his death in 1862, his theories had

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<sup>89</sup> Louis Agassiz, cited by John Charles Hall, “An Analytical Synopsis of the Natural History of Man,” in Charles Pickering, *The Races of Man; and their geographical distribution*, H. G. Bohn: London, 1854, p. xxiv. Hall’s article serves as an introduction to Pickering’s book. Both authors were monogenists and Hall used the introduction to discuss and refute polygenist claims. For more on Agassiz’s polygenist views see Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, pp. 74-83.

<sup>90</sup> See Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 78-79.

<sup>91</sup> In *Image of Africa*, Curtin asserts that “Knox’s importance has often been underrated, perhaps on account of his professional career.” After working as an army

inspired James Hunt to team with his friend Richard Burton to found the Anthropological Society of London. In *Races of Men* (1850), Knox presented an explicit declaration of white Anglo-Saxon difference from - and superiority to - the 'dark races of men.' In his view, "race" explained "everything" that had happened in the past, as well as what he believed would occur in the future.<sup>92</sup> For Knox, history was a series of wars pitting 'race' against 'race' in which the "fairer" skinned races, led by the Anglo-Saxons, "seemed destined, if not to destroy [the dark races] altogether, at least to limit their position to those regions of the earth where the fair races can neither labour nor live"<sup>93</sup> (According to Knox, whites would perish if they attempted to chase Africans into tropical equatorial Africa, which he termed "the grave of Europeans."<sup>94</sup>) What reasons did he provide for the white mastery over blacks

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surgeon in South Africa, Knox established a school of anatomy in Edinburgh in the 1820s. During this period it was the practice of the school (and of anatomists in general) to employ grave robbers to obtain anatomical specimens. However, in 1828 the two men Knox employed for this job, William Burke and William Hare, were charged with murdering the specimens that Knox used in the school. Although he was found to have no knowledge of their crimes, Knox was implicated in these infamous murders. His career as an anatomist and his school were ruined, leading to his later calling as a public lecturer and race scientist. See Curtin, pp. 377-378. See also Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 21-23; Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians*, p. 137; Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science*, MacMillan Press: London, 1982, p. 41. There is no thorough study of Knox's views. However, these authors provide short analyses of his writings.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Knox, *The Races of Men*, p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* This was an implicit attack on the Buxton-inspired Niger Expedition of 1841-1842. Mid-Victorian critics of British abolitionism and pro-African humanitarianism often used the high mortality of the expedition to argue that humanitarian-based government-funded expeditions were a waste of public money. The high death rate (although no higher than might have been expected) also led critics "to write off the expedition as just another failure of Europeans to survive in Africa." Of the 159 Europeans who were part of the Niger Expedition, 55 died before the expedition returned to England, 48 of whom perished in the

of the world? Knox pointed to a long history in which “the dark races have been the slaves of their fairer brethren.”<sup>95</sup> Moreover, in his role as an ‘ethnologist’ he remarked on what he perceived to be “the obvious physical deformity ... and, consequently, a psychological inferiority in the dark races generally” as proof that they were a ‘doomed’ people.<sup>96</sup>

Needless to say, in his view the eventual disappearance of ‘the dark races’ from all but the ‘equatorial regions’ of the world would not be caused by interracial unions. Interracial infertility was fundamental to his understanding of race. For Knox, race was akin to the concept of species. In his contradictory scheme of classification, peoples of different nationalities, ethnicities, religions and regions (which often overlapped) were designated as separate races, some with affinities with each other, others marked only by difference. “Men are of various Races,” he stated, “call them Species, if you will; call them permanent Varieties, it matters not.”<sup>97</sup> His races were unchanging types, imbued with invariable

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first two months on the Niger. See Curtin, pp. 289-317.

<sup>95</sup> Knox, p. 150.

<sup>96</sup> As ‘proof’ of the inferior physical strength of Africans, he pointed to such ‘evidence’ as “the bracelets worn by the Kaffirs” (Xhosa). He claimed that the bracelets were very light and “when placed on our own arms prove this.” In comparison, he implied that the bracelets proved heavy for the Xhosa. See Knox, p. 151.

<sup>97</sup> In what might on the surface seem a highly contradictory statement, Knox also asserted that “no one can believe [Africans] to be of the same race with ourselves; yet, unquestionably, they belong to the genus man.” However, ‘genus man’ was a Victorian term that did not connote the unity of the human species, or that all races were members of the same human species. Rather, ‘genus’ had “a much more extensive application” than species. In “An Analytical Synopsis of the Natural History of Man” (1854), monogenist John Charles Hall (also of Edinburgh) explained the nuances of the term: “There are several species which so exactly resemble each other as immediately to suggest the idea of some near relation between them. The horse, the ass, the zebra and others of the horse kind, are examples of this remark; the different species of elephant is another; and a third is furnished by the

physical and mental characteristics. Interracial unions might have temporarily affected a racial type (for the better or worse depending on the race of the father), but these changes could not be carried over in successive generations. With no evidence other than his own observations, Knox declared that the biological boundaries that separated the races could not be transcended. Yet, he challenged his monogenist adversaries to prove that blacks and whites could produce generations of fertile offspring. “Cross [the races] as you will,” he proclaimed, “the mulatto cannot hold his ground as a mulatto: back the breed will go to one or other of the pure breeds, white or black.”<sup>98</sup>

In *Races of Men*, Knox did not rely so much on the burden of proof to make his conclusions. There are no footnotes citing sources as support for his racial hypotheses, the way there are in Prichard’s work for example. Knox claimed instead that the lack of reliable sources available in the field of racial science added weight to his theories. He made this point in taking specific aim at Prichard. “[W]e have not [the] data to base a *physical history of mankind*,” he declared, invoking the title and the topic of Prichard’s main work.<sup>99</sup> But, Knox had also spent time in Southern Africa as an army field surgeon in the late 1810s and

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several kinds of oxen, buffaloes, bison, and so on, all belonging to the ox genus, and bearing a striking resemblance to each other.” Hall concluded that: “As we are aware of no physical causes which could have operated so as to produce these differences of structure which existed between the species of one genus, it is concluded that they originally sprung from different individuals. A genus consequently is a collection of several species on a principle of resemblance, and it may comprise a greater or less number of species, according to the peculiar views of the naturalist.” Knox, then was simply placing Africans and Europeans in a descriptive category based on certain outward similarities and was not asserting biological unity and common origin. See Knox, 9, 158; Hall, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

<sup>98</sup> Knox, p. 161.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154, italics added.



early 1820s. He clearly believed that this experience separated him from Prichard and other armchair ethnologists. As a result, he announced that the 'data' he had collected during this period of his life would serve as the basis for many of his conclusions about Africans and nature of racial difference. As a result, before beginning a long ethnological section "on the Dark Races of Africa," Knox announced: "Let me now consider the history of a few of those [Africans] at least, known best to me."<sup>100</sup> In what amounted to a polemical ethnology directed against British humanitarians whom he believed painted the African as an equal, he expounded on the racial characteristics of the San, Khoikhoi and Xhosa (whom he had encountered) and the 'Negroes' of Central Africa (whom he had not met during his time in Africa).<sup>101</sup> For example, in attacking the ideas of abolitionism, equality and monogenesis, Knox gave pseudo-scientific grounding to the racial beliefs of some of the Boers and British settlers he had encountered - and Livingstone had decried - in South Africa:

Wild, visionary, and pitiable theories have been offered respecting the colour

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> According to Knox: "The past history of the Negro, of the Caffre, of the Hottentot, and of the Bosjeman, is simply a blank - St. Domingo [and the rebellion led by Toussainte L'Ouverture against the French in Haiti, 1802] forming but an episode. Can the black races become civilized? I should say not; their future history, then, must resemble their past." For Knox, the Khoikhoi were "a simple, feeble race of men... and of a blood different and totally distinct from the rest of the world." Khoikhoi men specifically were "lazier than an Irishwoman" His Bosjeman/Bushmen/San were similar, but shorter. The 'dark race' that Knox was perhaps most positive about were Xhosa. He described them as "dark as Negroes, but yet not Negroes," and "a warlike, bold, and active race of men... exceedingly daring, and accustomed to act in bodies" in their attacks on their enemies. He claimed that they had been "mild," but by coming into contact with Europeans, they became "treacherous, bloody, and thoroughly savage." Yet, they still had "great and good points about them..." Nevertheless, as the laws of nature and history dictated: "We are now preparing to take possession of their country, and this of course leads to their enslavery and final destruction, for a people without land are most certainly mere bondmen." See Knox, pp.157-163.

of the black man; but he differs in everything as much as colour. He is no more a white man than an ass is a horse or a zebra.... But what has flattened the nose so much - altered the shape of the whole features, the body, the limbs? Some idle, foolish, and I must say, some wicked notions, have been spread about their being descended from Cain; such notions ought to be discountenanced.<sup>102</sup>

Knox's Africans were thus not properly human: its men were not truly 'men,' nor could African women be seen as 'women.' Africans - whether 'Kafir,' 'Hottentot,' 'Bosjeman' (another term for San) or 'Negro' were a subspecies of genus man, wholly different from and inferior to white skinned peoples.<sup>103</sup> For Knox, for any scientist, explorer, humanitarian or theologian to suggest otherwise was absurd. Moreover, he was clearly confident the majority of his readers sympathized with the basic assumptions of racial and 'species' difference that he championed. He played on the stereotypical misrepresentation and general lack of knowledge of Africans to elicit his audience's agreement with his theories. When he asked his readers to think of physical, mental or moral similarities between themselves and 'negroes', he seemed certain what they would find: "Look at the Negro so well known to you, and say, need I describe him? Is he shaped like any other white person? Is the anatomy of his frame, of his muscles, or organs like ours? Does he walk like us, think like us, act like us? Not in the least."<sup>104</sup>

Did Knox recognize that the Colonial authorities were beginning to retrench politically in favour of policies that promoted settler interests in the Cape Colony and

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<sup>102</sup> Knox, p. 163.

<sup>103</sup> Note that Knox did not consider most Jews or Irish to be 'white.' He claimed that these peoples had many 'dark-skinned' characteristics.

<sup>104</sup> Knox, p. 161.

colonial frontier? Had his experience in the Cape Colony convinced him that most whites saw Africans as sub-humans, 'lacking in souls,' and thus undeserving of human rights? Or, was it simply arrogance that led him challenge the supporters of native rights to push their cause with the colonial authorities? Whatever the motivation he declared: "Let them demand for the natives ... the privileges and rights wholly and fairly of Britons. I predict refusal on the part of the Colonial office. The office will appoint you as many aborigines protectors as you like - that is, spies; but the extension of equal rights and privileges is quite another question"<sup>105</sup> Knox believed true campaigners for racial equality were an exception to his belief that the Saxon race (his chosen people) was intrinsically hostile to Africans. He claimed: "What an innate hatred the Saxon has for him [the African in general].... There is no denying the fact, that the Saxon, call him by what name you will, has a perfect horror for his darker brethren."<sup>106</sup> Hence, in his view, "the folly of the war carried on by the philanthropists of Britain against nature."<sup>107</sup> What a world Knox had created for his

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 154

<sup>106</sup> What did this statement logically mean to Knox's argument? If all of Knox's whites (of which he was one) innately hated blacks, how could he offer an objective argument about blacks? Would it not lead him to make wild, unsustainable statements about the nature of racial difference? Ironically, Knox believed he could transcend the racism of his fellow 'whites.' Contradicting his statements about innate race hatred, he stated that "the European has, in my opinion, erred in despising the Negro, who seems to me a race of occasionally great energy." He pointed to black athletes and Africans on the West Coast of Africa who "showed much intelligence and energy in commercial transactions." Later in the same paragraph, however, he stated that the 'dark races,' like animals, lacked the "generalizing powers of pure reason - the love of perfectability - the desire to know the unknown ... and the ability to observe new phenomena and new relations." These were all qualities which distinguished "man from the animal." See Knox, pp. 153, 161, 190-191.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

readership: racial hatred was natural, races were unchanging, Africans were inhuman, the extermination of the 'dark races' was preordained, and whites would colonize and rule the earth (where Africans were not protected by a tropical equatorial climate).

Knox's theories proved attractive to mid-Victorian racists. Spurred by the interest in his ideas throughout the 1850s, he revised and expanded *Races of Men* for publication in 1862. In the United States, authors Nott and Gliddon made use of his theories in *The Races of Mankind* (1854). This polygenist, pro-slavery work went into six editions in the United States and was also popular in Europe. In Britain, Knox found a protege in James Hunt (1833-1869).<sup>108</sup> In the 1840s, Hunt joined Prichard's London Ethnological Society (which was a scientific offshoot of the humanitarian Aborigines Protection Society). Inspired by Knox's work as well as other ethnologists who endorsed the innate inferiority of Africans, Hunt broke from the 'Ethnologicals' in 1863. (He and other breakaway members were also upset with the Society's plan to admit women members). Joining forces with influential friends such as Richard Burton and Winwood Reade, he then founded the London Anthropological Society in an effort to foster the 'facts' of racial science, free from the constraints of theology and humanitarian 'fanaticism.'<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Before becoming a race scientist while still in his twenties, Hunt had established himself as a doctor interested in the phenomenon of stuttering. From 1860-1862, Hunt and Knox enjoyed a "close correspondence." See Ronald Rainger, "Race, Politics, and Science: The Anthropological Society of London in the 1860s," *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 22, 1978, p. 57, note 18.

<sup>109</sup> Knox appears to have been an active force in forming the Anthropological Society, but he died in December 1862, a month before Hunt and Burton publicly launched the organization. Led by Hunt - whose organizational skills had led to an upswing of the Ethnological Society's financial fortunes in the early 1860s - the new organization "expanded rapidly, the membership numbering 236 at the end of the first year and 500 by April 1865."

Despite the influence of polygenist-based theories of racial difference, Hunt and his colleagues portrayed themselves as ‘scientific’ outsiders and cast their work as heterodox and publicly unpopular. In their minds, the abolitionists, humanitarians, missionaries and monogenists of the mid-Victorian period continued to dominate - if not tyrannize - the public and scientific mind. Hunt had been shaping his racial theories in papers published in the journal of the Ethnological Society. However, his most influential work, “The Negro’s Place in Nature” appeared shortly after the formation of the Anthropological Society. Hunt and his friends liked to emphasize that when he first presented the ideas expressed in the article at a meeting of the British Association in January 1863 he was faced with audience hoots and catcalls as he delivered the paper.<sup>110</sup> The ‘Anthropologicals’ painted their critics as biased and uninformed, prejudiced by an outmoded support for abolitionism and a strange desire to see the African as ‘a man and brother, a woman and a sister.’ “We must ... simply take him as he exists, and not as poets and fanatics paint him,” Hunt said of ‘the Negro’ in the published version of the paper. More specifically, Hunt aimed his hyperbole at his former colleagues.<sup>111</sup> “I am astonished that an Ethnologist, a student of the Science of the Races of Man, could deliberately make the statement that all races have the same intellectual, moral and religious natures. Rather the reverse is the real fact,” he asserted.<sup>112</sup>

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See Rainger, p. 57.

<sup>110</sup> See the pamphlet version the article, p. v.

<sup>111</sup> James Hunt, “On the Negro’s Place in Nature,” *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society of London*, p. 60.

<sup>112</sup> Hunt also attacked the monogenists by arguing that their reasoning was contradictory. This allowed him to assail Prichard’s notion (advocated only in the 1813

Hunt believed that he had both history and science on his side to prove polygenist race difference. Unlike Knox, he made use of a vast array of like-minded writers and race scientists to corroborate his views. These included such luminaries as Carlyle and Trollope from the literary world, explorer friends like Burton, as well as a cast of international craniologists, craniometrists, physiologists and pro-slavery advocates.<sup>113</sup> Citing the American craniometrist Samuel Morton, for example, he argued that throughout history Africans had enjoyed the benefit of contact with the great civilizations of Rome, Carthage and Egypt, but failed to become ‘civilized’ as a result.<sup>114</sup> (Not surprisingly, he refused to consider that the latter two civilizations might have been ‘black’ or African or composed of black Africans). For Hunt, in fact, Africans had no history at all worth recording - no accomplishments, dynamic societies, inventions or monuments that merited attention. History, in his view, demonstrated the polygenist principle that ‘Negroes’ were an unchanging people, seemingly destined to fill an auxiliary role in society as slaves and

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edition of his *Researches*) that the first humans were black. Hunt stated: “The father of English ethnology, Dr. Prichard, taught that the original pair must have been Negroes, and that mankind descended from them. It is not a little remarkable that although Blumenbach and Prichard were both advocates for the unity of man, they materially differed in their arguments. Blumenbach saw, in his five varieties of man, nothing but degeneracy from some ideal perfect type. Prichard, on the contrary, asserted he could imagine no arguments, or knew of no facts, to support such a conclusion.” *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>113</sup> There is a difference between craniology and craniometry. The former is defined in *Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary* as “the science that deals with the size, shape and other characteristics of human skulls.” The latter is defined as “the science of measuring skulls, chiefly to determine their characteristic relationship to sex, body type or genetic population.” On this basis, ethnologists such as Livingstone, Burton and Winwood Reade, who did not measure brain size or cranial capacity, could describe themselves as craniologists, but not craniometrists.

<sup>114</sup> James Hunt, p. 27.

servants:

We now know it to be a patent fact that there are races existing which have no history, and that the Negro is one of these races. From the most remote antiquity the Negro race seems to have been what they now are. We may be pretty sure that the Negro race have been without a progressive history; and that they have been for thousands of years the uncivilized race they are at this moment. Egyptian monuments depict them the inferior race they are at this minute, and holding exactly the same position to the European.<sup>115</sup>

Despite his use of 'history,' Hunt believed his greatest weapon against his monogenist foes was 'science.' Citing the work of a coterie of contemporary polygenists, he made short work of the "large and important question of human hybridity," concluding that "all the *prima facie* evidence is against the assumption that permanent mixed races can be produced, especially if the races are not very closely allied."<sup>116</sup> Hunt did allow for the "temporary" fertility of blacks and whites. However, he used this phenomenon to argue that these unions accounted for the misguided belief held by "some writers" that blacks were equal in intelligence to whites.<sup>117</sup> He went on to say that "the exhibitions of cases of intelligent Negroes in the saloons of the fashionable world by so-called 'philanthropists,' have frequently been nothing but mere impostures. In nearly every case in which the history of these cases has been investigated, it has been found that these so-called Negroes are the offspring of European and

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. Hunt also cited the American craniometrist-polygenist Morton directly: "Negroes were numerous in Egypt, but their social position in ancient times was the same that it is now, that of servants and slaves." See p. 30.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

African parents.”<sup>118</sup>

This statement then led Hunt into the question of African intelligence. In his view, the “mental powers” of the African were so low that he challenged his critics “to give the name of one pure Negro who has ever distinguished himself as a man of science, as an author, a statesman, a warrior, a poet, an artist.”<sup>119</sup> This remark about African mental inferiority fed into the general polygenist position that Africans were innately intellectually akin to European children. (While some monogenists described Africans as mentally comparable to children, they often asserted that Africans had the ability to become the intellectual equals of European adults under the right circumstances). Hunt claimed that until

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36. One of Hunt’s loudest critics during 1863 was William Craft, an escaped American slave, abolitionist, explorer and ethnologist. Craft attended Hunt’s talks ‘on the negro’s place in nature’ at Newcastle and again when Hunt presented the paper in front of the Anthropological Society in London. He challenged Hunt’s claim that the physical signs of African racial difference were an indication of African inferiority. According to Craft, black skin, thick ‘wooly’ hair and thicker skulls all acted to protect the African against a hot, sunny climate and were in no way indicative of physical or intellectual inferiority. He also stated that “whenever [members of the African race] had had equal opportunities with whites they had shown that they possessed considerable intellectual ability and many of them had risen to very high positions in society.” In response, Hunt reasoned that Craft was able to make these remarks because he was not a ‘pure negro.’ (Craft was a mulatto: he had black grandparents and was born to a black father and white mother). Moreover, the Anthropological Society refused to publish Craft’s paper on the Dahomey region of West Africa, a topic Burton published a book on two years later. See the *Anthropological Review*, Vol. I, No. 3, 1863, pp. 388, 389, 409. See also Young, pp. 136, 199, note 59.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37. Hunt also found a vocal critic in Francis Galton. After Hunt made a similar point in a paper later in 1863, Galton asked Hunt and other audience members: “How did it happen, then, that so degraded a people [as the ‘negroes’ of Africa] could furnish men capable of constructing nations out of the loosest materials? .... The Negro though on average extremely base, was by no means a member of a race lying at a dead level. On the contrary, it had the capacity of frequently producing able men capable of taking on equal position with Europeans.” See the *Anthropological Review*, November 1863, vol. I, no. 3, pp. 387-388.



they reached puberty (at about the age of fourteen), African children were often equal in intelligence to white children). At this point for the African, “there was an arrested development” of the brain.<sup>120</sup> As a result, blacks were left with the mental faculties of pre-pubescent children, unable to rise above the ingrained constraints imposed by ‘nature.’ For Hunt, this was further proved by a comparison of ape and African skulls. He cited a study that ‘proved’ that “the infant ape's skull resembles more the Negro's head than the aged ape.”<sup>121</sup> This led him to conclude that there was a “striking analogy in [the] craniological development” of apes and ‘negroes.’<sup>122</sup>

According to Hunt, the abatement of African intellectual ability was also a sign of the physical differences between the races. He pointed to recent corroborative studies measuring cranial capacity (skull volume) to argue that African men and women clearly had smaller brains than their European gender counterparts. (These studies tended to reveal that African men had brains that were roughly the same size as European women, leading some craniologists to declare that they shared the same intellectual abilities, not to mention gender characteristics).<sup>123</sup> But skull and brain differences only topped off the physical disparities that Hunt imagined existed between Africans and Europeans. In the article, he provided an

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<sup>120</sup> James Hunt, “On the Negro's Place in Nature,” *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society of London*, p. 11. Hunt traced this idea to the biological difference he believed existed between African and European brains.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> See Stephan Jay Gould's *Mismeasure of Man* for an informed debunking of the nineteenth century ‘science’ of craniometry and craniology, including many of the sources used by Hunt.

exhaustive account of the inner and outer physical differences between his 'typical negro,' represented by millions of Africans and the European, embodied in the English, French and German 'races.'<sup>124</sup> For Hunt, just about every body part differed between these separate and unequal races. He repeated earlier statements - seen in Waitz for example - that the skull of the 'Negro' male was heavier and thicker. He added that the skeleton itself was heavier, leading the African's ape-like hunched posture. Hunt was not satisfied with remarking only on these differences. For instance, he added:

The thorax is generally laterally compressed, and, in thin individuals, presents a cylindrical form, and is smaller in proportion to the extremities. The extremities of the Negro differ from other races more by proportion than by form; the arm usually reaches below the middle of the femur. The leg is on the whole longer, but is made to look short on account of the ankle being only between 1 1/4 in. to 1 1/2 in. above the ground.... The foot is flat and the heel is both flat and long.... The toes are small [and] the knees are rather bent, the calves weak, and the upper part of the thigh rather thin.... The shoulders, arms, and legs are all weak in comparison. The hand is always relatively larger than in the European. The palm is flat, thumb narrow, long, and very weak... The great distinguishing characters of the Negro are the flattened forehead, which is low and compressed. The nose and whole face is flattened.... The nasal cavities and the orbits are spacious.<sup>125</sup>

In addition to his own description of African physical disability, Hunt provided evidence of physical difference 'recorded' by a number of ethnologists, including explorers and armchair commentators. Hunt's longest direct citation in the article was a passage from explorer Winwood Reade's *Savage Africa* (1863). Based on his travels in West Africa, Reade counterposed the gender characteristics of the men and women in the areas he visited with

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<sup>124</sup> James Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

Victorian gender norms for each sex. In citing the passage, Hunt was clearly attempting to gender the physical attributes of the many 'different' parts of the African body he had already intricately delineated as distinct from the European body. Yet, for these ethnologists, physical characteristics did not stand alone. They were intertwined with 'character,' as indicative of African inferiority. For Reade, African gender reversal was an indisputable mark of this inferiority. For example, in describing African women in general, he wrote: "It must be acknowledged that putting all exceptions aside, the women of Africa are very inferior beings. Their very virtues, with their affections and their industry, are those of well trained domestic animals."<sup>126</sup> Ostensibly, in Reade's view, African women lacked the proper signs of femininity (although undefined, 'their affections' might somehow qualify as a feminine gender norm). However, he was less concerned with denouncing their gender and racial failure, than in setting their 'animalistic' features against his characterization of African men. Reade explicitly wanted to cast all African men (despite only visiting parts of coastal West Africa) as effeminate, with gender characteristics similar to the white women of Western Europe. This led him to proclaim:

But if the women of Africa are brutal, the men of Africa are feminine. Their faces are smooth, their breasts are frequently as full as those of European women; their voices are never gruff or deep. Their fingers are long; and they can be very proud of their rosy nails.--While the women are nearly always ill-shaped after their girlhood, the men have gracefully moulded limbs, and always are after a feminine type--the arms rounded, the legs elegantly formed, without too much muscular development, and the feet delicate and small.... Such are the 'men and brothers' for whom their friends claim, not protection, but equality! They do not merit to be called our brethren; but let us call them

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

our children.<sup>127</sup>

Hence, not only was the 'typical' African male's cranium capacity and brain size supposedly analogous to a European woman's, but 'he' also possessed a similar inner skeletal and muscular structure and a comparably 'delicate' outer appearance.

Does this mean that the polygenists - and their friends the craniometrists - disliked their mothers, wives and daughters as much as Africans? As Stephen Jay Gould has argued, for these race scientists "'inferior' groups [were] often interchangeable in the general theory of biological determinism."<sup>128</sup> In their studies, Africans, white women, children, and sometimes working class Europeans were "juxtaposed, and one is made to serve as the surrogate for all - for the general proposition holds that society follows nature, and that social rank reflects innate worth."<sup>129</sup> As with Africans, the mental and physical inferiority of mid-Victorian women was widely assumed in the scientific community. For armchair ethnologists and active craniometrists, the data collected on the brains and skeletons of women was more accessible than similar information amassed on Africans. As a result of

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 46-47. Reade went to describe the normal day of the average African male (as representative of millions of men). If he could not denigrate African men further, he certainly tried: "The typical Negro, unrestrained by moral laws, spends his days in sloth and his nights in debauchery. He smokes haschisch [sic] till he stupefies his senses, or falls into convulsions; he drinks palm-wine till he brings on a loathsome disease; he abuses children, and stabs the poor brute of a woman whose hands keep him from starvation, and makes a trade of his own offspring. He swallows up his youth in premature vice; he lingers through a manhood of disease; and his tardy death is hastened by those who no longer care to find him food." See Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological*, p. 47.

<sup>128</sup> Gould, p. 135, see also p. 112.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

their deeply flawed studies and gender biases, some like the French ethnologist-cramiometrist Paul Broca, were quick to note the race and gender parallels they had convinced themselves existed between ‘inferior’ groups. For example, Broca (a good friend of Hunt’s), told the readers of his article on racial brain size differences to “not forget that women are, on the average, a little less intelligent than men...”<sup>130</sup> As with the ‘African,’ he added, “we are ... permitted to suppose that the relatively small size of the female brain depends in part upon her physical inferiority and in part upon her intellectual inferiority.”<sup>131</sup> Some misogynists, including Broca’s disciple Gustave Le Bon, used his data to publish “vicious” ‘scientifically’ based attacks on women.<sup>132</sup> However, Le Bon was not a mid-Victorian race scientist. (He is best known for his 1895 study of crowd behaviour and is noted as one of the founders of social psychology). The primary bias, if not hate, of men like Broca, Reade, Hunt, Knox, Burton, Agassiz and even Waitz was against Africans and/or blacks living in other parts of the world, such as the United States. Some of these men were overtly sexist. After all, one reason Hunt and others broke from the ‘Ethnologicals’ was

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<sup>130</sup> Broca, as cited by Gould in *Mismeasure of Man*, p. 136.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* Gould “reexamined Broca’s data” on the brain size differences between men and women and found that his “numbers sound but Broca’s interpretation, to say the least, ill founded.” As he demonstrated with Samuel Morton’s measurements of cranial capacity, Gould’s reassessment of Broca’s data revealed that these scientists ignored far too many factors that accounted for the differences they sought and found. Gould asserts: “Even when we can be sure that the same object has been measured in the same way under the same conditions [there are different methods of preparing the brain or skull for measurement], a second set of biases intervenes - influences upon brain size with no direct tie to the desired properties of [gender] or racial affiliation: ... body size, age, nutrition, non-nutritional environment, occupation and cause of death.” See Gould, pp. 137, 140.

<sup>132</sup> Gould, pp. 136-137.

because they were upset with the Society's plan to admit women members. But at the same time, they shared the fundamental belief that European women were at least members of the same species and race. African men may have shared some physical characteristics with women, but few, if any, members of the Anthropological Society (or of similar organizations in other countries) believed white women were morally or intellectually equal or inferior to the black men and women they disdained. These European women were members of the superior race(s) and together with the men of their race (and species) they produced the world's dominant peoples. So while writers like Reade and Hunt constructed their manliness in opposition to white women and Africans of both sexes, their ethnological remarks were essentially confined to African men.

For the mid-Victorian ethnologists and race 'scientists,' the differences between Africans and themselves were not simply racial. In their descriptions, race and gender were fused in an effort to provide a 'scientific' basis for the physical, moral and intellectual differences they wanted to perceive between blacks and whites. On one level, for the polygenists, African men could not be conceived of as manly, simply because they were not 'men' or people of the same species as Europeans. Nevertheless, many polygenists made the effort to demonstrate that African men had few if any physical or mental characteristics that might be called manly. Explorer-ethnologists like Reade and indeed many monogenists often saw African men - and sometimes women - as the gender antitheses of most European men and women. While their own manliness was a given, its assumed characteristics - whether physical, moral or intellectual - were set against the gendered failings of African men. In this sense, the belief that they were members of the supreme race - and superior

gender - went hand-in-hand with notion that only white men could be properly manly. Try as they might, the innate physiological difference of African men kept them from ever demonstrating a laudable form of manliness.

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In the “Appendix” to *Dr. Livingstone’s Cambridge Lectures*, William Monk challenged the growing number of skeptics of monogenism to “compare man with man, woman with woman, child with child; and travel the world over in order to arrive at conclusions from an induction of facts, and you must perceive th[e] inward unity” of human beings.<sup>133</sup> “Establish this,” he added confidently “and the outward must follow...”<sup>134</sup> As an advocate of monogenesis himself, Monk was surely mindful that the theory was under attack from an increasingly vocal cohort of polygenists intent on providing a scientific basis for their belief in the inferiority of Africans. Monk was also aware that after fifteen years in Africa, with more of the continent travelled than any known person, Livingstone was as qualified as any race scientist to compare European and African men, women and children on an ethnological basis.

In the next chapter, I explore Livingstone’s own complex understanding of African ethnology and African manliness. The jeers and catcalls that greeted Hunt as he delivered a version of “The Negro’s Place in Nature” in Newcastle in 1863 demonstrated, among other

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<sup>133</sup> Monk, p. 84.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

things, that the ‘discourse’ of race during the mid-Victorian period was deeply complicated. The fact that Hunt’s talk brought together an overflowing audience indicates that polygenism had its supporters, but also fierce critics. Livingstone was not present to add to the catcalls, but he would have supported those who objected to Hunt’s ideas about Africans.<sup>135</sup> *Missionary Travels* was not a work where Livingstone ranted about polygenist (apart from Boer) or general white racism (though polygenists often complained about ‘pro-African’ humanitarians and missionaries in their own work). Yet, as Andrew Ross has argued: “Again and again throughout the book he emphasize[d] firmly the rationality of African behaviour, and trie[d] to get his audience to recognize a common humanity with Africans.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> On his return to Britain after the Zambesi Expedition, Livingstone became personally acquainted with members of both the Anthropological Society of London and the Ethnological Society. He spoke at Bath at the annual meeting of the British Association to an audience of 2500, including many ethnologists. In London, he also attended the meetings of various Societies, including the RGS – where he met Burton for the first time. His impressions were unfavorable, although he took Burton’s London home address. See the entry dated 14, November, 1864 in Livingstone’s “Bombay Journal.” Later, in letters and journals written during his last expedition, Livingstone took aim at the racial intolerance of the Anthropological Society by satirizing the way Society members characterized Africans. For example, when among the Manyuema, Livingstone described them as “a fine looking race,” particularly when compared to the white members of the Anthropological Society. “I would back a company of Manyuema men,” he wrote, “to be far superior in shape of head, and generally in physical form too, against the whole Anthropological Society.” See the *Last Journals of David Livingstone*, p. 371.

<sup>136</sup> Ross, “Livingstone and Race,” p. 77. In the writing of his second book, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries* (1865), Livingstone was more forthright in declaring his belief in monogenism. In the final chapter of the book, he proclaimed: “In reference to the status of the Africans among the nations of the earth, we have seen nothing to justify the notion that they are a different ‘breed’ or ‘species’ from the most civilized. The African is a man with every attribute of human kind.” The book also contains a number of other frank statements either denouncing racial intolerance, challenging ideas of racial difference or asserting racial sameness. David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, pp. 596, as well as 67, 182, 235-236, 597.



Hunt, Knox and the members of the Anthropological Society passionately rejected the idea that they might share a common humanity with Africans. Even for monogenists like Waitz, it is unclear whether Europeans and Africans shared anything other than the union of species. Despite Monk's efforts, a belief in monogenesis in the late 1850s did not necessarily demonstrate as great a distance between Livingstone and the polygenists, as his "Appendix" implied. Where did Livingstone fit into this debate? In what ways did he transcend a basic belief in monogenism to put forth ideas that clearly set him apart from the majority of commentators on Africa and its peoples? I explore these and other important questions in the next chapter.

## Chapter Five

### Situating Livingstone's Missionary Travels in the Mid-Victorian Understanding of Race and African Manliness (Part II): Beyond Racial Unity - Livingstone Confronts Racial and Gender Difference (1852-1857)

In *The Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1860), Richard Burton reached a conclusion which - at first glance - appeared startlingly similar to Livingstone's 1856 assertion that Africans "are a *wonderful compound* of good and evil, as man appears to be everywhere else."<sup>1</sup> However, Burton's statement was not a declaration of his belief in the fundamental sameness and 'unity' of the world's 'races.' His assertion about racial unity applied only to 'dark skinned' "barbarians," and specifically to the generic 'East African' that he characterized in the book. In marked contrast to Livingstone, Burton wrote: "The East African is, like other barbarians, *a strange mixture* of good and evil: by the nature of barbarous society, however, the good element has not, while the evil has, been carefully cultured."<sup>2</sup> Although Burton hinted that 'the East African' character contained an element which only needed to be nurtured to emerge, he made it clear in the book that the 'East African' was a creature with a 'natural' "incapacity for improvement" that "neither progresses nor retrogrades."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it was the common practice of Burton - and other members of the Anthropological Society - to cast 'dark skinned' Africans as a generic group

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<sup>1</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. II, p. 446. The journal entry is from 2 April, 1856. Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, Harper and Brothers: New York, 1860, p. 490. Emphasis added.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.

with universal and unchanging psychological and physical characteristics. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is clear that for these racial theorists, it was untenable to suggest that Africans were or could ever become the moral, intellectual or physical equals of Europeans.

Burton's ethnological writings on Africa, unlike Livingstone's, arguably fit the Saidean theory which posits the colonial relationship - between colonizer and colonized - as a set of binary oppositions.<sup>4</sup> In *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, Burton's generic 'East African' is represented as his - and as "the civilized man's" - antithesis.<sup>5</sup> As he stated conclusively in the book: "His ways are not our ways, his reason is not our reason."<sup>6</sup> Inherently different and unequal, intrinsically unable to become 'civilized' or change for the better (or worse), the Africans that Burton characterized bore little resemblance to the Africans that Livingstone wrote about during and as a result of his cross-continental journey. It is an overstatement to say, however, that Livingstone's views were always antithetical to - or the binary opposite of - Burton's. At the same time, it is also overly simplistic to lump Livingstone and Burton's ethnological understanding of Africans together at the end of the

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<sup>4</sup> This assertion is based on the books Burton wrote between 1856-1864 that dealt with his African explorations. In addition to *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, Burton published four books on Africa between 1856-1864. They include: *First Footsteps in East Africa*, Longmans: London, 1856; *Abeokuta and the Cameroons Mountains*, 2 vols., Tinsley Brothers: London, 1863; *Wandering in West Africa*, 2 vols., Tinsley Brothers: London, 1863 (attributed not to Burton, but to a 'Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society'); *A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome*, 2 vols., Tinsley Brothers: London, 1864. Parts of two other books, *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast* (1872), and *Two Trips to Gorilla Land and the Cataracts of the Congo* (1876) were also written during this period. A third, *To the Gold Coast for Gold* (1883), was based on a much later expedition to West Africa (with the explorer Verney Cameron), but included material from *Wanderings in West Africa*.

<sup>5</sup> Burton, *Lake Regions of Central Africa*, p. 490.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

same binary pole. In responding to post-colonial theory, I assert throughout this study that African cultures, social systems and peoples were not always perceived negatively or in a homogeneous manner during the colonial period. In Chapters Two and Three, I argued that Livingstone - as a colonial figure - was not interchangeable with other missionaries, or with white settlers or colonial officials in Southern Africa. Building on the analysis of Chapter Four, this chapter illustrates how Livingstone's ethnological understanding of Africans differed from the ways in which other important ethnologists characterized Africans.

By the time Livingstone had completed his cross-continental journey, he had over fifteen years of experience as an ethnological observer. The knowledge he gained as a result led him to develop a distinct understanding of the factors that separated Britons from Africans. In the first section of this chapter (5.1), I examine some of the important broad-based conclusions Livingstone made about the nature of African society during his cross-continental journey. In particular, I examine how Livingstone went beyond asserting basic human unity to argue that Africans had the inherent ability to become as 'civilized' as Britons. Beyond the mantra of 'Commerce and Christianity,' Livingstone had specific ideas about how Africans could become 'civilized.' But, Livingstone scholars have ignored or failed to uncover the importance he placed on factors such as literacy and human rights in his understanding of 'civilization.' Hence, among other issues, this section analyses how Livingstone believed literacy had the potential to deliver the African from the 'backwardness' of an oral culture. Section 5.2 begins with an examination of Livingstone's specific criticisms of the ways in which his fellow ethnologists characterized Africans. Although Livingstone failed to escape the language of Victorian ethnology, in comparison

to Burton and other explorer-ethnologists, he offered a far more complex understanding of the Africans he encountered. His observational experience often translated into a more balanced view of racial and gender difference than was offered by the ethnologists examined in Chapter Four. In the sub-sections A, B, C, D of 5.2, I highlight four ‘case studies’ of Livingstone’s conceptions of gender and African manliness. By analysing how Livingstone represented the gender and racial characteristics of the San, the Lunda, the African-Portuguese of Angola and the Kololo, I demonstrate how he often challenged normative ethnological opinion about the differences between ‘blacks’ and ‘whites.’ In recognizing that African men could be manly (and, in one case, that an African women could act as an authoritative and persevering chief), Livingstone confronted racial and gender orthodoxy and offered an alternative vision of Africans and African society.

### 5.1 Becoming ‘Civilized’: Livingstone and the ‘Nature’ of African Society

In the second edition of his groundbreaking work, *The Mismeasure of Man* (1994), Stephen Jay Gould states: “Impartiality (even if it is desirable) is not attainable by human beings with inevitable backgrounds, needs, desires and beliefs.”<sup>7</sup> Based on Gould’s reasoning, it can be argued that Victorian ethnologists - whether they were explorers or based in laboratories - approached their work with “an a priori conviction about racial ranking”

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<sup>7</sup> Gould, p. 36. Note that this comment appears in the introduction to the revised and expanded edition of the book.

which determined the nature of their observations.<sup>8</sup> In Chapter Two, I showed that Livingstone brought a relatively open mind to his observations about African life and society when he first arrived in Africa. Among other things, this led him to denounce the racial intolerance of his fellow missionaries and to support the concept of native agency. After his cross-continental journey, Livingstone claimed that it took him fifteen years to determine that all humans “are a wonderful compound of good and evil.” The time it took to make this conclusion may have been an exaggeration on Livingstone’s part, but it shows that he conceived of himself as a conscientious ethnographer who saw the value of experience in making conclusions about different ‘races.’

Yet, it is clear that Livingstone was not an unbiased observer, somehow able to reach a level of impartiality because his unique experience as an explorer. From his first arrival in Africa until the end of his life, Livingstone continued to see British civilization and culture as somewhat flawed, but still unparalleled in the world. British ‘society’ - his ‘civilization’ - served as his measure for ranking other cultures and peoples. Livingstone shared this bias with Burton and other British ‘colonizers.’ However, as their statements about racial sameness and difference indicate, these two explorers diverged over the key matter of the exclusivity of ‘civilization.’ Burton believed his ethnology showed that his “withal unimprovable” and inherently unchangeable ‘African’ could never become ‘civilized.’<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Livingstone maintained that the day would soon come when Africans could claim to be as ‘civilized’ as the British. “Our own condition is the effect of

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>9</sup> Burton, *Lake Regions of Central Africa*, p. 490.

centuries of civilization and God's favour," he declared, "and one or two or three generations will pass away before the Africans will attain our stature. That they will ultimately rise to it, I have no doubt..."<sup>10</sup> Whether it was because of his evangelicalism, his open mind, his observational experience as an ethnographer, or a combination of these factors, Livingstone believed all Africans were inherently capable of reaching the highest levels of 'civilization' and 'culture.' In mid-Victorian ethnology, this radical position necessarily assumed that Europeans and Africans were members of the same species. Moreover, in holding the view that Africans had the potential to morally, intellectually and physically equal Europeans, Livingstone went further in challenging racial difference than most of his fellow monogenists.

Livingstone was not somehow born intrinsically more objective than Burton. After arriving in Africa with an open-minded perception of new cultures, time, experience or some other factor could have motivated him to become a harsh critic of African society, with little or no toleration for racial difference. However, it is clear that his years of experience as a missionary-explorer only enriched his perceptions of the African peoples and societies he encountered. Despite his biases, he approached exploration as an educational process. As a result, the writings he produced during his cross-continental journey, show a more 'mature' Livingstone coming to important general conclusions about the 'nature' of African society.

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<sup>10</sup> David Livingstone to Edmund Gabriel, 7 December, 1854, National Library of Scotland Ms. 17080. Several years later, during the Zambesi Expedition, Livingstone provided something of an addendum to this statement. In a letter to a friend, he wrote: "Some may be disposed to sneer at the idea of Negroes ever becoming as civilized as ourselves, forgetting apparently that no great time has elapsed since our forefathers were famous for burning witches." David Livingstone to Sid Strong, 25 March, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.

Like Burton and other explorers of Africa, he made claims about what amounts to a generic 'African' character. Yet, when Burton concluded that East Africans were "a strange mixture of good and evil" he had spent only a year and half in East and Central Africa. (It should be noted, however, that he had far more direct observational experience in Africa than the 'laboratory' ethnologists examined in the previous chapter). In comparison, Livingstone took more time and nurtured his observational experience before making all-embracing claims about the character or the potential of Africans.

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In an 1855 letter to Edmund Gabriel - the British Consul at Luanda who was his close confidant on racial matters - Livingstone declared: "The whole of my experience among Africans leads me to believe that they act very much as we should ourselves do, were we placed in their circumstances.... But poor mortals. They have had a bad education and centuries of degradation must have left a bias on the[ir] physical and mental constitution...."<sup>11</sup> Coupled with his assertion that Africans would soon reach the highest levels of civilization, it is clear that Livingstone believed there was an innate equivalence between 'Africans' and 'Britons.' If their 'destinies' had somehow been reversed, he seemed to accept that Africans would have reached the level of 'civilization' enjoyed by his compatriots, while Britons would have 'suffered' the same 'fate' as Africans. As a devout Christian, he explained the different destinies of the world's peoples as God's will. As a missionary and an evangelical, Livingstone believed that the Christian faith of his compatriots was fundamental to Britain's

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<sup>11</sup> David Livingstone to Edmund Gabriel, 2 March, 1855, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 17080.



power and authority as a nation. Yet, Livingstone was not so naive as to think that a magical combination of ‘Christianity and commerce’ could solely propel whole regions of Africa into a realm of culture, prosperity and learning on par with ‘civilized’ Britain. His belief in racial unity allowed him to see Africans as more than simple ‘stick figure’ heathens, needing only to convert to Christianity to receive the benefits of British ‘civilization.’

During his cross-continental journey, Livingstone made it clear that Africans needed to be able to read and write in their own languages and not necessarily in English in order to build a strong and stable ‘civilized’ society. The emphasis he placed on these skills in his plans for Africa was an important reflection of the significance of learning in his own life. The education and knowledge that Livingstone himself had striven so hard to attain brought the social change to his life that he hoped to bring in some form to Africans. Livingstone knew that without literacy he could not have transcended the class obstacles of his youth. Arguably, like other literate British working-class men and women of his time, he saw the value in passing on reading and writing skills to those who might not otherwise have the opportunity to become literate.<sup>12</sup> What is perhaps surprising - given his Protestant-based

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<sup>12</sup> In his study of Sunday schools and working-class culture, Thomas Laqueur revealed that reading, writing and arithmetic skills were usually taught by members of the working-class to groups of working-class children. According to Laqueur, “during the first half of the nineteenth century, predominantly working-class students were taught primarily by working-class teachers in [Sunday] schools largely financed, and sometimes also run, by working-class men and women.” He attests that “Sunday school teaching became an important vehicle for the expression of working-class [and often Non-conformist] religion and of the desire, particularly among older students, to pass on the skills they had learned to their younger brothers and sisters.” These teachers firmly believed that their students, though they were poverty-stricken, had the intelligence to learn to read and write. Similarly, Livingstone embraced the idea that Africans, despite their ‘backwardness,’ had the same capacity as anyone else to become literate. See Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850*, Yale University

evangelicalism - was Livingstone's lack of concern about who brought literacy to Africans. "To impart education is unquestionably a real boon on any nation," he wrote. "So highly do I value the knowledge of letters among a people, I would rejoice to see it imparted by any body of men, even by the Jesuits.... [I]n a heathen country, education would be a good of unquestionable value, by whomever communicated."<sup>13</sup>

The educatability of Africans separated Livingstone from Burton (and many of the ethnologists examined in the previous chapter). Burton argued, for instance, that the African "mentally remains a child, and is never capable of a generalisation."<sup>14</sup> In his view, Africans had the basic ability to acquire literacy, but did not have the mental capacity to use their reading or writing skills to engender any type of self or societal improvement. Livingstone's experience in working with Sechele convinced him of the importance of literacy (to his missionary work) and of the obvious capacity of the Tswana to learn to read and write their own language, as well as English. As he journeyed across the continent into territory never visited by missionaries, he realized that literacy was a scarce resource in sub-Saharan

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Press: New Haven, 1976, pp. 94, 93. Note that Laqueur was challenging the Marxist historical view that working-class education and literacy were a means of middle-class social control.

<sup>13</sup> Multi-denominational education was arguably part of Livingstone's legacy in Africa. The many missionaries societies that came to Africa in the years after his death imparted literacy skills (in English, French and German, but sometimes also in African languages).

<sup>14</sup> Richard Burton, *A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome*, vol. II, p. 203. In *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, he claimed that "in intellect the East African is sterile and incult, apparently unprogressive and unfit for change. Like the uncivilized generally, he observes well, but he can deduce nothing profitable from his perceptions." Burton, himself, clearly took pride in being an expert in the art of generalization! See Burton, *Lake Regions of Central Africa*, p. 497.

Africa.<sup>15</sup> In dismissing the value of an oral culture, Livingstone came to see the absence of literacy as synonymous with Africa's level of 'backwardness.'

But, just how 'backward' did he think 'African' society was when compared to mid-nineteenth century Western civilization? In the previous chapter, the polygenist-ethnologists who were examined, and even the monogenist Waitz, likened Africans to primates and other animals. Both Knox and Hunt emphasized that Africans had no culture and no history, and were fated to remain in a sub-human state of savagery and barbarism - at least until they were exterminated by the 'civilized' races of Europe. Burton's books show an Africa replete with cannibalistic tribes, savage amazons and bloodthirsty rulers.<sup>16</sup> Although Livingstone occasionally referred to Africans as savages or barbarians in his writings, this was often in reference to the slavery practised by a tribe or a nefarious chief. On his cross-continental journey, he saw far more of Africa than Burton had, yet he encountered no cannibals or amazon armies and witnessed no human sacrifices.<sup>17</sup> In his writings, he described instances of excessive African "cruelty" and "heartlessness," but he believed that this type of

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<sup>15</sup> When he reached western Angola, he was thus pleased to find literate mulatto communities where literary expertise was prized and rewarded. See Section 5.2(D) for further analysis of Livingstone's ethnology of Portuguese Angola.

<sup>16</sup> See in particular Burton's *A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome*, which is subtitled "With Notices of the So-called 'Amazons,' the Grand Customs, the Human Sacrifices, the Present State of the Slave Trade, and the Negroes' Place in Nature."

<sup>17</sup> However, as I discuss in section 5.2(B), he did characterize a female chief he encountered as an 'Amazon.' Only on his final journey, did Livingstone believe he had encountered cannibals. However, he spent over a year among the Manyuema and never seemed quite sure that they were cannibals. He found, for example, that they used gorilla skulls to fool people into thinking that the bones belonged to their devoured human victims. This functioned to scare away slave traders. See David Livingstone to Lord Stanley, 15 November, 1870, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20318.

behaviour was simply part of human - rather than a specifically African - 'nature'. In Livingstone's mind, after all, the actions of both Africans and Britons were a 'compound of good and evil.' As a result, he realized that "by a selection of cases of either kind [of behaviour], it would not be difficult to make [Africans or any other 'race' of people] appear excessively good or uncommonly bad."<sup>18</sup>

Thus, for Livingstone, African 'backwardness' was not due to some sort of innate species, racial, character or intellectual difference. Rather, he believed that the levels of 'civilization' attained by Britain and Africa were the result of socially determined factors. Hence, he saw no parallels between Africans and primates. Nor did he equate African society with a primitive or sub-human level of degeneration. In fact, Livingstone compared the degree of African 'backwardness' to the level of 'civilization' attained by the ancient Greeks. "How their ideas are like those of the ancient Greeks for whom we are taught to entertain the profoundest reverence," he remarked.<sup>19</sup> In particular, he believed that Africans and Greeks as polytheists shared a fondness for intriguing but wrongheaded spiritual ideas, which left them immersed in superstition. As he told Edmund Gabriel,

Think of the 'Prayer of Proclus to all the Gods and Goddesses.' I meet Proclus every day with thirty or forty charms around their necks. Among so many, the right [charm] surely can't be missed. Proclus the darkie applies charms to his hut, door, fireplace, spear, neck, sandals, head, feet, garden, hoe, etc, etc. and propitiates all his ancestors, friends and enemies, the known and the unknown. Proclus the spouter uttered a wail to the invisibilities - the known and the unknown, the good, bad and indifferent were all the same to him. No doubt [Proclus] thought he had stuck out a comprehensive idea that

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<sup>18</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 511.

<sup>19</sup> David Livingstone to Edmund Gabriel, 2 March, 1855, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 17080.

would receive the benefit of his ingenuity and so it seems to my black philosophers.<sup>20</sup>

However, Livingstone admitted that there was at least one important difference between Africans and the ancient Greeks. Africans “don’t commit their notions to writing and thus have no chance of being admired as ‘searchers after the truth’ like the ancients...”<sup>21</sup> In his view, Africans had the same intellectual capacity as the inhabitants of ancient Greece. But, because they lived in a largely oral world, they could not show outsiders that they had complex, if not perplexing, philosophical and spiritual ideas. It could be argued that in making the analogy between Greek and African society, Livingstone was belittling ancient Greek achievement and asserting his own cultural and spiritual arrogance. Moreover, he clearly saw no value in an oral culture. However, it is significant that in this analogy he made the link between an historically revered civilization and a continent and a people denigrated by other ethnologists and explorers as the antithesis of civilization.

In addition to literacy and a written culture, it is clear that Livingstone realized there were other important differences between ancient Greek and African society. The Greeks had established strong political and civic institutions, while in his view, both Central and East Africa were dominated by tribalism and were largely devoid of the types of institutions required to establish a ‘civilized’ society. Although Livingstone did not refer specifically to civil society in his writings, he accepted many of the tenets of the theory, which had been redefined by Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. The concept of civil society was grounded on

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. The Neo-Platonist Proclus (410/412 - 485 c.e.) was the last of the important ancient Greek philosophers.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

the idea that 'civilized' societies had transcended despotic rule and had succeeded in establishing non-government institutions that were strong enough to counterbalance the power of the State.<sup>22</sup> Adam Ferguson - who is most closely identified with the term - argued that civil societies were characterized by polished manners, public virtue, thriving intellectual and artistic communities and flourishing commercial sectors.<sup>23</sup> In his treatise, Ferguson also counterposed the 'modern' societies who demonstrated these qualities with 'rude' societies, like 'Africa', that had failed to inspire "the virtues which are connected with freedom, and required in the conduct of civil affairs."<sup>24</sup>

Livingstone became a missionary to convert Africans to Christianity and to motivate social change in Africa. Yet, it is clear that he approached his work with the view that members of 'civilized' society had a duty to act as a 'civilizing' force in 'backward' societies that had 'endured centuries of degradation.' For Livingstone, these were African societies

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<sup>22</sup> Part of this definition is taken from Ernest Geller, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals*, Penguin Press: New York, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1995 [first published 1767].

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108. In their "Introduction" to *Civil Society and the Political Imagination of Africa*, John and Jean Comoroff analyse the historical legacy and contemporary use of the civil society as a analytic construct. They conclude that the concept of civil society "is an inherently double-edged weapon: just as it is summoned up in the name of populist empowerment, so it is invoked to banish those who fall beyond its normative, often restrictive purview.... Insofar as it must, by its very nature, establish limits, it will always negate, exclude, silence, erase, rule out." Yet, they argued that "[o]n the other hand, its positive dimension lies in its capacity to open up spaces of democratizing aspiration; also - once relieved of its parochial roots in the European Enlightenment - to mandate practical experimentation in the building of new publics, new modes of association, new media of expression, new sorts of moral community, new politics." See John and Jean Comoroff, "Introduction" to *Civil Society and the Political Imagination of Africa: Critical Perspectives*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1999, p. 33.

whose histories were marked by a failure to overcome tyranny, an inability to establish civic institutions and an unwillingness to protect basic human liberties and rights. Without an intellectual culture that prized the written word, he believed the African peoples who suffered these ‘disadvantages’ had little hope of joining the ranks of ‘civilized’ society.<sup>25</sup> In a journal entry written near the end of his cross-continental journey, Livingstone made it clear that he believed that the endeavour to bring the attributes of civil society to sub-Saharan Africa had to begin with village elites. In a sweeping generalization about the ‘nature’ of Central African history and politics, he argued that the enduring legacy of illiteracy among African chiefs and their principal advisors had kept African nations and ‘tribes’ from establishing the leadership necessary to overcome tyranny. “So far as tradition can inform us,” he declared,

they [Central Africans] appear to have lived alternatively in a state of peace and war from time immemorial. A chief imbued with more ambition usually begins by overcoming his neighbours, who, fleeing, are set upon by others, and rendered desperate, they soon learn their power and custom makes them more expert in war. They sweep over a large portion of territory, carrying destruction wherever they go. The death of the chief and principal men leads to a settlement of the tribe in peace. Men breathe, become rich and proud, to be again disturbed, scattered, and peeled, by some other marauder.... Had the powerful chiefs who have from time to time arisen possessed a knowledge of

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<sup>25</sup> In Livingstone’s estimation, an oral culture failed to adequately record and transmit African achievements and ideas. As a result, he was concerned that there were no role models or heroes for Africans to follow. In *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, he wrote that “Men of remarkable ability have risen up among the Africans from time to time, as amongst other portions of the human family. Some have attracted attention, and excited the admiration of large districts by their wisdom.... [But], the wisdom of the wise has not been handed down.” Other Africans had earned temporary fame because of the skill they exemplified in throwing a spear, shooting a bow, or in practising ventriloquism. But, a lack of literature meant these great stories could not be captured fully for future generations to appreciate. See David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, pp. 235-236.

letters, their kingdoms would have remained, but they give themselves up to self-indulgence entirely, and their power slips away from their hands as they become old.<sup>26</sup>

For Livingstone, even the most “friendly” ‘tribes’ with good relations between paramount and branch chiefs could “never attain anything like a state of civilization without that concentration which a knowledge of letters imparts.”<sup>27</sup> Literature, he concluded, “is therefore one essential ingredient in a high degree of civilization.”<sup>28</sup> Livingstone believed that if intelligent and capable African leaders developed strong literary skills, they would create the type of political environment that could put an end to the cycle of destruction that condemned Africans to a history of ‘backwardness.’ He realized that different African nations had “laws and customs which are considered sacred.”<sup>29</sup> But in his view, Africans in positions of power needed to put aside the system of “allegiances” and “espionage” they relied on to protect their authority and instead use “written communication” to entrench “a sense [of] peace and justice” in their communities.<sup>30</sup> If they did not, he believed tyranny would never be overcome in Africa and there would be no literary foundation in African society upon which to develop a written discourse that would challenge the persistence of the slave trade on African soil.

As Livingstone’s journey across Africa continued, he discovered that slavery and

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<sup>26</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s African Journal*, vol. II, pp. 447-448.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 447.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448.



indentured labour were practised in different areas across the continent. He found that Portuguese and Zanzibari-Arab slave traders were responsible for some of the trade of African slaves, but that different African nations were also involved. While many African nations - like the Tswana and Xhosa - had long been opposed to the buying and selling of slaves (although not necessarily the indentured labour of conquered peoples), other nations and individual tribes were engaged in the trade and saw no reason to stop their activities. It is important to remember that as a young man in Britain, Livingstone witnessed the success of the British abolitionist movement in ending the trans-Atlantic slave trade. As a volunteer movement, the Anti-Slavery Society, for example, was representative of Britain's status as a civil society. Moreover, the organization's achievement in pressuring the State to prohibit the slave-trade was indicative of the nation's level of 'civilization' and capacity for 'improvement.' In essence, he believed this status gave him the right to act as a representative of British 'civilization' in African. For Livingstone, the decision whether or not to engage in the slave trade was a moral choice; it was one that British society had long debated before independent civil organizations convinced the State to enact laws to end the trade. But in his view, Africa - with an undeveloped civil society and a high level of illiteracy - had no political or cultural base from which to discuss and debate the morality of slavery. He found no native groups that had formed organizations to oppose the practice of slavery within their nations or 'tribes.' Moreover, because Africans relied on oral traditions, they had produced no books or speeches denouncing "human rights" abuses or the practice

of slavery.<sup>31</sup> Nor did Livingstone uncover any laws written by Africans that could be used to fight the slave trade in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, he argued that “the first rights of humanity” were never guaranteed in the independent African societies he had visited.<sup>32</sup> Although, he never explicitly defined what these ‘rights’ were, it is clear that Livingstone thought that Africans - like any other humans - had a right to live free from slavery. British citizens had this ‘civil’ right and, as an abolitionist, he believed Africans deserved this same basic right that his compatriots enjoyed.

In his fight against slavery, Livingstone took issue with those who argued that freedom from slavery was not a right, but a privilege earned by the ‘civilized’ races. Many of these same critics also claimed that slavery was not as immoral or harmful as abolitionists alleged. Burton, for example, was openly critical of those who maintained that a slave’s life was brutal and dehumanizing or that slave owners were particularly vicious. In *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, he declared:

Justice requires the confession that the horrors of slave-trading rarely meet the eye in East Africa. Some merchants chain or cord together their [slave] gangs for safer transport through regions where desertion is at a premium. Usually, however, they trust to soft words and kind treatment; the fat lazy slave is seen stretched at ease in the shade, while the master toils in the sun and wind. The ‘property’ is well fed and little worked.... The relationship is rather that of patron and client than of lord and bondsman; the slave is addressed as ... ‘my brother,’ and he is seldom provoked by hard work or stripes.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Livingstone refers specifically to African “human rights” in a letter to Thomas Steele, 24 January, 1855, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10777.

<sup>32</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s African Journal*, vol. I, p. 187.

<sup>33</sup> Burton was willing to admit that slave owners were not always this ‘benevolent.’ “To this general rule,” he argued, “there are terrible exceptions, as might be expected among

In response to opinions like these, Livingstone argued that slavery was anything but benevolent or humane. He maintained that - based on what he had witnessed in Africa - slaves were habitually treated like animals and slave owners had no concern for the welfare of their captives. "Slavery cannot be kind, no more than highway robbery can," he wrote.<sup>34</sup>

The chief rights of manhood are withheld by the slave owner from his chattels every day and hour of the slave's life. The kindness shown in certain cases is nearly but not equal to that which is shown by an owner of a parrot or a monkey to that race of domesticated playthings. Food and a cage is provided for those whose nature is adapted extremely well to provide everything necessary for themselves. In the case of [a] man, food and clothing are provided in lieu of independence, but then labour is extracted, unpaid unthanked-for-labour, and if cruelty is not added there unto we are told that the owner is kind - aye, the degraded animals are supposed to be better off than they would have been had they their freedom.<sup>35</sup>

In using concepts like 'the chief rights of manhood' and 'the first rights of humanity,' Livingstone wanted to make it clear that he believed Africans deserved the human 'right' to live free from slavery.<sup>36</sup> Yet, at the same time, African slavery and illiteracy provided moral

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a people with scant regard for human life. The kirangozi or guide attached to the expedition on return from Ujiji, had loitered behind for some days because his slave girl was too footsore to walk. When tired of waiting, he cut off her head, for fear lest she should become gratis another man's property." Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, p. 515.

<sup>34</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. 158.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> In 1865, as he sailed from England to Bombay (at the outset of his last journey), Livingstone met a small group of American abolitionists from Boston. In a letter written during the voyage, Livingstone told his daughter Agnes that he and his shipmates had discussed the position of 'former' slaves in the wake of the American Civil War. He recounted that the Americans told him that "the abolition of slavery seems real and that the Negroes will work well." In his response to the Americans, Livingstone exemplified both his distain for slavery and his empathy for former slaves. "Had I been a slave," he wrote Agnes, "I would not have done anything after getting my freedom, but sunned myself by a hedge to the end of my days and done this to Massa." In the letter, he traced a line from this

justification for what he considered was Britain's 'right' to act as a 'civilizing' power. But, if Africans had an inherent right to live free from slavery, then presumably they also had a right to live independently from British evangelicals and humanitarians, or a right to protect their oral culture and traditions from outside influences. Livingstone, however, was not willing to consider the option that Africans be left alone to autonomously create their own societies. In his view, the Central African nations that had been unaffected by the slave trade and had been free from foreign influence, had had centuries in which to become literate, develop civil organizations and guarantee basic human rights. But, he also realized contemporaries like Burton, who were opposed to British missionary work or secular education in Africa, also refused to let African nations and tribes 'develop' independently. Among other schemes, Burton, for example, advocated 'employing' Africans as a source of indentured labour and using African lands to build British sanatoriums. To counter ideas like these - as well as Britain's own colonial practises - Livingstone believed Africans needed a helping hand from 'civilizers' who had Africa's 'improvement' in mind -- rather than their own or their nation's interests. In asserting 'the unity of the human species,' Livingstone was declaring that an inherent biological and physical bond existed between men and women of different races and levels of 'civilization.' In his view, a 'backward' oral culture left Africans isolated from the outside world and the benefits of literate society. Implicit in this conviction, was the idea Africans would be more extensively accepted as members of the human species if and when they learned to read and write. Literate Africans and African

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to a picture he had drawn of a former slave flicking his thumb at his former master. See David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 26 August, 1865, British Library, Additional Ms. 50184.

literature - perhaps as much as the adoption of Christianity - would, in his mind, 'prove' that Africans had the capacity for 'civilization.'

There was clearly a paternalist principle behind Livingstone's notion that Africans needed the guiding hand of 'civilized' educationalists in order to overcome their 'ignorance' and 'backwardness.' Arguably this education 'from above' can be seen as a form of social control, a way of imposing British secular and religious values on a 'lower order' of people. British historians have made similar arguments in examining the issue of the education of the British working class, particularly in the period from the late-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. For example, a number of Marxist historians have asserted that literacy and education were used by the upper and middle classes to "impose their social ideas on the working class."<sup>37</sup> In this argument, schools are cast as "an important agency of suppressing, with a minimum of coercion, traditional lower-class patterns of behaviour which were replaced with conduct more suited to an industrial society."<sup>38</sup> According to historian J.F.C Harrison: "By the [eighteen] fifties and sixties the middle classes had been wonderfully effective in suffusing their ideals and precepts throughout the 'lower orders.' They had established among the more prosperous sections of the working classes the goal of respectability, the hallmark of which was a regard for knowledge and print."<sup>39</sup> Yet, as

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<sup>37</sup> M.W. Flinn, cited in Laqueur, p. 187. See Laqueur for a discussion of E.P. Thompson and other historians who have advanced this thesis, pp. xii-xiii, 124-126, 187-189.

<sup>38</sup> Laqueur, p. 187.

<sup>39</sup> J.F.C. Harrison, *Learning and Living, 1790-1960*, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1961, p. 43.

Harrison has also attested, the “development of a literate section of the working classes opened the way to the spread of radical and unorthodox opinions” that challenged middle class moral and political doctrine.<sup>40</sup>

Education and the growth of literacy in Africa ultimately had a comparable effect in colonial Africa. During the colonial era in Africa, mission schools spawned generations of literate Africans as part of their ‘civilizing’ mission. To an extent this education suppressed ‘traditional’ African forms of behaviour and inculcated the goal of ‘civilization.’ Yet, mission schools also nurtured radical ideas among their African students. One of the great ironies of colonial rule is that a missionary education often provided Africans with the skills, knowledge and status necessary to challenge foreign ‘social control’ and political tyranny. Based on his condemnation of British colonialism in South Africa, Livingstone may have been working under the assumption that Africans needed literacy, not simply to generate change in their own societies, but also to better understand the tyranny brought by foreign cultures. Like his earlier support for ‘native agency’ and independent African churches (see Chapter Two), Livingstone saw literacy, not as a means of social control, but as a way of giving Africans the tools to establish their own civil societies.

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As an ethnologist, Livingstone failed to observe oral culture with an open mind and thus he could not see any merit in African oral traditions. As a humanitarian, he became increasingly convinced that literacy was a key to helping Africans form the type of societies he believed they deserved. As such, just as he could not attain Gould’s vision of impartiality

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

in his ethnology – Livingstone could not transcend his own cultural heritage. Yet, this is what he asked Africans to do to overcome their ‘backwardness.’ However, the complexities of the discourses of race and colonialism reveal that he, unlike his fellow ethnologists and explorers, believed that Africans had an inherent capacity to transcend their ‘racial’ heritage. Livingstone and these other ‘colonizers’ shared the belief that Britain represented the apex of ‘civilization.’ But, Livingstone’s racial politics and observational experience told him that Africans had the same ability and as much right to reach this level of ‘civilization.’

### 5.2 Challenging Racial and Gender Orthodoxy through Ethnology: Case Studies in Livingstone’s Conceptions of Race, Gender and African Manliness

In both his published and unpublished writings, Livingstone was critical of the ‘science’ of physical ethnology, to the point of satirising the conclusions reached by its main practitioners. His main difficulty with ethnologists was that they magnified the physical variations between the ‘races’ so that racial difference was emphasized. He also complained that the examples of racial ‘types’ that these laboratory ethnologists selected were in no way representative of the peoples they were supposed to exemplify. In *Missionary Travels*, for example, he declared: “With every disposition to pay due deference to the opinions of those who have made ethnology their special study, I have felt myself unable to believe that the exaggerated features usually put forth as those of the typical negro, characterized the majority of any nation of south central Africa.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 290.

In his journals, Livingstone was even more forthright in finding fault with the conclusions reached by his ethnological brethren. (This is yet another example of the type of critical writing about race that did not make it from his journals to *Missionary Travels*).

In a long entry, written in the early stages of his cross-continental journey, he concluded:

There are undoubtedly prevailing types in different races of man which serve to distinguish them from each other, but so far as I have had an opportunity of observing them, systematic writers rarely hit on the proper one. Dr. Prichard has been very happy in his selection of two Hottentot [Khoikhoi] girls as types of that race, but the small noses, high cheek bones, colour, hair, shape of the head, would do for the Bushmen [San] as well, and for those degraded Irish of whom he makes mention. He is not so happy in his Caffre [Xhosa]. A typical Malay would easily be found among that people, but not a true type of any black tribe I know.<sup>42</sup>

Livingstone did not altogether dismiss what Prichard and other ethnologists were seeking to accomplish in identifying the outward or physical characteristics of distinct peoples. He did believe that there were 'racial' - or more specifically ethnic - types that were in some ways representative of a nation or a 'tribe.' But, he knew that most practising ethnologists, including Prichard, had never been to Africa or met any of the peoples they categorized which meant that their observations about the physical characteristics of Africans were spurious. Some might have studied a cadaver or an embalmed museum exhibit, but most based their conclusions on the drawings found in the works of explorers and missionaries. A single sketch subject thus might serve as the ethnological representative of an entire racial type or nation of people. Livingstone was also aware that ethnologists brought racial and other biases to their work, whether they were aware of them or not. Hence, he could confidently assert that the conclusions they reached were flawed, if not

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<sup>42</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Private Journals*, pp. 186.



purposely skewed. In looking for models of racial difference, he affirmed, they 'found' what they wanted: unmistakable examples of physical or physiognomical variation from the white male European 'norm.' As a result, he knew that ethnologists would fail to see that, beyond skin colour, they themselves sometimes looked much like the Africans they cast as 'ugly.'<sup>43</sup>

In making these points, he mockingly wrote:

The ugliest [Africans] seem to be selected for their very ugliness, but would it be fair to select the very ugliest varlet that could be selected amongst a crowd of the common rabble of England and compare him with the fairest Caucasian that might be found in the suite of an ambassador. I have often been struck by meeting countenances the facsimiles of renowned statesman in everything except as to colour. One of Sekhomi's courtiers was the picture of M. Guizot. Another amongst the Bamapela ... might have sat for the likeness of Professor Agassiz .... The plates [of Europeans] selected by M. Guyot if coloured dark find ready counterparts among the dark tribes. Even the Caucasian & Captain Cook may be found. By selecting the ugliest or the best looking of different races anything may be proved which the writer wishes.<sup>44</sup>

Livingstone clearly realized the power that ethnologists - as members of the 'colonizing' race - had in constructing how Africans were perceived in Victorian society. In his view, for most ethnologists - and even for Prichard - impartiality was not a primary goal. He was convinced that the observations many of his fellow ethnologists made about

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<sup>43</sup> In *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone recounted that he had encountered Ngoni men who looked just like eminent Europeans, except for their different skin colour and hair texture. He declared, for example: "Their splendid physical development and form of skull show that, but for the black skin and wooly hair, they would take rank among the foremost Europeans." See *Missionary Travels*, p. 95.

<sup>44</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Private Journals*, pp. 187. Sekhomi (Sekgoma) was a high-ranking Tswana chief Livingstone befriended during his first decade in Africa. Francois Guizot (1787-1874) was a French historian. Arnold Guyot was the author of *The Earth and Man: Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography in its Relation to the History of Mankind* (1849). The Swiss-American polygenist Louis Agassiz, is discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.3.

the 'nature' of Africans were dictated by *a priori* convictions about racial ranking. Rather than trying to prove racial equality or sameness, these 'scientists' were trying to certify their own superiority by establishing the physical - and often the inherent moral and intellectual - inferiority of Africans. Thus, for Livingstone, the practice of ethnology was something of a 'game' played by white men with a racial agenda. For the polygenists examined in Chapter Four, outer 'ugliness' often dictated a parallel 'inner' baseness, which was synonymous with the assumed 'inferiority' of Africans. Prichard and some monogenists (like William Monk, the editor of Livingstone's *Cambridge Journals*) argued that outer differences were not connected to the 'inner' qualities of men and women. For these ethnologists, the psychological and moral similarities between different races were what 'proved' their common humanity.

Despite the clear racial biases and methodological failings Livingstone found in the work of the West's leading ethnologists, he could not escape using the language they employed in describing the physical characteristics of Africans. But, instead of using the discourse of physical ethnology to characterize a generic African 'type,' he often employed its jargon to challenge the way other ethnologists represented African physical difference. Although he sometimes belittled the physical characteristics of different African peoples and 'tribes,' he relied on his observational experience before making conclusions about the 'inner' character of these ethnological subjects. For Livingstone, a study of the physical ethnology of different 'races' proved that there was as much physical variation between Africans as there was between Europeans. Just as all humans, in his view, were a "wonderful" amalgamation of good and evil, physically humans were also a compound of

attractiveness (superiority) and the ugliness (inferiority). Thus, for example, a white man could be morally 'evil,' but physically attractive, while a black man could be morally 'good,' but physically inferior. (For Livingstone, in this dichotomy attractiveness was not necessarily equated with a manly disposition and unattractiveness with effeminacy in men. However, on the occasions when he praised a man's "lithe manly figure" and spoke of another's "feminine delicacy" he was clearly making a distinction between superior and inferior physical types).<sup>45</sup> Even when he assessed the physical (bodily and physiognomical) gender traits of the Africans he described, Livingstone did not equate these outer characteristics with his subjects' moral or intellectual qualities. This stance in itself did not guarantee that Livingstone brought an open mind to his observations about the diverse populations he encountered on his cross-continental journey. However, as the four case studies in this section will demonstrate, Livingstone's perceptions of the gender and racial characteristics of different Africans were complex and often broad minded.

In the first case study, I examine how Livingstone challenged ethnological orthodoxy in his representation of the San (Bushmen) he encountered. Although San men were widely denigrated, Livingstone saw them as a manly people distinguished by their industriousness, energy and love of independence. I then explore how a female Lunda chief challenged Livingstone's understanding of femininity through her physical appearance and her character. Although he exaggerated and then mocked her 'feminine' characteristics in print, he also

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<sup>45</sup> Livingstone characterized Monga, a Kololo man as "a merry, good-tempered fellow, ... his lithe manly figure has always been in the front of danger, and, from being left handed, had been easily recognized in the fight with elephants." See David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, p. 158. The "feminine delicacy" of the African-Portuguese is cited and discussed in section 5.2(C).

came to praise the ‘manly’ qualities he believed she displayed in her role as chief and in her abilities as an explorer. The third case study, investigates how Livingstone countered polygenist doctrine in his description of the African-Portuguese peoples of colonial Angola. Despite his remark that both male and female mixed-race Angolans were physically “effeminate,” he realized that they were an intelligent and productive people who prized the written word. The final case study, examines Livingstone’s relationship with the Kololo - the people with whom he travelled the furthest during his long career. Unlike Burton and the other explorers who maligned the gender characteristics of their African crew members, Livingstone often lauded the manliness he believed the ‘Makololo’ demonstrated during their cross-continental journey together.

#### 5.2(A) The San: Confronting the Racial and Ethnological Stereotype of the ‘Bushmen’

Livingstone’s heterogeneous perspective on Africans or what Gluckman called his “open mind” was perhaps best exemplified in his view of the San, or Bushmen as they were commonly known during the nineteenth century. Along with their neighbours the Khoikhoi, the hunter-gatherer San people were arguably the most ethnologically scorned of the native peoples of Southern Africa during - and long before - Livingstone’s time in Africa. By the time the first white settlers arrived in the Western Cape, many San had already been absorbed into pastoral Khoikhoi communities or had intermarried with Xhosa herders who had moved

into northeastern regions of the Cape.<sup>46</sup> When whites subsequently began to conquer the Cape (see Chapter Three), many of the San that remained were “forced, or had decided, to retreat to the mountain areas [to the north] where most were hunted down by Europeans... Typically colonists shot the adults and captured the children and women who were forced to labour on the white farms of the colony.”<sup>47</sup> These San remained in a state of bondage until Ordinance 50 (1828) and the anti-slavery laws of the early 1830s gave them their freedom and rights as Cape citizens. Meanwhile, northeast of the Cape, other San communities - which had long been established in and around the Kalahari desert - continued to engage in traditional hunting and gathering practices, largely free of European encroachment.

Prichard perhaps best epitomized the dominant view of the San in both the ethnological and popular writings of the period. Despite his belief that all races had been (initially) borne of the same seed, he characterized the San in terms that approximated the language of his polygenist foes. Moreover, he clearly realized that his ethnological conclusions about the San were reflective of the stereotypical view of these Africans:

Writers on the history of mankind seem to be nearly agreed in considering the Bushmen... of South Africa as the most degraded and miserable of all nations, and lowest in the scale humanity... these people are so brutish, lazy and stupid, that the idea of reducing them to slavery has been abandoned.... It is no matter of surprise that those writers who search for approximations between mankind and the inferior orders of creation, fix upon the Bushmen

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<sup>46</sup> The Xhosa perceived the San as cattle thieves and San were sometimes forcibly ‘absorbed’ or forced to pay a tribute to Xhosa chiefs. As Switzer reports “San bands also absorbed Xhosa refugees. Xhosa men married San women, and San were employed as diviners and rainmakers in Xhosa religious ceremonies. San were also active in trade with the Xhosa, obtaining cattle and dagga [hemp] in exchange for ivory.” See Switzer, p. 45.

<sup>47</sup> Crais, p. 12.

as their favourite theme.<sup>48</sup>

While Livingstone did not mention Prichard by name in *Missionary Travels*, in his discussion of the San in the book he took aim at the obvious methodological failings of the dominant ethnological understanding of these Africans. “The specimens brought to Europe have been selected, like costermongers’ dogs, on account of their extreme ugliness,” he remarked, “consequently English ideas of the whole tribe are formed in the same way as if the ugliest specimens of the English were exhibited in Africa as characteristic of the entire British nation.”<sup>49</sup> Livingstone had met, communicated with (through a translator) and had travelled amongst the San during his treks across the Kalahari and again on his journey to rendezvous with the Makololo in 1852-1853. This is not to say that Livingstone reached some sort of ethnological ‘truth’ or escaped the use of biased Victorian ethnological language in his description of the San. However, he had read Prichard and knew the racial discourse which enveloped these people. Rather than repeat the overt racism of the dominant characterisation of the San, he directly challenged it throughout his writings. As a result, Livingstone’s descriptions of the San bore little or no resemblance to Prichard’s

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<sup>48</sup> This statement is from J. C. Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1851, pp. 177-178, cited in Robert J. Gordon and Stuart Sholto Douglas, *The Bushmen Myth: The Making of A Namibian Underclass*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Westview Press: Boulder, 2000, pp. 15-16. In *The Natural History of Man*, Prichard made similar comments about San savagery. In his copy of the book, Richard Burton noted the following remarks on the San: “The passion of anger has amazing influence over them: it incites them to frequent murders. A total want of forethought is one of their characteristics, and the prospects of to-morrow, or of the time to come, seldom occupy their minds.” In the margin of his copy, Burton wrote “African destructiveness” next to the passage, seemingly in agreement with Prichard’s assertions. Burton’s copy of Prichard’s *The Natural History of Man* is in the Huntington Library. Prichard’s comments are found, p. 603 of the book.

<sup>49</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 49.

representation of these people.

However, Livingstone could not refrain from describing the physical characteristics of the San. For example, in an 1854 article, he represented the San of Kalahari as “light olive” in “colour,” with high cheek bones and thin arms and legs.<sup>50</sup> He added that “many of them were of low stature.”<sup>51</sup> Because of their height and body type, the San were often ridiculed by Europeans. However, for Livingstone, body shape did not dictate practice. The San might have had thin extremities, but he realized they were muscular and quick. As a result, he was led to praise the physical qualities of San men and seemed unconcerned about their stature. In his journals, for instance, he commented that they were “strong, well-fed looking men” with “finely formed” bodies.<sup>52</sup> He also distinguished between the shorter San he had met in the Kalahari and a tribe he travelled with who lived north of the desert who “were at least six feet high.”<sup>53</sup> In addition to lauding the physical attributes of the San in general, he also remarked on the character, good humour and honesty of these people. “What a wonderful people the Bushmen are. Always merry and laughing, and never tell lies

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<sup>50</sup> He argued that this appearance was due to the difficulty of living off the desert, “with precarious fare” and exposed “to a fierce sun.” See David Livingstone, “Notes for the Bulletin,” a draft of an article dated, 22 August, 1854. This may have been part of an article that appeared in translation as “Letter to the Paris Geographical Society,” in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, May, 1854 (earlier in the year). See National Library of Scotland, 10777, folio 17.

<sup>51</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 49. See also David Livingstone, “Notes for the Bulletin.”

<sup>52</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Private Journals*, pp. 10, 108.

<sup>53</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 165.

wantonly like the Bechuana [Tswana],” he wrote in stark contrast to Prichard.<sup>54</sup> Noting the important role women played in San communities, he remarked that they were hard working, intelligent nomads whose knowledge of the intricacies of the desert guaranteed a stock of food and water for their people.<sup>55</sup> In *Missionary Travels*, he demonstrated that he was clearly impressed with the San ability to live and flourish in a desert setting. Possessing “an intense love of liberty,” for Livingstone, the San were “the only real nomads of the country.”<sup>56</sup> Expert hunters, they were “capable of great exertion and severe privations.”<sup>57</sup> In particular, he noted that they were remarkably adept at going without water - a skill that he saw as an indicator of manliness and an ability in which he himself took pride in demonstrating during his time in the desert.<sup>58</sup> In further praising their abilities, he asserted that “no other [African] tribe c[ould] compete with them in hunting the elephant and other large animals.”<sup>59</sup> In Livingstone’s estimation, the only ‘tribe’ that could outmatch the San in this pursuit were the

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<sup>54</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s Private Journals*, p. 12. Contrast this passage with a similar, but less enthusiastic description of the San from *Missionary Travels*: “They are a merry laughing set, and do not tell lies wantonly.” Here is the editing of Livingstone’s writing about Africans at work. Was the original passage from his journals deemed too positive? Whose decision was it to shorten the passage, Livingstone or one of the books’ editors? See *Missionary Travels*, p. 165.

<sup>55</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s Private Journals*, pp. 49-52, 153.

<sup>56</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 49.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52. For example, Livingstone vaunted: “My powers of doing without water excited the astonishment of the natives and I think I suffered as little from thirst as any of them.” David Livingstone to Margaret Sewell, 17 June, 1843, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 656.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.



British who, he acknowledged, used guns to kill the animals rather than spears.<sup>60</sup>

Did Livingstone have something to gain from portraying the San in such a positive light? Did he hope a sympathetic missionary might take up their plight and work to convert them?<sup>61</sup> With the San, like the Xhosa and Khoikhoi peoples, Livingstone's praise was based on what he saw as the manliness of a strong, spirited and fiercely independent people. In a 1856 letter to Murchison about the ethnology of different African peoples, Livingstone characterized the San as a "brave and independent" people, secure and successful in their nomadic lifestyle.<sup>62</sup> In *Missionary Travels*, he lauded the San who had acted as guides as knowledgeable, polite, "independent gentlemen."<sup>63</sup> Although they differed in social structure, political clout and often in physical stature to the Xhosa, like these Africans they exhibited clear ability to live under difficult circumstances, to maintain their honour where others had failed.<sup>64</sup> In a sense, for Livingstone, in their lifestyle and character, the San were

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>61</sup> For Livingstone, the San had the intelligence and character to become good Christians. Some he had met practised a system of worship that interested him. Yet, he despaired that his fellow missionaries refused to take much interest in 'saving their souls.' See *Missionary Travels*, p. 144; *Livingstone's Private Journals*, p. 12.

<sup>62</sup> David Livingstone to Roderick Murchison, 4 March, 1856, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10780.

<sup>63</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 173.

<sup>64</sup> Livingstone contrasted the San of the Kalahari with a people he called the Bakalahari, who were the first Tswana to settle on the desert. In *Missionary Travels* he wrote of the Bakalahari: "Living ever since on the same plains with the Bushmen, subjected to the same influences and climate, enduring the same thirst, and subsisting on similar food for centuries, they seem to supply a standing proof that locality is not always sufficient of itself to account for difference in races." Like the San, they possessed an "intense love of liberty. Yet, the San were free and the Bakalahari were indentured serfs subject to the

a prime example of ‘Robinson Crusoeing it’ in Africa. They lived off the land and found all they needed to survive through their knowledge of desert life (as he thought he had done during his early travels as a young missionary). Keen and agile hunters, informed and courteous travellers, hard-working and fearless nomads - these manly Africans were the antitheses of Prichard’s “brutish, lazy and stupid” Bushmen. They had qualities Livingstone believed everyone in Africa needed to survive and prosper, but that few could demonstrate in practice.

#### 5.2(B) The Lunda: Confronting Ethnological Practice, Gender Difference and Notions of Femininity

In his general account of the Lunda - or ‘Balonda’ as he referred to them - Livingstone also used prototypical ethnological language and categories of description.<sup>65</sup> In

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injustice and wrong ... often perpetuated” by their Tswana lords. For Livingstone, this was due, in untold measure, to the fact that the Bakalahari were “a timid race.” To illustrate this point he compared the Bakalahari with the typical San response to a Tswana attempt to commandeer the tobacco from their lands: “A few Bechuanas [Tswana] may go into a village of Bakalahari, and domineer over the whole with impunity; but when these same adventurers meet the Bushmen, they are fain to change their manners to fawning sycophancy; they know that, if the request for tobacco is refused, these free sons of the Desert may settle the point as to its possessions by a poisoned arrow.” See *Missionary Travels*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>65</sup> Although he seemed not to realize it, the Lunda were one of the largest and most powerful empires he encountered in Africa. The foundation of the Lunda nation had been laid by 1600 and it reached its height in the second half of the seventeenth century under a succession of kings named Mwata Yamvo. The empire was centred in what is now the Katanga province of modern Congo (in the south of the country). It stretched from the Kwango river in the west to the Luapula in the east. It also produced offshoots, including the empire of Cazembe, where Livingstone spent some time during his last expedition. (See Chapter Seven for more on Livingstone and Cazembe). Manenko’s chiefdom was located along the Zambesi, very close to the current border between north-west Zambia and western

*Missionary Travels*, for example, he described the Lunda as “real negroes, having much more wool on their heads and bodies than any of the Bechuana or Caffre tribes. They are generally very dark in colour, but several are to be seen of a higher hue.”<sup>66</sup> He added that “a large proportion” of the Lunda had “heads somewhat elongated backwards and upwards, thick lips, flat noses, elongated *ossa calces* [heel bones]” and other ‘true negro’ characteristics.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, other Lunda were particularly “good looking ... persons” distinguished by their “well-shaped heads.”<sup>68</sup> Despite his condemnation of the ethnological discipline, Livingstone could not transcend its derogatory language. So while some Lunda were attractive, well-proportioned individuals, others seemingly matched a racial stereotype noted for its inferior skull shape, facial structure, and limb length.

Ironically, Livingstone used the example of the Lunda to critique the stereotypical representation of the ‘true’ or ‘typical negro,’ a racial ‘type’ described by Prichard and others. To this end, he argued that “while [the Lunda had] a general similarity to the typical negro, I never could, from my own observation, think that our ideal [meaning average or generic] negro, as seen in tobacconists’ shops, is the true type.”<sup>69</sup> Derived from ethnological texts like Prichard’s, the typical Africans found in British advertising were, in Livingstone’s view, drawn to appear unattractive and were an inaccurate depiction of any Africans he had

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Angola.

<sup>66</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, pp. 290-291.

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

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

encountered. Livingstone believed that his observations about the Lunda demonstrated that there were obvious variations in body type and in skin colour within an ethnic group or individual 'tribe.' In his view, it was thus a mistake to classify all Lunda - or all of the members of another 'tribe' - homogeneously.

Livingstone generally had little to say about the masculinity of Lunda men. However, he was fascinated by both the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' gender characteristics of Manenko, a female Lunda chief he encountered not long after leaving Kololo territory on his journey west to Luanda. According to Livingstone, Manenko was "a tall strapping woman about twenty" covered in ornaments and "a mixture of fat and red ochre, as a protection against the weather, for, like most of the Balonda ladies, she was otherwise in a state of frightful nudity."<sup>70</sup> But for Livingstone, Manenko was anything but a typical Lunda 'lady' and was quite unlike any woman he had met in Africa or in Britain. Although he lauded her powers of physical endurance and her abilities as an expedition leader, he clearly had difficulty dealing with and explaining her power and authority as a female chief.

Livingstone's contact with Manenko on his cross-continental journey centred around

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 276. Jeal has asserted that Livingstone "deplored" the small piece of cloth that covered her genitals, perhaps as a sign of his Victorian-evangelical prudery. However, in his journal Livingstone simply explained that the smaller than usual fashion choice was considered a statement of "elegance" among the Lunda. In an effort to make Livingstone seem prudish Jeal also hinted that he was frustrated by the delay in travel caused by the onset of Manenko's period (after they had begun the journey to Shinte's village). Yet, as Jeal failed to note, Livingstone expressed no anger at this in his journals and was "glad to see her move on clothed" after what amounted to only a morning delay. Moreover (as I will examine later in this section), Livingstone also offered a gendered interpretation of her nudity, explaining that naked travel by a chief was a Lunda custom that marked a leader's manliness, whether the chief was male or female. See Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 131. David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, pp. 39, 50.

her request to escort him and his Kololo crew to her uncle Shinte's village along the Zambesi (in the north-west corner of modern Zambia).<sup>71</sup> Livingstone would have preferred to take a different route through the Lunda territory and travel on his own time, but acquiesced to her proposal. The reason he provided in *Missionary Travels* was that he was intimidated by Manenko and dared not challenge her authority. Rather than admit that she was a powerful African woman who commanded respect as a chief, in the book he resorted to the Victorian gender stereotype of the scold or dominating woman to minimize the power struggle between them. For example, when confronted by her authority, he asserted: "We had heard a sample of what she could do with her tongue and as neither my men nor myself had much inclination to encounter a scolding from this black Mrs. Caudle, we made ready the packages" to prepare for the voyage.<sup>72</sup> In the book's narrative, Livingstone recounted that Manenko had promised to provide some men to carry the expedition's baggage to her uncle's village. Livingstone recorded that he was frustrated when these men were then delayed by a day. He then ordered his crew to load the baggage and move on without waiting for Manenko's men. But again, the chief intervened to thwart his attempt to leave or to lead the expedition. "Manenko would not be circumvented in this way;" he maintained, "she came forward with her people

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<sup>71</sup> In the large Lunda empire, Shinte - although more powerful than Manenko - was but a branch chief, serving the paramount leader based in the capital to the north-west.

<sup>72</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 279. Mrs. Caudle was the lead character and narrator of the fictional comedic work *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*. Written by Douglas Jerrold, the 'lectures' appeared in *Punch* magazine in 1845. Mrs. Caudle was portrayed as a domineering woman who constantly 'lectured' her weak-willed husband. The stories were published in book form and proved to be highly popular throughout the Victorian period. See Douglas Jerrold, *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, Prion Books: London, 2000, f.p. 1845.

... seized the luggage and declared that she would carry it in spite of me."<sup>73</sup> Again resorting to sexist humour, Livingstone claimed that he was intimidated but refused - at least at first - to kowtow to her rule:

My men succumbed sooner to this petticoat government than I felt inclined to do, and left me no power; and being unwilling to encounter her tongue, I was moving off to the canoes, when she gave me a kind explanation, and, with her hand on my shoulder, put on a motherly look, saying, 'Now, my little man, just do as the rest have done.' My feelings of annoyance of course vanished, and I went out to try and get some meat.<sup>74</sup>

In the *Missionary Travels* version of these events, Livingstone portrayed himself as browbeaten by a nearly naked, yet domineering female chief. Forsaken by his crew and defeated, all he could do to recapture a shred of his dignity was to go out and kill an animal. In sharp contrast, in his journal Livingstone recorded his power struggle with Manenko without explicit reference to her exaggerated gender characteristics. The framing of her strident 'petticoat' rule rather than her genuine power and authority were reserved for the book. In his journal, for example, Livingstone included no spoken dialogue with Manenko in his description of this event. He simply hinted that he was "not inclined to encounter her tongue" and that he could do nothing to counter her authority.<sup>75</sup> When preparing his journal -

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<sup>73</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 279.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> The passage in his journal, 9 January, 1854, reads: "I ordered the people to take the goods to the canoes, and that we should proceed up the river without her people. But Maneñiko [he included an accent over the n in his journal but not in the book] was not to be done so. She said she was afraid her uncle would be angry if she did not carry forward the tusks and goods of Sekeletu, and came boldly up and with her people and seized our luggage: she would carry it in spite of me. I was not inclined to counter her tongue and went off to the canoes, but she managed the people, so I could do nothing." See *Livingstone's African Journal*, pp. 42-43.

which was itself based on field notes - Livingstone may not have thoroughly recorded the particulars of his encounter with Manenko and may simply have added the explicitly gendered details when writing *Missionary Travels*. Or he, Murray or another editor may have seen a young, powerful female leader as an easy target for satire for the British reading public. This would have been more palatable than facing that fact that Africa could have produced a female chief with sanctioned power and real authority. After all, for these mid-Victorians, how could a manly white explorer and missionary hero truly be bullied by a young African woman? Was Manenko then simply a narrative tool in *Missionary Travels*? Or, did Livingstone actually respect this able young African chief?

Livingstone met a few female chiefs on his cross-continental journey, but none like Manenko had insisted on joining - if not leading - his crew across a difficult landscape. In another passage in *Missionary Travels*, as well as in an entry in his journal, Livingstone indicated that he was impressed with the qualities she ultimately brought to their journey to her uncle's village. On the march, he was struck with her fortitude and spirit. Her overall abilities as a leader and explorer surpassed his expectations of typical female behaviour, if not typical male behaviour. In the book's narrative, he praised her "pedestrian powers" and provided a gendered explanation for her nudity in travel.<sup>76</sup> As they journeyed, the rain, he wrote:

poured down incessantly, and on our Amazon went ... and at a pace that few of the men could keep up with. Being on ox-back, I kept pretty close to our leader, and asked why she did not clothe herself during the rain, and learned that it is not considered proper for a chief to appear effeminate. He or she

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<sup>76</sup> "Manenko's Pedestrian Powers," appears as a sub-heading in chapter 16 of *Missionary Travels*, p. 281.

must always wear the appearance of a robust youth, and bear vicissitudes without wincing. My men, in admiration of her pedestrian powers, every now and then remarked, 'Manenko is a soldier;' and thoroughly wet and cold, we were all glad when she proposed a halt to prepare our night's lodging on the banks of a stream."<sup>77</sup>

In this case, Livingstone's journal entry was quite similar to what he wrote in *Missionary Travels*.<sup>78</sup> Rarely, if ever, did he write of anybody - black, white, male or female - who had the ability or the desire to trek, no matter the weather, at a speed that surpassed his own. For Livingstone, Manenko fit the role set out for her by Lunda tradition with both vigour and confidence. Rather than retreat from her commitment to act manly in the post of chief, she appeared to relish the opportunity to demonstrate her abilities as a 'tribal' leader. Livingstone's commentary also revealed that clothing among the Lunda was considered a sign of femininity. But, nudity was not the only prerequisite for the manliness expected of Lunda chiefs. He believed that, for the Lunda, to be manly was to be youthful, full of energy and vitality, with the ability to persevere through a difficult situation. In his understanding of Lunda gender roles, these qualities were most closely identified in young Lunda males. In his view, Manenko - as a female - was transcending the behaviour normally expected of women in Lunda society. However, in labelling her an Amazon, Livingstone was resorting to a stereotypical Victorian way of describing a powerful, strong, domineering, if not manly,

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<sup>77</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 282.

<sup>78</sup> In his journal he wrote: "A heavy Scotch mist commenced after we left, but this amazon went on in her ball dress at such a rate few of the men could keep up with her. I asked her why she did not clothe during the rain and learned that it is not considered proper for a chief to be clad. He (or she) is expected to be as a lad, and able to endure all vicissitudes.... 'The woman is a soldier,' said our people in reference to her pedestrian powers." Notice, however, that Livingstone did not capitalize amazon in his journal, but still used the term. See David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. 44.



woman. Even though he exaggerated and mocked her 'feminine' characteristics, arguably he still attempted to understand and explain her gender and racial 'difference.' Despite the sexist language he used to describe her gender qualities - for Livingstone and likely for his readers too - Manenko was anything but a 'stick figure' African or stereotypical woman.

### 5.2(C) The African-Portuguese: A Fertile Inter-Racial Union in Colonial Angola

In the Livingstone historiography, the Portuguese in Africa are widely cast as his enemies, as "peddlers in human flesh" intent on perpetuating the slave trade in Africa.<sup>79</sup> During his Zambesi Expedition, he blamed the Portuguese in East Africa (together with slave trading Zanzibari-Arabs) for the decimation of African society in the region (centred in modern Mozambique). In addition to angry invectives against the brutality of slavery, his writings during the period are replete with references to the moral and physical degeneration of the Portuguese in East Africa. He believed the decadence of these colonizers had led to widespread political corruption, apathetic rule, and a clear decline in the level of public and private virtue. With few Portuguese women in Africa, inter-racial marriages were common, but in Livingstone's view, so was non-marital sex with slaves. As a result of such

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<sup>79</sup> William Monk, *Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*, p. 45. The Portuguese have a long history in Africa, establishing (or conquering) forts on both the West and East coasts of the continent in the late-fifteenth century. First interested in the gold and spice trades in addition to missionary work, they increasingly concentrated on the slave trade. A permanent settlement was established in Angola in 1576, essentially to supply slaves for shipment to Brazil. By the mid-eighteenth century, Luanda alone was exporting more than ten thousand slaves a year captured by Portuguese and Afro-European slave traders. See Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 198-202.

widespread 'debauchery,' he was led to estimate that syphilis among the Portuguese in East Africa was almost universal.<sup>80</sup> He even believed that some white members of his Zambesi crew had succumbed to this licentiousness, despite the expedition's mission to combat slavery (which also included an order forbidding sex with slave women).<sup>81</sup> In the aftermath of the Zambesi Expedition, Livingstone pledged to eradicate the Portuguese slave trade in East Africa, if not Portuguese rule itself in the area.<sup>82</sup>

However, in contrast to Portuguese colonial rule in East Africa, during his cross-continental journey, Livingstone praised the form of colonialism practised by the Portuguese in Angola. Luanda was a slave port - with slaves from Central Africa brought by Portuguese traders for export to Brazil. But, ironically, in Livingstone's view, the colony seemed like a place where the native population enjoyed rights and opportunities that had been withheld

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<sup>80</sup> In a journal entry dated May 1, 1860 he wrote that "every one has it. It is believed that there is not one Portuguese in the country without venereal disease, either hereditary or acquired." See David Livingstone, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 162.

<sup>81</sup> See Chapter Six for further analysis of Livingstone's disenchantment with the actions of his white crew on the Zambesi Expedition.

<sup>82</sup> Jeal argues that the Portuguese served as a convenient "public scapegoat" after the failure of the Zambesi Expedition. In his view, the problems that plagued the expedition were Livingstone's fault, in addition to factors such drought, famine and tribal warfare in the regions that Livingstone explored. For Jeal, the Portuguese slave trade exacerbated the situation, but was not responsible for the devastation in East Africa, centred primarily in the Shire River Highlands in northern Mozambique. Jeal is right in that the Portuguese were not solely responsible for the decimation in the area. Drought, famine and war caused the depopulation that Livingstone and his crew witnessed. However, Jeal fails to see a relation between Livingstone's condemnation of the Portuguese and his views on colonialism. In Livingstone's view, the Portuguese had failed as a colonial power in East Africa. Rather than working to eradicate the slave trade, they had based their presence in East Africa on the profits they could derive from slavery and war. See Jeal, p. 266.

from the Khoikhoi and Xhosa in South Africa. As I discussed briefly in Chapter Three, he asserted that there was a far greater degree of racial equality between Europeans and Africans in Angola, than there was in the Cape Colony. In a letter to Robert Moffat, for example, he detailed some of the differences between the British in South Africa and Portuguese rule in Angola. “The Portuguese are unquestionably more liberal to the blacks than the Cape people are,” he told his father-in-law; “they [Africans] sit at the tables of the richest men in the country. I met a canon of the church at Pungo Andongo [a town about 180 miles east-south-east of Luanda] who was quite black with short wooly hair. He had just returned from accompanying a prince of Congo to Portugal, and the king decorated him with one of the Orders for his devotedness.”<sup>83</sup> Elsewhere, he argued that under Portuguese rule in Angola, Africans and African-Portuguese were guaranteed more civil rights than natives in the Cape Colony. For example, he remarked that both blacks and ‘mulattoes’ were assured positions “as officers in the army and in the offices of trust in the civil administration.”<sup>84</sup> He also noted that, in contrast to the Cape, “complaints are always listened to, even when emanating from natives only.”<sup>85</sup> In Angola, he argued, this resulted in the removal of the guilty colonial official; whereas, “at the Cape flagrant injustice and scandalous conduct were rewarded by Sir Harry Smith by removal to a better magistracy.”<sup>86</sup> Thus, for Livingstone, in colonial

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<sup>83</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 12 September, 1855, *Livingstone's Family Letters*, vol. II, p. 262.

<sup>84</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. 207. The journal entry was from December, 1854.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

Angola ‘natives’ had a much better opportunity to learn the benefits brought by ‘civilizing’ society than they did in the Cape Colony.

Livingstone’s descriptions of Angolan society also challenged the fundamental tenets of polygenism. An Angolan deacon, honoured by the king of Portugal, clearly counteracted James Hunt’s declaration that Africans had failed to rise to positions of authority and honour in Western society. Moreover, Livingstone’s depiction of African-Portuguese ‘mixed-race’ or ‘mulatto’ communities in the Angolan interior served as biological and ethnographic testimony that inter-racial offspring could thrive intellectually and reproduce physically.<sup>87</sup> In commenting on the physical characteristics of these peoples, Livingstone remarked that both men and women “had a feminine delicacy of constitution” and were thus “not physically equal to the European Portuguese population.”<sup>88</sup> Despite this ‘gendered’ view of their physical traits, he did not see them as a people doomed to infertility and extinction, as polygenists would suggest of a mixed-race population. Nor did they need to be specifically manly in any way to earn his praise. In his view, these “half-casts... possess[ed] considerable ability.”<sup>89</sup> In fact, they evinced one of his main claims to ‘civilization:’ they were a literate society that prized the ability to read and write. For example, in passing through the Angolan territory of Ambaca (roughly 300 miles east of Luanda), he observed that its largely mixed-

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<sup>87</sup> Both ‘mixed-race’ or ‘mulatto’ have a derogatory legacy and neither is an entirely appropriate term to use to describe the Angolan-Portuguese or any other people. Yet, there is no obvious alternative to either of these terms (both continue to be used in academic and popular language).

<sup>88</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 442.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

race population was “famed for their fine writing [and was] remarkable for their love of learning of all sorts, knowledge of history, laws, &c &c.”<sup>90</sup> In speaking with members of the community - primarily through a translator - he found that “nearly all [men could] read and understand well what they read.”<sup>91</sup> Always keen to understand Africans in their own language, he was delighted to find that “some eagerly pick up a few words in English in exchange for those they give in their tongue.”<sup>92</sup>

The Angolan-Portuguese Livingstone encountered were not the first generation produced by the meeting of colonizer and colonized in the Portuguese colony. The Portuguese had been in Angola since the late-sixteenth century. During the seventeenth century, as part of a wave of Catholic missionary enterprise, monasteries were established in the interior. However, due to “warfare and internal dissension” the monasteries were later abandoned and the missionaries were replaced by Portuguese soldiers.<sup>93</sup> These soldiers, along with the traders they were sent to protect, took ‘concubines,’ a tradition followed by colonizing men throughout the colonial world. In places like Ambaca, the offspring of these relationships eventually became the dominant population. As Livingstone noted, some Ambaca-based mixed-race slave traders continued to travel the ‘supply’ routes established

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<sup>90</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. 215.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Schapera, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. 159, note 2.

by their ancestors.<sup>94</sup>

As part of his 'ethnological' account of Portugese-African race relations, Livingstone also scrutinized how 'mulatto' children were accepted in both mixed-race families and colonial society in general. In the village of Cassenge (just east of Ambaca), he discovered that many Portuguese traders who had come from Portugal as single men hoping to make some money and then return home, had instead settled in the village and married African women. In his view, these colonizers had distinguished themselves - in comparison with other European fathers of 'mixed-race' children - as honourable men, willing to take on the duties and difficulties that came with parenting a mixed-race child. For Livingstone, these were colonizers who had overcome the barriers of racial difference and were able to act as proud parents of inter-racial children. As he was pleased to remark in *Missionary Travels*, the character exhibited by these men was symptomatic of stronger race relations in Angola:

It was particularly gratifying to me, who had been familiar with the stupid prejudice against colour ... to view the liberality with which people of colour were treated by the Portuguese. Instances, so common in the south [the Cape Colony], in which half-caste children are abandoned, are here extremely rare. The coloured clerks of the merchants sit at the same table with their employers, without any embarrassment [on the part of the Portuguese merchants].... [N]owhere else in Africa is there such goodwill between Europeans and natives as here.<sup>95</sup>

Despite these comments, Livingstone realized that in this multi-racial society, the constraints of race and gender continued to work together to foster racial prejudice and inequality. In his view, even though Angola was a more equal and just society than the Cape,

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<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Livingstone's description of Cypriano de Santos in *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, pp. 123-126.

<sup>95</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, pp. 371-372.

colonizers necessarily brought notions racial superiority to Africa. As result, he reported that “superstitious ideas” about African racial inferiority continued to circulate in colonial Angola.<sup>96</sup> These ideas were in turn “imbibed” by mixed-race children.<sup>97</sup> Livingstone suspected that even if these children were born to African women, many soon learned to treat their mothers as inferiors. “It is painful to witness the pride which some [‘mixed-race’ children] manifest towards their black mothers,” he wrote.<sup>98</sup>

They look down upon them, though they must remember that this same black woman gave birth to and suckled their most illustrious highness. To the honour of the fathers, it can truly be said that they treat their children well, but it looks a little odd to see the children at a table, and the mother in the kitchen as cook. Pity they are not all furnished with more knowledge of what is good and true and heavenly.<sup>99</sup>

Thus for Livingstone, a sense of racial difference compounded by complicated feelings of racial superiority/inferiority (and sexism) created disturbing hierarchies within the Angolan-Portuguese nuclear family. Despite a comparatively positive view of Africans and ‘mulattoes’ in colonial Angola, mixed-race families - and African women in particular - were forced to confront a legacy of slavery and ‘prejudice against colour.’ Polygenists, if not some monogenists, argued that this legacy could never be overcome, that racial divisions and hostilities were historically inevitable. Livingstone’s remarks throughout this chapter demonstrate that he believed notions like these were unfounded; inter-racial infertility was

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<sup>96</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s African Journal*, vol. I, p. 171.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

a myth easily disproved, while 'imbibed' racial prejudice could be overcome through time. In creating a comparatively more just society for its native and mixed-race populations than the Cape Colony, Livingstone believed the Portuguese in Angola had taken important steps to overcome a legacy of slavery and racial intolerance. An African deacon and proud, literate communities gave him faith that colonialism could work to provide Africans with the tools of 'civilization.' Yet, he believed that education was still needed to build tolerance and understanding so that African mothers could be seen as racially equal members of the family. Livingstone was confident that in embracing their duties as fathers of inter-racial children, Portuguese men had made a key step in building strong mixed-race families. Ironically, he had 'sacrificed' his own family life and escaped his own domestic 'duties' to combat racial stereotypes and intolerance.

#### 5.2(D) The Makololo: The Manliness of Livingstone's Greatest Travelling Companions

In the Livingstone historiography, the Africans he is most closely associated with are Susi and Chuma who were with him when he died in 1873 and were part of the group that carried his body to the East coast of Africa, to be shipped back to England. (In Chapter Seven I examine how they were important figures in the development of the Livingstone 'myth' after his death). However, the people with whom he travelled the greatest distance and who accompanied him on his most celebrated explorative triumphs were members of the Kololo nation. His first meeting with them in 1851 (see Chapter Two) revealed that they were a 'melting pot' of different ethnic groups, including Tswana and Sotho. For



Livingstone, this ethnic diversity made the Kololo - and Kololo males in particular - difficult to characterize physically.<sup>100</sup> His writings reveal that he made few discernable remarks about the physical characteristics of the Kololo in general or the men he travelled with on his cross-continental journey. His decision to refrain from making essentialist judgements about the physical traits of an African 'tribe' challenged Victorian ethnological practice. Moreover, his apparent resolution not to describe the physical characteristics of his Kololo crew contested the common ethnological strategy followed by other explorers. Burton, for instance, provided detailed (and often derogatory) physical descriptions of the African porters he employed on his journey to Lake Tanganyika in *The Lake Region of Central Africa*.

In his writings, Livingstone also challenged ethnological convention in the ways he chose to describe his Kololo companions. Explorers of Africa were rarely willing to concede that their African crews could demonstrate a laudable - or any other - form of manliness. As

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<sup>100</sup> Although he seldom wrote about Kololo women, the majority of his observations about the physical characteristics of the Kololo were confined to them. Apparently, he found them easier to characterize physically than Kololo men. Yet, take note that he did not record these remarks until writing *A Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*. He was thus not quick to come to his generalizations about the femininity of Kololo women. In the book, he declared that "Makololo women are vastly superior to any we have seen. They are of a light warm brown complexion, have pleasant countenances, and are remarkably quick of apprehension. They dress neatly, wearing a quilt and mantle, and have many ornaments." Two pages later he added that they "have soft, small, delicate hands and feet; their foreheads are well shaped and of a good size; the nose not disagreeably flat, though the alae are full; the mouth, chin, teeth, eyes, and general form are beautiful, and, contrasted with the West- Coast negro, quite ladylike." Because he believed their physical characteristics paralleled those of middle class British 'ladies,' he hoped that they could devote their 'delicate' hands and strong minds to similar tasks. He wrote that "unlike their fairer [paler] and more fortunate sisters in Europe, they have neither sewing nor other needle work, nor pianoforte practice, to occupy their fingers, nor reading to occupy their minds." See David and Charles Livingstone, *A Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, pp. 283, 285-286.

I illustrated in the previous chapter, explorer-ethnologist Winwood Reade portrayed the different West African men he travelled with and encountered on his journey as physically and behaviourally effeminate. This is not to say that all explorers saw all the African men under their command as more ‘feminine’ than ‘masculine.’ Burton, for example, often cast his crew members as childish and lacking any behaviour traits that he might judge as manly, but rarely as specifically effeminate. Livingstone, on the other hand, repeatedly pronounced that Kololo men had a manly character. This case study will explore some of the complex ways in which Livingstone represented the gender qualities of the Kololo. He did not always see the actions and morality of the Kololo as exemplary or praiseworthy. Livingstone sometimes also denounced the ‘cowardice’ of members of his crew and of other Kololo men – which served as criticism of their masculinity. However, this simply demonstrates that he had clear ideas about what he considered to be manly gender behaviour and what he thought was “unbecoming” conduct in men.

As his writings indicate, Livingstone clearly had “very great affection” for the Kololo, whom he declared were “by far the most intelligent and enterprising tribe I have met with” in Africa.<sup>101</sup> When he first encountered the Kololo in 1851, they were led by Sebituane, a Sotho who had led his people out of Southern Africa almost thirty years earlier in the wake of the *mfecane* and the ‘scattering’ of various Sotho-Tswana groups in Southern Africa.<sup>102</sup> As Livingstone recounts in detail in *Missionary Travels*, under Sebituane the Kololo had

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<sup>101</sup> David Livingstone to the Secretaries of the Oxford and Cambridge Mission, 29 November, 1860, National Library of Scotland, Ms.10779 and David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, p. 282.

<sup>102</sup> The Kololo were named after one of Sebituane’s wives.

marched from their original home in the Orange Free State through (what is now) Botswana, while attempting to conquer the tribes in their path. They later settled on the verdant Batoka plateau (north of the Zambesi in modern Zambia), but were later forced from the region by the fierce Ndebele, the Zulus led by Mzilikazi who had also moved north after the *mfecane*.<sup>103</sup> In Livingstone's view, Sebituane and the Kololo had shown great courage and determination in the long, circuitous journey that eventually led them to a settlement on the Chobe river, an area west of Victoria Falls. When Livingstone arrived in Linyanti in 1851, the Kololo had re-conquered the Batoka plateau and its peoples (although they deemed it too difficult to re-settle in the area because of the Ndebele threat) as well as the Barotse (or Lozi) Kingdom to the north. Many of these peoples (as well as members of previously conquered groups) were integrated into the Kololo 'tribe.' As a result, the 'Kololo' that Livingstone praised were actually an amalgam of different African ethnic groups.

Livingstone's early relationship with the Kololo centred around Sebituane, a man he deemed "the best specimen of native chief I had ever met."<sup>104</sup> In *Missionary Travels*, he dedicated several pages of the book to recounting the Kololo leader's personal history and life experience, which had been unknown outside of Africa. Livingstone likely saw something of his own adventuresome spirit and fearless determination in Sebituane's heroic

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<sup>103</sup> Mzilikazi had been a military commander under Shaka, the Zulu King, but he revolted against his leader in 1823. He then marched to Mozambique and then west into the southern Transvaal. After their battles with the Kololo, Mzilikazi and his followers (numbering 15,000 to 20,000), travelled east into what is now southwestern Zimbabwe, where he settled Matabeleland. Around the time of Sechele's battle with the Boers, Mzilikazi organized a militaristic system that was able to repel repeated Boer attacks. This forced the Transvaal Boers to agree to a peace deal with him in 1852.

<sup>104</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 90.

struggle to establish a new homeland for his devoted followers. Casting him as a fearless fighter, masterful tactician and wise leader, he provided a detailed description of the battle-filled life and career of his “bosom friend.”<sup>105</sup> For Livingstone, Sebituane seemed to be an archetype of the fiercely combative manliness that he had admired in the Xhosa who combatted British colonial rule in the Cape Colony and colonial frontier. His highest praise came for Sebituane’s bravery in battle and refusal to accept cowardice from his men. In his view, Sebituane “was the greatest warrior ever heard beyond the [Cape] Colony, for, unlike Mosilikatse, Dingane, and others, he always led his men into battle himself .... So fleet of foot was he, that all his people knew there was no escape for the coward, as any such would be cut down without mercy.”<sup>106</sup> As a result, Livingstone believed that during their years in search of a homeland, the Kololo nation was comprised of only the most courageous of men, willing to give their lives to their leader. Years after Sebituane’s death, he continued to hail the manliness of these men. In *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries* (1865), Livingstone recalled how “[n]one but brave and strong men remained long with Sebituane, his stern discipline soon eradicated cowardice from his army.”<sup>107</sup> In his view, the men who had long fought by their leader’s side “had many manly virtues.”<sup>108</sup> In addition to their fortitude in battle, “they were truthful [and] they never stole, excepting in what they

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<sup>105</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s African Journal*, vol. II, p. 300.

<sup>106</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p.84. Dingane had assassinated his half-brother Shaka in 1828 and proclaimed himself King of the Zulu nation.

<sup>107</sup> David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, p. 282.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

considered the honourable way of lifting cattle in fair fight.”<sup>109</sup>

As he sensitively revealed in *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone was not able to enjoy a long relationship with the man he grew so quickly to revere. During Livingstone’s first visit to Linyanti in 1851 (with Oswell), Sebituane developed a chest ailment and died soon after. The leadership of the Kololo and their subject tribes then devolved to Sekeletu, Sebituane’s eighteen year old son.<sup>110</sup> Under this inexperienced leader, Livingstone believed the Kololo lost something of the honourable character brought by their founder. In his view, the manliness of the younger generation of Kololo men had not been tested adequately through a difficult journey or a hard-fought battle. Their fathers had fought many battles against the Ndebele, for example, but he believed they seemed intimidated and afraid of Mzilikazi and his warriors. Livingstone also complained that since their arrival in their new homeland, many of the young Kololo men had acquired the “vices” of the recently conquered Lozi and Batoka peoples.<sup>111</sup> However, Livingstone’s explorative goals depended on Sekeletu’s support and despite his initial concerns about their character, he developed close

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Livingstone described Sekeletu as “about five feet seven in height, and neither so goodlooking, nor of so much ability, as his father was...” In *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone recounted that leadership of the Kololo first passed to Sebituane’s daughter Ma-mochisane, as her father had wished. However, Kololo conceptions of masculinity and femininity led her to pass the leadership to her brother. According to Livingstone, she was not comfortable with keeping a man (who were considered ‘superior’ in Kololo society) as husband who would be referred to as her “wife” because of her supreme leadership position. See *Missionary Travels*, p. 179.

<sup>111</sup> David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, p. 282.

ties with the Kololo which lasted for over a decade.<sup>112</sup> Without adequate funding of his own, the Kololo under Sekeletu acted as the ‘sponsors’ of Livingstone’s 1853-1856 cross-continental trek, assuming the role the RGS often took in financing British expeditions in Africa. Moreover, without the group of hardworking and dedicated Kololo porters that Sekeletu provided, Livingstone would not have achieved such great success on the journey. Ironically, of the group of twenty-seven that took part in the initial return trek between Linyanti and Luanda, only two of the men were considered ‘true’ Kololo.<sup>113</sup> The rest of Livingstone’s crew was composed of men selected from the Lozi, Batoka and other groups subjugated by the Kololo.

In many ways, the Kololo set a standard of hard work, vigour and dedication during this journey that was difficult for other men - whether European or African - under his command to match. Livingstone was clearly impressed with the level of manliness exhibited by the initial group of 27 that travelled to the west and the larger contingent of Kololo that completed the expedition east after Livingstone’s return to Linyanti. As with many of his relationships with men, he judged the success of his bond with the Kololo on the basis of his respect for the manliness they exhibited in the line of ‘duty.’ As a result, Livingstone and

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<sup>112</sup> One of Livingstone’s goals in undertaking his journey to the West coast was to provide the Kololo with a trade link to the many markets in Luanda. He hoped this would open trade between Central Africa and European markets. Sekeletu thus provided porters not just to help Livingstone, but also to learn the route to the coast and to carry trade goods, such as ivory, to and from Luanda.

<sup>113</sup> “I was then entirely dependent on my twenty-seven men, whom I might name Zambesians, for there were two Makololo only, while the rest consisted of Barotse, Batoka, Bashubia, and two of the Ambōnda.” Despite this remark, Livingstone continued to call this group the “Makololo.” See David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 228 and *Livingstone’s African Journal*, vol. I, p. 5, n.1, p. 36, n.1.

the Kololo were ultimately able to transcend ingrained cultural diversities to construct a common language and a cooperative understanding of the type of gendered behaviour they expected from one another as men. Even as they prepared for their journey together, they realized they shared common ground in their respective conceptions of what constituted manly (or effeminate) male behaviour. For example, on their initial trek together to the northern reaches of Kolololand, Livingstone remarked that he and the Kololo were in agreement that the mode of transportation chosen by a Portuguese explorer they had encountered on the journey was decidedly effeminate. Antonio Francisco Ferreira da Silva Porto (1817-1890), Portugal's foremost African explorer of the period, had stopped among the Kololo in 1853 during his own attempted crossing of Africa. (He had undertaken the journey for trade purposes, rather than specifically explorative goals). According to Livingstone - rather than test his own stamina and fortitude through a more manly form of travel - da Silva Porto's favoured method of transportation was to travel in a hammock carried by his slaves.<sup>114</sup> "Ferra has 20 slaves with him [and] he is carried by them in a

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<sup>114</sup> In over three decades of exploration in African, Livingstone used a number of different methods of transportation. On his early journeys across the Cape Colony and Kalahari, he was carried by an ox-pulled wagon. On his cross-continent journey, he travelled by a combination of ox, horse, donkey, canoe and foot. His later journeys, particularly his search for the source of the Nile, were primarily on foot. Only when he developed painful and debilitating foot ulcers late in life was Livingstone carried by his companions in a makeshift hammock. However, rather than face the indignity of travelling in this method, he chose to take several months to recuperate. In comparison, Burton, for example, was less hesitant about being transported in a hammock by members of his crew. During his 1857-1859 expedition in search of the Nile's source, malaria and other afflictions drove Burton to spend much of his travelling-time in a hammock or draped over a donkey which he could barely control. Reading this in *Lake Regions of Central Africa* might have given Livingstone great pleasure. It would have fed his (considerable) ego to discover that his rival used this 'effeminate' mode of travel, while he had endured countless bouts of malaria and other crippling illnesses without (admitting to) 'debasing' himself in this manner.

swinging cot attached to a thick pole,” Livingstone noted.<sup>115</sup> Sharing the Kololo’s disdain for such behaviour (and revealing his own thoughts on the matter), Livingstone recorded: “The natives despise this effeminacy.”<sup>116</sup>

The hammock incident quickly provided Livingstone and his travelling companions with a gendered basis of what to expect from one another on their long, history-making trek across Africa. In maligning da Silva Porto’s manliness (in apparent agreement with the Kololo), Livingstone aligned himself with Africans against a European on the important issue of masculinity. In recording the Kololo statement about da Silva Porto’s effeminacy, Livingstone revealed that he firmly believed these Africans held established conceptions of gender difference as well as a language in which to express these ideas. Moreover, he recognized that their perceptions of what was ‘manly’ or ‘feminine’ were sometimes analogous to his own understanding of ‘proper’ male and female behaviour. As they journeyed together, the ‘effeminate’ example provided by the Portuguese explorer united Livingstone and his male crew on the basis of a gender construct. Da Silva Porto’s behaviour served as a gauge to measure their own levels of manliness. It helped them establish that on their journey west, each man - white leader and black crew - would be pushed to demonstrate their own vigour, perseverance and fortitude in order to avoid the

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<sup>115</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s Private Journals*, p. 179.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. In *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone mentioned meeting a trader “who closely resembled a real Portuguese” in Linyanti in 1853, without referring to da Silva Porto by name. In the book, he included the detail that the Portuguese trader “was carried in a hammock, slung between two poles.” However, he excised the Kololo comment about da Silva Porto’s (lack of) manliness. Instead, Livingstone wrote that “the Makololo named him the ‘Father of the Bag’” because of his appearance in the hammock. See *Missionary Travels*, pp. 180-181.



charge of effeminacy.

On the cross-continental journey, the Kololo seemed to relish the opportunity to push themselves to the limits of physical and mental endurance in an effort to meet the expedition's goals. As a result, throughout their time together, Livingstone heaped praise on his Kololo crew, lauding their work ethic, endurance and sense of morality. For example, soon after leaving Luanda for the return voyage east, he compared the men under his leadership to Jason's Argonauts. Writing Edmund Gabriel, he expressed sympathy for the "the men" because their feet had become "soft" during their long layover in Luanda.<sup>117</sup> (The men did not wear shoes and working as paid labourers unloading coal from ships on the Luanda docks during their layover apparently softened their feet). "Even Mashawana - who in physical strength is a match for any two of the party - is limping," he remarked.<sup>118</sup> Many of the men had also been struck by malaria and other illnesses that beset the party. Yet, in his view, the Kololo persevered with great spirit and stamina, never complaining about what ailed them. Livingstone believed they were aware that they were on a path-breaking explorative journey and that their feat of manliness would be venerated when they reached home. "They have been trying to celebrate their own glories and daring in songs," he wrote,

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<sup>117</sup> David Livingstone to Edmund Gabriel, 1 October, 1854, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 17080.

<sup>118</sup> This description of Mashawana comes from two separate sources. "Even Mashawana is limping" comes from David Livingstone to Edmund Gabriel, 1 October, 1854, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 17080. The passage "who in physical strength is a match for any two of the party" is taken from *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. 75. Mashawana was a member of the Lozi people subject to the Kololo. He served as the head "boatman" on the canoe journeys during the expedition. See *Livingstone's Private Journals*, p. 225, n. 3 and *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. I, p. 11, n. 1 for further information on Mashawana.

“and these are intended to be sung when they reach home.”<sup>119</sup> Proud that these men had shown their ability to continually surmount the challenges in their path, he concluded: “The Argonauts were nothing to them.”<sup>120</sup>

By their return to Linyanti, he seemed convinced that in persevering throughout the long journey his crew had recaptured the manly character of their forefathers who had journeyed alongside Sebituane. He also believed his crew had also developed a strong moral consciousness. He was pleased they had told him that they believed Sekeletu had been wrong to raid other tribes, kill potential rivals and engage in the slave trade (on a limited basis).<sup>121</sup> Although none of the Kololo demonstrated an interest in converting to Christianity, he was also happy that they expressed an interest in learning to read. As such, Livingstone was confident that he had been an important influence on their character. By exposing them

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<sup>119</sup> David Livingstone to Edmund Gabriel, 1 October, 1854, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 17080.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. If his Kololo companions were like Argonauts, did Livingstone imagine himself as a modern-day Jason in Africa? As his reference to Proclus demonstrated, Livingstone was familiar with Greek writings and his knowledge of Greek philosophy and mythology served him throughout his years in Africa. His high praise for the character of the Kololo here also functioned to explicitly link his actions with Jason’s intrepid example. The parallels in their respective stories were clear and Livingstone seemed to relish the opportunity to cast his mission in an heroic, if not mythological, vein. In this great test of manliness, he and his loyal companions were seeking a trade route that would bring civilization to Africa, rather than the Golden Fleece. Like Jason’s daunting venture, Livingstone’s goal of crossing the continent was thought to be impracticable, if not impossible, for an ordinary human. Though their perseverance, leadership and the help of their followers, both completed their journeys and demonstrated their ability to overcome great dangers and difficulties. Perhaps, Livingstone needed the inspiration provided by a mythological character and crew to push himself through his path breaking journey?

<sup>121</sup> David Livingstone to Edmund Gabriel, 12 August, 1855, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 17080.

to different cultures and ideas on the journey, he paternalistically believed they were beginning to conform to his conception of 'civilization.' Although he was not specific about what impact these men would have amongst the larger Kololo population, he seemed to hope that after their great journey, they might gain influence in their community, leading to a change in the Kololo political structure.

After Livingstone's return to Linyanti, Sekeletu provided him with a much larger crew for the journey east along the Zambesi towards the coast. This crew - again a mixture of Kololo and their subjects - also elicited Livingstone's praise. The designated African 'headman' for this leg of the journey was a Sekwebu, a man whose travelling experience seemed to dictate that he was well suited to this leadership role. As Livingstone wrote: "Sekwebu had been captured by the Matabele when a little boy, and the tribe in which he was captive had migrated to the country near Tete: he had travelled along both banks of the Zambesi several times, and was intimately acquainted with the dialects spoken there."<sup>122</sup> Sekwebu proved to be one of Livingstone's favourite travelling companions, as well as a great explorer in his own right. Livingstone clearly recognized the Kololo man's strengths as a translator, negotiator and ethnographer in his own right. In many ways, Sekwebu was a fellow explorer who shared Livingstone's adventurous curiosity and yearning for

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<sup>122</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 513. It is curious to note that if Sekwebu had travelled the banks of the Zambesi he would have confronted the Cabora Bassa rapids. Thus, he may have warned Livingstone about the difficulties they posed to his plan for the Zambesi. After their visit to the Batoka plateau (1855), Sekwebu may, in fact, have suggested that they bypass the Zambesi at the point of the rapids because of the difficulties posed by the terrain. Despite these possibilities, Livingstone claimed to be surprised about the nature of the rapids when he first reached them during the Zambesi expedition in 1858.

knowledge. And, in *Missionary Travels*, there are a number of passages that convey a sense of the pivotal role he played in acting as a liaison between Livingstone and the chiefs they encountered along their route. His diplomacy with village headmen, knowledge of disparate tribal customs and keen intellect proved integral to the expedition's ability to forge peaceful links with potentially hostile tribes, thus guaranteeing passage across their lands. In the closing pages of the book, Livingstone explicitly singled-out Sekwebu's key contribution to the success of the final leg of the expedition. In the process, he lauded his Kololo headman in terms he rarely directed at other men or women, whether African or European: "He was very intelligent, and had been of the greatest service to me; indeed, but for his good sense, tact, and command of the language of the tribes through which we passed, I believed we should scarcely have succeeded in reaching the coast."<sup>123</sup>

For Livingstone, Sekwebu exemplified the African capacity for 'civilization.' In addition to his ability to manfully persevere as an explorer, he was a man who had the character and the intelligence to transcend African 'backwardness.' To satiate Sekwebu's curiosity about the world and introduce him to the 'wonders' of 'civilization,' Livingstone extended an offer to bring him back to Britain when they completed the expedition - an offer his headman accepted.<sup>124</sup> "I thought it would be beneficial for him to see the effects of

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 681. Livingstone noted that Sekwebu learned to read English in less than a month.

<sup>124</sup> Other explorers and travellers, it should be noted, brought Africans back to Britain during the Victorian period. Livingstone's decision may have been inspired by William Cotton Oswell. After his journeys with Livingstone (1849-1852), Oswell bought a ticket to Britain for his servant, former slave William John Thomas. Oswell claimed that this was to reward Thomas - who had asked to live in Britain - for his good service. But, Oswell had no plans to keep Thomas with him, either to provide an education for the man or to continue to

civilization, and report them to his countrymen; I wished also to make some return for his good services,” Livingstone asserted in a matter-of-fact manner.<sup>125</sup> However, Sekwebu died on the journey to Britain. According to Livingstone, he was driven insane by the experience of ocean travel. Although he could swim and was an experienced canoe traveller, the open sea and high waves were seemingly too much for him to endure. The final page of *Missionary Travels* details how, at Mauritius, Sekwebu committed suicide after he leapt off the ship and pulled himself under water by the anchor chain.<sup>126</sup> Other than his published

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employ him as a servant. Instead, Thomas went to work, driving a horse-drawn coach for Oswell’s country parson brother. He was later employed as the servant of an officer in the Rifle Brigade during the Crimean War. After the war, he worked as a butler and died in this post in 1864. This type of ‘career trajectory’ was common among the Africans brought to Britain by British travellers. While docked at the Cape Verde Islands in 1867, diplomat/poet/explorer Wilfred Scawen Blunt bought ten-year old Pompey from his mother. Blunt did not intend to give the boy an education, declaring “I would not allow him to be taught his letters....” Pompey learned to speak both English and Spanish on his own and became the majordomo of the Blunt household. He also accompanied Blunt and his explorer-wife Lady Anne on their treks across the Arabian desert. For more on Thomas, see Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 65. For Blunt and Pompey, see Elizabeth Longford, *A Pilgrimage of Passion: The Life of Wilfred Scawen Blunt*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson: London, 1979, p. 66.

<sup>125</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 681. It is unclear exactly what Livingstone planned for Sekwebu in Britain. He likely would have stayed with Livingstone during his sojourn in Britain and accompanied the explorer as he toured Britain publicizing his plans for Africa. Sekwebu would also have been introduced to many of the political and social elites whom Livingstone himself first encountered during this period. All of this, presumably would have given Sekwebu a taste of a another cultural and intellectual world, categorically different from the traditions he knew. Returning to Africa with Livingstone, he might have joined the Zambesi expedition, continuing in his role as a diplomat, translator and explorer.

<sup>126</sup> Livingstone recounts that Sekwebu had been unnerved by the high waves as they travelled in a small boat to board a larger vessel off the shore at Quelimane. On the month long journey to Mauritius, Sekwebu regained his composure and learned to read English. However, when they first reached Mauritius and commenced de-boarding, he threatened to throw himself into the water. Livingstone attempted to calm his fears and convinced some

explanation of these events, Livingstone appears to have said little about Sekwebu's death. His biographers have ignored Sekwebu other than mentioning his suicide. Yet, it is clear that he symbolized Livingstone's belief in the inherent ability of Africans to prove that they could be just as intelligent, 'civilized' and manly (if male) as his compatriots.

When Livingstone returned to Africa in 1858 to lead the Zambesi Expedition, he readily employed the Kololo again. As he neared the end of his cross-continental journey, he made the decision to leave most of the Kololo at Tete (in modern Mozambique) and promised to accompany them back to Kolololand when he returned to Africa. These men (and the women they had married during Livingstone's absence), proved to be an integral part of his crew during the Zambesi Expedition.<sup>127</sup> Despite the failures associated with the expedition, he continued to be gratified by their contribution to his exploratory goals and was often more pleased with their performance than with the actions of his fellow-countrymen. While he condemned the effort of some of the white members of his 'official' crew, he believed that the Kololo had again demonstrated that they had "a great deal of soldier in their character."<sup>128</sup> After some of the missionaries, including Waller, complained that the Kololo

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of the ship officers not to put him in irons. Later the same day, Sekwebu attempted to spear one of the crew and then leapt overboard. His body was not found. See *Missionary Travels*, pp. 682-683.

<sup>127</sup> In meeting the Kololo at Tete in September 1858, Livingstone could not hold back his tears when he realized that they expected to see Sekwebu. In his journal, he wrote: "Taking the boat I went ashore and was at once surrounded by my faithful Makololo.... It is not often I have shed a tear, but they [the tears] came in spite of me, and I said, "I am glad to meet you, but there is no Sekwebu.'" David Livingstone, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 42.

<sup>128</sup> David Livingstone to the Secretaries of the Oxford and Cambridge Mission, 29 November, 1860, National Library of Scotland, Ms.10779.

were causing havoc at a newly established mission station, Livingstone leapt to their defence. “I must say that my judgement may be warped by the very great affection I bear to the Makololo,” he remarked. “They are a jolly rollicking set of fellows [who have repeatedly shown that they are] “respectful and intelligent.”<sup>129</sup> In his view, the ‘Makololo’ had repeatedly earned the right to be called manly. In essence, they became a yardstick by which he measured the work ethic, the mettle, and the explorative spirit of other men, both black and white, whom he worked with in Africa.

In 1860, as he had pledged - but later than he had planned - Livingstone trekked with some of the Kololo back to Kolololand.<sup>130</sup> When they reached the area, Livingstone and his companions found a land decimated by malaria and a chief ill with a skin disease. Livingstone believed that to avoid decimation from malaria, the Kololo would have to move from their lowland home to the highlands of the Batoka Plateau. However, like his father, Sekeletu was wary of living in an area in which the Ndebele would prove to be a constant threat. After discussions between Livingstone and Sekeletu, it was agreed that the inhabitants of the Kolololand town of Sesheke were to be moved to the Plateau as an experiment. Livingstone urged Sekeletu to join these settlers, but claimed the chief admitted that “cowardice alone kept him in the lowlands.”<sup>131</sup> Interestingly, in a letter, Sekeletu argued that it was not Livingstone, but his absent wife Mary who was integral to the Kololo plan to

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> According to Jeal, “he did so with roughly sixty of the original 114.” However, half of the sixty decided to return to the Tete area not long into the journey. See Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 230.

<sup>131</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 261.

move back to the Plateau. Robert Moffat had an amicable relationship with Mzilikazi - chief of the Ndebele - and planned to establish a mission station among them. Because Mary was Moffat's blood relative, Sekeletu believed she would ensure the Kololo's safety from the Ndebele, if they moved to the Plateau. The Kololo chief was clearly disappointed to find out that she had returned Britain, rather than accompany Livingstone on his journey.<sup>132</sup>

After Livingstone left Kolololand to return to the Zambesi expedition, Sekeletu 'ignored' his advice and decided that the Kololo would remain in their lowland homeland. By 1863, Sekeletu had died (of the skin disease that had long ailed him). Two years later, the Kololo that remained were routed by the Lozi, a people Sebituane had conquered years earlier. The short-lived dynasty that Sebituane had established - and Livingstone had praised - had been overthrown. For Livingstone, it was the (apparently self-admitted) 'cowardice' of Sekeletu that was ultimately responsible for the destruction of the Kololo. Although he praised Sekeletu's generosity, Livingstone ultimately judged the Kololo chief by the level of manliness he displayed in his leadership role. Without his father's vision or bravery,

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<sup>132</sup> In a letter to Lord Clarendon (translated by Livingstone) Sekeletu wrote: "Had MaRobert [Mary Livingstone] come, then I should have rejoiced, because Mosilikatse would let her alone, and us, she being a child of his friend Moshete [Moffat]." He also added that he hoped Britain would send settlers to the Batoka region, as a buffer against the Ndebele. Livingstone himself made similar arguments in a letter, dated 6 September, 1860, to Lord Russell. However, he proffered a strange and blatant lie concerning Mary's involvement in this scheme. He claimed that she had "travelled overland a thousand miles from the Cape to join me here [in Kolololand], but hearing that it was impossible for us to ascend [the Zambesi] in the small and weak steamer at our command, she returned at great expense to Cape Town." He maintained that this was the reason Sekeletu now wanted British settlers sent to the region. Livingstone may also have influenced the contents of Sekeletu's letter in an effort to get the British directly involved in his plan to establish a small colony on the Batoka Plateau. For Sekeletu and Livingstone's letters, see *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, pp. 387-396.



unable to cope with illness or address the need for change, Sekeletu, in Livingstone's mind, had failed to live up to the manliness of the 'Makololo.'<sup>133</sup>

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When James Hunt published "On the Negro's Place in Nature" as a pamphlet (1863), he dedicated the article to his close friend Richard Burton. Hunt told Burton (and the readers of the pamphlet) that he was worthy of the dedication "because you are one of the few men living who is capable of judging as to the exact value of the general deductions contained in the paper."<sup>134</sup> In what amounted to a clear affront against Livingstone - and his extensive observational experience as an African explorer - Hunt added: "We have had plenty of African travellers, but there is perhaps no other man living who, by previous education and

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<sup>133</sup> In "As Men are Everywhere Else," Max Gluckman declared that Livingstone "let down the Makololo." In his view, Livingstone's obsession with exploration eventually drove him away from the pledges he had made to Sebituane and later to Sekeletu. Gluckman argued that Livingstone did not fulfill his promise to lead a mission among the Kololo and "failed to bring them their desired peace and protection." Tim Jeal, who cast the Kololo in a much darker light than Gluckman, was also critical of Livingstone's treatment of these peoples. In his view, Livingstone "had used" Sekeletu and the Kololo for his own gain. Subsequently, left waiting for Livingstone's promises to come to fruition, the Kololo, he asserted, had become hostile to other Europeans, whether traders or missionaries. Stuck in Linyanti, fearful of the Ndebele, they had gone into decline and were easily conquered by the Lozi. Although he hinted at it, Jeal argued "[i]t would be too much to suggest that Livingstone was responsible" for their destruction. Yet, he maintained that Sekeletu could still have expected Livingstone's aid in helping the Kololo move "to a healthier area without danger" from the Lozi or Ndebele. See Gluckman, p. 70. Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>134</sup> The dedication did not appear in the version of the paper published in the first volume of *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society*. It appears only in the pamphlet version of the article, published separately by the Society. See, p. vi.

study, is better able than yourself to paint the Negro and other African race as they are, regardless of what we may consider should be their state.”<sup>135</sup> Hunt knew that Livingstone had spent twenty years in Africa and had long offered ethnological judgements about the peoples of Africa. Yet it is clear that he believed Livingstone was a biased observer whose opinions about Africa and its peoples were flawed because of the missionary-explorer’s evangelical and humanitarian principles. Although Livingstone had seen more of Africa than any other European, Hunt cast Burton - his close friend and Anthropological Society ally - as the consummate ethnological voice of among African explorers. For the Society President, Burton was as an impartial and broad-minded ‘judge’ of African mental, physical and social characteristics, with a rare ability to see beyond ‘orthodox’ conceptions of Africans.

Both Livingstone and Burton (and the other members of the Anthropological Society of London) had noticeable ‘agendas’ in the way they represented Africans. Apart from his missionary work and explorative goals, Livingstone had a keen desire to champion the inherent ‘sameness’ of Britons and Africans. As this chapter demonstrates, during the 1853-1857 period this involved asserting that Africans had the intellectual and moral ability to become as ‘civilized’ as the British, that Africans deserved specifically ‘human’ rights, that inter-racial infertility was a fallacy, and that - whatever their physical characteristics - African men (and some women) could be as manly as (if not more manly than) Britons. Burton and the Anthropological Society wholly rejected ideas like these in the racial theory they proffered during the period examined in this and the previous chapter (1850-1864). For

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<sup>135</sup> Hunt, *On the Negro's Place in Nature*, p. vii.

these men, any type of affinity, equality or sameness between whites and blacks was 'scientifically' and ethnologically impossible, if not morally abhorrent. Ironically, ethnologists like Burton, Hunt and Knox saw themselves as leaders of a vanguard of new 'forward looking' racial thinking. In many ways, their racial theories did anticipate the virulent racism of the late-nineteenth century that accompanied the 'scramble for' and colonization of Africa. However, with the benefit of historical hindsight it is evident that the ideas about Africans put forth by Burton and the Anthropological Society were the result of their hatred of Africans, their belief in 'white' racial superiority and their use of faulty 'science.' In their world, Africans were not properly human, did not merit any kind of human rights, were best suited to forced labour and - if they were male - were certainly not physically, mentally or morally manly.

Was Livingstone thus ahead of his time in asserting that 'blacks' were just as manly and intelligent as 'whites' and that Africans - as human beings - deserved basic civil rights? To an extent he was something of a path breaker in espousing these principles, although British abolitionists - influenced by Enlightenment theories about 'the rights of man' - had championed similar ideas in a simpler form long before Livingstone. Yet, Livingstone was in a position to give these notions new and substantial support in mid-Victorian society. His unparalleled observational experience in Africa and his relatively open mind gave him the unique ability to challenge ideas about Africans that were based on popular stereotypes, preconceived notions and/or blatant falsehoods. Add to this, the status he gained as a result of his cross-continental journey, and he also had a public stage from which he could champion concepts like racial unity and his more radical ideas about the 'nature' of African

society and the gender characteristics of different African peoples. Yet, it is also important to note that not all of these ideas appeared in print during Livingstone's lifetime.<sup>136</sup> The journals I have cited in this chapter were not published until the mid-twentieth century, one hundred years after the period discussed in this chapter. Moreover, as I explained in the last chapter, the radical racial positions Livingstone supported were not always made explicit in *Missionary Travels* or in other material published at the time. In his appendix to Livingstone's *Cambridge Lectures*, William Monk was forthright in asserting Livingstone's belief in racial unity. He even attempted to provide ethnological 'proof' of this belief in citing remarks about different African 'tribes' taken from Livingstone's writings. Yet - if Prichard defined the monogenism in the first half of the nineteenth - Livingstone arguably took the concept of the 'unity of the human species' further than any of his mid-nineteenth century contemporaries. Monk noted the importance of Prichard in his appendix. However, there is little sense from his analysis that Livingstone critiqued and went beyond what Prichard had written about Africans. Clearly, Monk could have taken further steps to demonstrate how his friend confronted racial and ethnological stereotypes. As a result, Livingstone's *Cambridge Lectures*, like his *Missionary Travels*, serves as a somewhat muted testimony of his comparatively radical perceptions of Africans and African societies.

Arguably, mid-Victorian British society was 'not ready' to hear that Africans might soon be joining the ranks of civilization or that, other than skin colour, they were the same as everybody else. When vast numbers of men, women and children were forced to endure inhuman levels of poverty in industrial Britain, the welfare of Africans was likely a mute

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<sup>136</sup> See Chapter Four, section 4.2.

point to many humanitarians and philanthropists dedicated to combatting Britain's social ills. For radicals fighting to extend the franchise in Britain, voting rights for their compatriots took precedence over human rights for Africans. But it is also important to recognize that in many ways Livingstone's cross-continental journey revolutionized how the 'unknown' regions of 'darkest' Africa were perceived when *Missionary Travels* was published.<sup>137</sup> As I discussed in Chapter Four, his revelations about the physical geography, population size and diversity of life in 'unexplored' Africa shocked many readers - if not members of the scientific community. Moreover, in *Missionary Travels* - which I cite throughout this chapter - the Africans he wrote about were humans, just as 'good' and just as 'evil' as anybody else. Unlike British explorers before him - and the famous ones who followed like Burton, Speke, Baker, Stanley - Livingstone 'enlightened' his readers about Africans who

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<sup>137</sup> The revolutionary aspect of *Missionary Travels* were recognized by Livingstone's authorized biographer, William Blaikie, who noted (in Victorian terms) that the book had "a remarkable effect ... on the public opinion of [Britain] in regard to Africa. In the first place ... there was quite a revolution of ideas as to the interior of the country. It astonished men to find that, instead of a vast sandy desert, it was so rich and productive a land, and merchants came to see that if only a safe and wholesome traffic could be introduced, the result would be hardly less beneficial to them than to the people of Africa. In the second place, a new idea was given of the African people." Blaikie added that "Caffre wars and other mismanaged enterprises had brought out the wildest aspects of the native character, and had led to the impression that the blacks were just as brutish and ferocious as the tigers and crocodiles among which they lived. But Livingstone showed ... that, rightly dealt with, they were teachable and companionable, full of respect for the white man, affectionate towards him when they treated him well, and eager to have him dwelling among them." Blaikie's language conveys a sense of just how far Livingstone had to go to overturn Victorian stereotypes about Africans. It is clear here that Blaikie wanted assert that Livingstone's characterizations of Africans challenged the prevailing mid-nineteenth century view. However, by portraying Africans as pliable, docile and friendly, Blaikie resorted to other stereotypes of Africans, used, for example, to describe American slaves. As such, Blaikie failed to identify the terms or the language Livingstone himself used to confront racial stereotypes. See Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 196.

were equals, albeit as ‘degraded’ fellow humans living in a ‘backward’ world. The way he represented Africans in his immensely popular book posed a direct challenge to polygenist ideas and the racial ‘science’ of ethnologists intent on ‘proving’ the innate and unchanging inferiority of Africans. Simply on this basis, the Livingstone of *Missionary Travels* offered a clear rebuttal to racial supremacists like Burton and Hunt. It is thus clear why Hunt would tell Burton that there was “no other man living ... better able ... to paint the Negro and other African races as they are, regardless of what we may consider should be their state.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Hunt, *On the Negro's Place in Nature*, p. iv.

## Chapter Six

### Livingstone's Zambesi Expedition: Colonial Dreams and the Failure of White Masculinity, 1858-1864

At a banquet given in his honour in February 1858 to celebrate the imminent departure of his Zambesi Expedition, David Livingstone told the 300 guests about the challenges he faced in returning to Africa as the head of £5,000 state sponsored journey:

In former times, while performing what I considered to my duty in Africa, I felt great pleasure in the work; and now, when I perceive that all eyes are directed to my future conduct, I feel as if I were laid under a load of obligation to do better than I have ever done as yet. I expect to find no fortune in that country, nor do I expect to explore any large portions of a new country, but I do hope to find through that part of the country which I have already explored, a pathway by means of the river Zambesi which may lead to highlands where Europeans may form a settlement, and where by opening up communications and establishing commercial intercourse with the natives of Africa, they may ... impart to the people of that country the knowledge and the estimable blessings of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

I have explained how Livingstone tempered the racial politics of *Missionary Travels* in order to make himself and his ideas about Africa more acceptable to mid-Victorian society. This quest was accompanied by a series of public lectures, much like the speech he made at his farewell banquet.<sup>2</sup> In speaking to the public, Livingstone focussed on the simple message that Central Africa was a land of possibility where Britons could help both Africans and themselves in the process. The Zambesi river had long been integral to his plans and he told his audiences that his cross-continental journey had given him the confidence that the

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<sup>1</sup> "Farewell Banquet to Dr. Livingstone," *The Times*, 15 February, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> The public lectures he gave at Cambridge on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 1857 were published as *Dr Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*.

river could function as a 'pathway' into the interior of Africa. With the 'discovery' of the Batoka plateau, he believed he had found the site for a future Christian colony - where Africans and Europeans would presumably live and work together in racial harmony. He envisioned that from this 'highland' location, British settlers would also combat African 'barbarism' with Christianity and 'civilizing' tools like literacy. These Christians would be joined in the interior by British merchants who would travel up and down the Zambesi trading British manufactured goods for African raw materials. Inspired by the economic and social theories of earlier abolitionists, Livingstone was confident that the introduction of legitimate "commercial intercourse" would eventually destroy slavery in Central Africa.<sup>3</sup>

By the time Livingstone gave his farewell speech, this vision of 'humanitarian' colonialism had won acceptance across British society, from mill workers in Blantyre to British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston. His path-breaking journey, the enormous success of *Missionary Travels* and the added publicity generated by his lectures, gave Livingstone the reputation and influence he needed to attract the State, investors, philanthropists, missionaries and potential crew members to his cause. In the weeks before his farewell banquet, Livingstone had officially resigned from the London Missionary Society. With his newfound sway in government circles (and with the help of Murchison) he had been named the British Consul at 'Quelimane for the Eastern Coast and independent districts of the interior.'<sup>4</sup> He was also made the commander of the most expensive and highly publicized

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<sup>3</sup> "Farewell Banquet to Dr. Livingstone," *The Times*, 15 February, 1858.

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Secretary Clarendon had asked the Portuguese to allow Livingstone's consular position to cover all of Portuguese Mozambique. Not surprising, this request was refused by Lisbon. The appointment to Quelimane was permitted because it was open to



State-financed expedition into Africa since Buxton's 1841 Niger Expedition.<sup>5</sup> In addition to £5000 of government support, Livingstone was offered the command of a large expedition made up of over two hundred of his compatriots. Despite hundreds of eager applicants, including a number of experienced explorers, he instead personally selected a small crew of six fellow Britons, who would be joined by his wife Mary, his youngest son Oswell and twelve West African Kru sailors.<sup>6</sup> His call for missionaries (of any Christian denomination) to join his cause also prompted a resurgence of missionary enterprise in Africa. Although he was no longer employed by the LMS, the Society organized missions at his behest to be established among the Kololo and the Ndebele.<sup>7</sup> Anglican representatives from Britain's

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foreign trade, whereas other areas under Portuguese control were not. See Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup> After the disaster of the Niger Expedition, the British government lost interest in funding large-scale expeditions into Africa. The search for the source of the Nile, however, proved to be an enticing venture to the government who provided a small amount of funding for Burton's and Speke's 1857-1858 journey into Central Africa. In addition to the State-funding, Livingstone also received funding from the Royal Geographical Society and was to be paid £500 a year in his position as British Consul. He also used profits from *Missionary Travels* to personally fund the LMS mission to the Ndebele as well as other costs directly associated with the Zambesi Expedition. His largest personal expense during the expedition was the purchase of a £6000 vessel mid-way through the expedition.

<sup>6</sup> It is not clear whether Oswell - who had been deemed too young to leave at home with his older sister and brothers - was to accompany his parents on the expedition up the Zambesi. His parents may have planned to leave him with his grandparents at Kuruman. Because Mary did not end up accompanying the expedition up the river (due to her pregnancy) this became a moot point.

<sup>7</sup> Prior to Livingstone's success, the LMS had been experiencing financial problems. However, through their association with him they were able to raise £5,000 to establish the two Central African missions. Before his resignation from the Society, Livingstone had agreed that he and his family would live at the Kololo mission, which would eventually be located on the Batoka Plateau (across the Zambesi from the Ndebele mission). After Livingstone had officially parted with the LMS, the Society was put in a difficult situation.

most prestigious universities - under the auspices of the newly formed Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) - also promised to send missionaries to the Zambesi during the expedition.

Livingstone's farewell banquet attested to his celebrated status as a mid-nineteenth century colonial 'visionary' and government-funded expedition leader.<sup>8</sup> However, fame brought higher expectations and Livingstone's new influence carried added responsibilities. His banquet speech revealed that he felt pressure to "do better than [he had] done as yet" on his return to Africa.<sup>9</sup> Based on the unparalleled explorative success of his cross-continental journey, Livingstone's supporters seemed to accept that he could accomplish whatever he set out to do on his return to Africa. Yet, even his most sympathetic biographers could not hide the fact the Zambesi Expedition was marked by failure and disappointment. Livingstone had asked his compatriots to trust his assurances that the Zambesi was a navigable waterway, even though he had bypassed the river when leaving the Batoka Plateau.

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Without his involvement in the settling of the Kololo mission station or its initial day-to-day operations, the directors of the LMS considered cancelling both missions. However, in doing so they faced public indignation over their use of the donations they had received as a result of Livingstone's popularity. They settled on the option of accepting Livingstone's offer of help with the Kololo mission as part of the Zambesi Expedition, with the assumption that he would eventually join the Kololo on the Batoka Plateau. See Jeal's *Livingstone* for a scathing indictment of the way Livingstone parted with the LMS and forsook the Kololo mission project. Jeal raises a number of valid criticisms in discussing these issues, but arguably goes to far in attempting to discredit Livingstone.

<sup>8</sup> During the Zambesi Expedition - after he had 'discovered' Lake Nyassa (Malawi) - Livingstone asked former journey-mate William Cotton Oswell to "look at [his plans for the region] and see if I am a visionary." David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 1 November, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> "Farewell Banquet to Dr. Livingstone," *The Times*, 15 February, 1858.

But, when he confronted the impassable cataracts of the Cabora Basa rapids on the river, he was forced to abandon the dream of establishing a Christian settlement deep in the interior of Africa. With what one biographer has described as “an astonishing volte-face,” he quickly turned his expeditionary goals to the River Shire (or Tchiri), which fed into the Zambesi only a hundred miles from the East coast of Africa.<sup>10</sup> Despite a shorter and more navigable route inland, the expedition still could not establish a Christian settlement, initiate trade links with Africans or hope to stop the slave trade. Two of the three Missions associated with the expedition also ended in collapse with the malarial deaths of a number of the missionaries involved. Rather than question his leadership abilities or his own character, Livingstone blamed the failings and catastrophes associated with the expedition on his crew, the missionaries or other factors beyond his control. In particular, he believed most of the white members of his crew and many of the missionaries who took part in the unsuccessful missions had failed to demonstrate the manliness he believed was required in Africa. The only tragedy which led Livingstone to re-examine his priorities was the malarial death of his wife Mary in 1862.

More recent biographers, such as Tim Jeal, have catalogued the failures of the Zambesi Expedition and examined aspects of Livingstone’s dissatisfaction with his white crew. However, Livingstone scholars have yet to explore his characterization of his crew or the missionaries who were connected with expedition from a gendered or a racial perspective. Even though Livingstone is a key figure in the history of British colonialism,

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<sup>10</sup> Jeal, “David Livingstone: A Brief Biographical Account,” p. 49. Tchiri is the Yao name for the river, which is not far from Shire if the latter is pronounced Cheer-ee, as it was by Livingstone.

the colonial vision he advanced during the Zambesi Expedition has also received little scholarly attention. In examining these issues, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a narrative account of the Zambesi Expedition, establishing a background for the issues examined in the rest of the chapter. Section 6.2 is an in-depth analysis of Livingstone's colonial plans. Livingstone's dream to build a Christian colony in the African interior was his own, yet his scheme to stop slavery with legitimate commerce was inspired by earlier abolitionists. This section explores not only how his economic and humanitarian ideas were influenced by earlier theories, but also how he attempted to forge his own colonial vision. In reaction to the racial conflict he condemned in the Cape Colony, Livingstone aspired to build a small colony that would bring poor, hardworking Britons and Africans together to work and live in an equalitarian Christian environment. Yet, his idealistic vision was also beset by gender, racial and class contortions and contradictions, not to mention poor practical planning. Rather than take the blame for the problems that beset the expedition as result, Livingstone found fault in his crew and the missionaries who joined him in Africa. Section 6.3 examines Livingstone's relationship with his six member British crew and with the men who made up the UMCA mission to the Shire Highlands. The focus of this section is on how Livingstone's conception of manliness was integral to the way he judged the work ethic and moral character of these British men. Despite Livingstone's initial belief that the members of Zambesi Expedition could serve as the vanguard of a unique form of colonialism, he was ultimately convinced that few of his compatriots could demonstrate the manliness he believed was necessary to bring 'civilization' to Africa.

### 6.1 The Zambesi Expedition: A Narrative Account

Buoyed by the sendoff he had received at his farewell banquet and the new authority he commanded as the leader of a government-funded expedition, Livingstone, Mary, son Oswell and a crew of six fellow Britons departed from Liverpool in March 1858 on board the *Pearl*, a Royal Navy ship. Livingstone's hand-picked expeditionary team consisted of naval officer Norman Bedingfeld, physician and botanist John Kirk, geologist Richard Thornton, artist and storekeeper Thomas Baines, engineer George Ray and moral agent and photographer Charles Livingstone. Livingstone had met Bedingfeld in Luanda in 1854 and had selected the Royal Navy Commander to navigate the *Ma-Robert*, a paddle-steamer (carried in sections aboard the *Pearl*) that the expedition would use to travel up the Zambesi.<sup>11</sup> Kirk was a twenty-six year old Scot who had served with the British Hospital staff during the Crimean War. Thornton, a nineteen year old protégé of Murchison's, had been come highly recommended by the RGS president. Baines, the only crew member other than Bedingfeld with experience in Africa, had taken part in a recent expedition across north-western Australia. Livingstone hired Baines on Murchison's recommendation, despite the fact that he had served as an artist-soldier during the Eighth Frontier War in South Africa (1850-1853). Ray, who hailed from the Livingstone's hometown of Blantyre, had experience in the North Atlantic. Charles Livingstone, eight years younger than his brother, had worked as a Nonconformist minister in the eastern United States, which beyond family ties, served

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<sup>11</sup> The *Ma-Robert* was named after Mary Livingstone. *Ma-Robert* was the name the Kololo had given to Mary, meaning the mother of Robert (her eldest son). The steamer, when assembled, would measure 75 feet in length and 8 feet in beam.

as his qualification to act as the expedition's 'moral agent.' Out of the hundreds of applicants Livingstone received, this was hardly the most qualified expeditionary team he could have assembled. Had he made sure to select compatriots whom he believed shared his vision for Africa as well as his work ethic? Or, were they men he thought would pose no threat to his status by somehow eclipsing him during the expedition with heroic feats of their own? Or, had Livingstone simply failed to take the time to assemble an experienced crew, believing he could lead these men to the same triumphs as he had with his Kololo crew?

Even before reaching Africa, Livingstone's plans for the expedition began to unravel. Stopping in Sierra Leone, the *Pearl* took aboard the 12 Kru men who had been chosen to join the crew.<sup>12</sup> However, soon after departing for the Cape, Mary realized that she was pregnant. When the *Pearl* made a planned docking at Cape Town, Mary was met by her parents and she and Oswell travelled to Kuruman, where she delivered a baby girl - Anna-Mary. To loud applause during his farewell speech, Livingstone had championed his wife's language skills, perseverance as well as her apparent belief that in Africa "one must put one's hands to everything."<sup>13</sup> As I explained in Chapter Two, he believed Mary was dedicated to his vision for Africa and was always ready to join him in working towards his explorative goals. But,

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<sup>12</sup> Kru men had served aboard British Royal Navy ships throughout the nineteenth century. However, because the Zambesi proved largely unnavigable, the Kru had little opportunity to display their sailing abilities during the expedition. Instead they did much of the heavy labour required to power the *Ma-Robert*. The men became disenchanted with their role - as well as with the food found along the Zambesi - and Livingstone became disenchanted with them. They had all been dismissed by August 1, 1859. See Gary Clendennen and Donald Simpson, "African Members of the Zambesi Expedition, 1861-1864," in *David Livingstone's Shire Journal, 1861-1864*, edited by Gary Clendennen, Scottish Cultural Press: Aberdeen, 1992, pp. 129-130.

<sup>13</sup> "Farewell Banquet to Dr. Livingstone," *The Times*, 15 February, 1858.

with her pregnancy, he had lost the services of his “guardian angel” for the journey up the Zambesi.<sup>14</sup> Livingstone took this in stride, yet he still hoped she would rejoin the expedition before the end of its mandate.<sup>15</sup>

When Livingstone and his crew reached the mouth of the Zambesi, they still had every confidence that the expedition would proceed as planned. His scheme to sail up the Zambesi, establish trade links with Africans and place a small settlement - and a prefabricated iron storehouse - on the Batoka plateau, seemed relatively simple and straightforward. Biographer Timothy Holmes has captured how Livingstone and his crew might have imagined the expedition unfolding:

If all goes according to plan, the *Ma Robert*, assembled by Rae and the Kroomen at the [Zambesi] delta, pilots the *Pearl* up the Zambesi to Tete, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. There the *Pearl* offloads the expedition's stores, turns around, and resumes her voyage to Ceylon. The *Ma Robert* then takes the party aboard and delivers them to the Kafue confluence, a further three hundred and fifty miles upriver. A few days walk from there, the Batoka plateau lies waiting, salubrious, cool - even frosty - under the bright winter sky. The prefabricated house is erected, and their members of the party commence the duties as laid down in their instructions, some along the Zambesi ... others on the highlands. Livingstone has brought his previous journey's porters up from Tete and takes them back to the Kololo capital where he persuades Sekeletu to move from Linyanti's swamps to the healthy

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. In the April 9<sup>th</sup> entry in his journal, Livingstone wrote that the news of Mary's pregnancy “is a great trial to me, for had she come with us, she might have proved an essential service to the Expedition... but it all may turn out for the best.” The new plan was for Mary and the two children to join Livingstone at the settlement on the Batoka Plateau. However, after the focus of the expedition shifted to the River Shire and Lake Nyassa, she returned to Britain with her two children, presumably to await the return of her husband. When the expedition was subsequently extended, she left the children (with some trusted friends/caregivers) and travelled to Africa to rejoin Livingstone. She died three months after her arrival. See David Livingstone, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 3.

highlands. Soon the LMS mission arrives, [an] overland route to the Cape is opened, Mary Livingstone, the baby and young Oswell come up from Kuruman, bringing with them what remains of Livingstone's belongings as well as orchard seedlings from the Moffats' nursery. A new Livingstone home is established, the cotton fields of free men begin to flourish, there dawns an age of prosperity, barbarism is transmuted into civilization, produce flows to Britain, British goods flow back. And Livingstone?... A redeemed Adam in a new Garden of Eden.<sup>16</sup>

However, during the Zambesi Expedition, none of these possibilities came to fruition. When the *Pearl* arrived at the delta of the Zambesi, two British naval boats capsized trying to help a Royal Navy vessel find the main channel into the river, resulting in the deaths of a number of British sailors. This catastrophe seemed to serve as an 'omen' of the disappointments, hardships and problems that were to mark the expedition and the accompanying LMS and UMCA missions.

By the time a viable channel into the Zambesi had been found, Livingstone had been prostrated by an "attack of gastro-enteritis, so painful that Dr. Kirk dosed him repeatedly with opium as an analgesic."<sup>17</sup> Soon after, it became clear that the plan to sail the *Pearl* up to Tete was untenable. The river that Livingstone had championed was too shallow to support a vessel the size of the *Pearl*. The *Ma-Robert* would thus have to be used to carry the crew and the expedition's supplies up the river to the confluence with the Kafue river, to be followed by a short overland journey to the Batoka Plateau. However, the smaller vessel could not make this voyage in one trip, so the iron storehouse was unloaded and packed with provisions less than fifty miles from the Indian Ocean. Although it was easy to

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<sup>16</sup> Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 159. See Map 3, Appendix 1 for the actual route followed by Livingstone during the expedition.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



assemble, the *Ma-Robert* had problems of its own. It required vast amounts of fuel (in the form of fresh cut timber), it was heavy in the shallow Zambesi and after several groundings on the banks of the river, it leaked like a sieve. It thus took several months to reach Tete, by which time Livingstone's crew had 'lost' its first member. Bedingfeld had tendered his resignation soon after reaching the Zambesi, been convinced to stay, and later left for good after a series of disagreements with Livingstone about the command and navigation of the *Ma-Robert*.

Livingstone, however, had bigger problems to worry about than the loss of his argumentative naval officer. Just west of Tete, the *Ma-Robert* was grounded above the waterline and the expedition was forced to continue on foot, "clambering over giant rocks for four days" in the blazing sun.<sup>18</sup> To his horror, Livingstone discovered that this impenetrable environment marked the beginning of the cataracts of the Cabora Basa rapids. At the outset of his journey, he had expected to find rapids west of Tete, but he never imagined that the 'rapids' might prevent a vessel from sailing on towards the Kafue and the Batoka Plateau. He tried to convince himself that during the rainy season, a steamer might be able to sail through the rapids, or that the largest rocks jutting out into the river could be blasted away, allowing ships to travel all the way to Victoria Falls.<sup>19</sup> Despite the obvious

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<sup>18</sup> Jeal, "David Livingstone: A Brief Biographical Account," p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> In his journals, Livingstone expressed his discouragement with this turn of events, stating: "Things look dark for our enterprise. This Kebrabasa is what I never expected. No hint of its nature ever reached my ears." *The Zambesi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 63. However, in *A Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, Livingstone gives little impression that the Cabora Basa rapids ruined his dreams for the Zambesi. See pp. 54-55 of the book for his muted description of reaching the rapids.

disappointment, Livingstone realized that to save his public reputation after such a strategic error, he would have to find another location for his settlement - one that could be easily accessed by a steamer, traders and missionaries. He thus abandoned his original vision of spreading Christianity, 'civilization,' and legitimate trade from a location in Central Africa and turned his attention instead to the River Shire, located only 100 miles from the East coast of the continent.

On his cross-continental journey, Livingstone had been told by a Portuguese trader that the Shire was fed by a considerable lake, lying north of Tete. Without another viable alternative, he turned the expedition around, hoping that the new river might lead to an area that could act as a replacement for the Batoka Plateau. Moreover, if the lake was as vast as he had been told, the expedition could claim it as a substantial 'discovery,' assuaging some of the criticism that was likely to come when the public found out that his original plans had been abandoned. The new focus on the Shire and Lake Nyassa (Lake Malawi) meant that Livingstone would have to forsake his plan to settle amongst the Kololo on the Batoka Plateau. It also indicated that he had abdicated whatever responsibility he had to help establish the LMS mission that had been sent to Kolololand. On a more general level, his move away from using the Zambesi as a pathway into the interior, seemingly signalled that his cross-continental journey had not been the great explorative success that he and others characterized it as being. Whatever the further risks to his reputation, Livingstone ostensibly had little choice but to follow this new expeditionary direction.

During 1859, Livingstone and Kirk made three separate journeys up the Shire, reaching Lake Nyassa on foot on the final trip. With the Shire, they discovered a deep river

surrounded by fertile lands that would be easily navigable with a steamer smaller than the *Ma-Robert*. Moreover, after reaching the southern highlands of (modern) Malawi, Livingstone declared that he had found an alternative to the Batoka Plateau, a 'healthy' place fed by fresh water springs, where he could base a mission station as well as a potential colony. But, as Livingstone also discovered, these new highlands were in the path of the Swahili-Arab controlled slave route that ran from Katanga to Zanzibar.<sup>20</sup> Subject to slave raids, the native 'tribes' of the area - the Mang'anga and the Yao - had been plagued by the presence of slave traders and had even engaged in the slave trade themselves. For Livingstone, this presented an opportunity to put the expedition to the test of combatting the slave trade with commerce, Christianity and British 'civilization.' However, this plan would also put potential British missionaries and traders in the midst of a perilous environment. Add to this, the fact that the southern reaches of the Shire were infested with malaria and controlled by the Portuguese, who were also major participants in the slave trade. Livingstone was nevertheless undaunted by these obstacles. He arranged for the UMCA to send missionaries to the Shire Highlands, asked the government to supply a smaller replacement for the *Ma-Robert* and used £6000 of his own savings to order a steamer that he would use to patrol Lake Nyassa for slavers.

Livingstone had months to wait before the UMCA missionaries and the new vessels arrived from Britain. This gave him the time he needed to return the Kololo he had left at Tete to their homeland, visit Sekeletu and give whatever help he could to the LMS mission

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<sup>20</sup> See David Livingstone to George Frere, 22 December 1863, *Letters and Documents*, p. 87. Retaining its name today, the Katanga Province of the Congo lies in the southernmost region of the country.

at Linyanti. On the trek to Kolololand, he was joined by his brother, Kirk and the Kololo who wished to go home. After the third journey up the Shire, Livingstone had officially dismissed Thornton and Baines for a variety of reasons (explored in section 6.3). Rae, meanwhile, had returned to Britain to supervise the construction of the new vessels. In my case study of the Kololo in the previous chapter, I touched on how Livingstone returned to Linyanti to find that the Kololo had been decimated by malaria. He also discovered that the disease had taken the lives of six of the nine Britons sent to Kolololand as part of the LMS mission. The dead included missionary Holloway Helmore, his wife, two of his children, as well as the wife and child of Roger Price, the other LMS missionary at the station. Price and two of the Helmore's children survived and had left Linyanti while Livingstone was still in the Shire region. In the aftermath of this disaster, Price accused the Kololo of poisoning those who died. When Livingstone heard this - and also learned that Price had kicked a Kololo man, tied another to a waggon wheel and threatened others with a gun - he blamed Price for the failure of the mission.<sup>21</sup> Although a feud developed between Livingstone and Price, the disaster of the LMS mission received relatively little attention in Britain. This was because the calamity and controversy that soon surrounded the UMCA mission to the Shire Highlands overshadowed any public criticism that developed out of the devastation of the LMS mission.

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<sup>21</sup> In a letter to Arthur Tidman, the Foreign Secretary of the LMS, Livingstone reported that he had heard that Price had made "some remarks ... at a public meeting at Cape Town about binding a [Kololo] man to his waggon wheel..." Jeal infers that Livingstone may have invented or exaggerated the reports about Price's treatment of the Kololo in order to protect the reputation of his "Makololo" - and sully Price's character in the process. See Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 180.

The Livingstone party returned to Tete in November 1860. Here they received notice from British Foreign Secretary Lord Russell that the Zambesi Expedition had been extended for up to three years. Livingstone was also informed that the first UMCA missionaries and the *Pioneer*, the replacement for the *Ma-Robert*, would be arriving at the mouth of the Zambesi early in the new year.<sup>22</sup> As biographer Timothy Holmes has argued: "The first two years of Livingstone's expedition had been so unrewarding ... that it is difficult to see how the British government could have renewed his mandate unless it had been persuaded to do so in order to provide logistical support for the UMCA."<sup>23</sup> Composed mainly of High churchmen - as opposed to the nonconformists of the LMS - the UMCA was led by Bishop James MacKenzie. The thirty-six year old MacKenzie had attended Cambridge and had taught theology and mathematics at the university. He later worked as a missionary/curate in Natal. Shortly before leaving to join Livingstone, he had been named the Bishop of Cape Town. Because the UMCA was led by a man of this status and the Church of England was paying close attention to the mission, Livingstone could not quietly abdicate his responsibility for the mission as he had for the LMS Kololo mission. McKenzie was joined

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<sup>22</sup> A crew of 18 British sailors were also sent with the *Pioneer*. Livingstone immediately dismissed one of these men, who would have ranked above Kirk. The lower ranking sailors, however, were retained. Their numbers dwindled as the expedition wore on - a number of the men were transferred to other British ships in the area - and one man succumbed to malaria. Two of the men, Richard Wilson and Thomas Ward, remained with the *Pioneer* and the expedition until its recall. Sailors from other British ships were also transferred to the *Pioneer*. These included Edward Young, a Gunner, who, in 1867, was sent by the RGS to conduct a Livingstone search expedition. See Chapter Seven for more on Young. For a list of the various British sailors who were associated with the Zambesi Expedition, see *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>23</sup> Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 193.

by Reverends Lovell Proctor, Henry Rowley and Henry Scudamore, lay supervisor Horace Waller, two British labourers and a number of African servants. Another missionary, Reverend Henry Burrup arrived later in the year.<sup>24</sup> MacKenzie's sister, Burrup's wife, their two servants and a British doctor were to join the mission in early 1862, after sailing from Britain with Mary Livingstone.<sup>25</sup>

When the UMCA members arrived it was the malarial season in the Shire and unsafe

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<sup>24</sup> Proctor and Rowley were High Anglicans (as was Burrup who followed); whereas, Scudamore and Waller were Low churchmen.

<sup>25</sup> Mary had left her three boys and Agnes at schools around Britain, where (other than Oswell) they had been since 1857. Anna Mary was left with Livingstone's two unmarried sisters. The Livingstones also had a series of friends who acted as guardians and caregivers for their children. Using the hefty royalties from the sale of Livingstone's books, James Young and Bevan Braithwaite, two of his closest friends, acted as the main 'foster-parents' in the period after 1857. Others, such as Frederick and Mrs. Fitch, also helped at different stages of the children's lives. Clearly, Livingstone did not attach much weight to the notion expressed by Samuel Smiles' that "a man's real character ... his manliness" is most evidently displayed in the home. Instead, he put far more stock in the ethic that had served him well in his youth (again expressed by Smiles) that good character could be built through independence and 'self-help.' In an 1862 letter to Young, Livingstone admitted that "my pursuits have [pre]vented me giving that parental attention ... I ought." Throughout the Zambesi Expedition, Livingstone was concerned about the welfare of his children and seemed to believe they were in good hands. Another letter to Young illustrates the nature of his parental involvement: "please keep Oswell at Brighton as his chest is tender.... If necessary to remove Thomas, it would be well to send him there too, but he gets on so well at Kendall, if health fail not, keep him there. If Robert [his eldest son] goes anywhere I beg you will remember his very excitable temperament. At St. Andrews he complains that he is learning only what he acquired at Kendal, if so he would be better off at any of the medical classes. I suppose he has some of my nature and judging from myself placing him in a quiet family for lodging and allowing him to pursue his best in studies ... will prove more beneficial." Mary's death, soon after this letter was written, brought Livingstone emotionally closer to his growing children. Agnes, his eldest daughter, gradually became his closest confidante. However, Livingstone only returned home for a year in 1865, meaning that over the course of their lives, the Livingstone children saw little of their famous father. See Samuel Smiles, *Character*, John Murray; London, 1875, pp. 308-309, David Livingstone to James Young, 19 February 1862 and February 1862, *Letters and Documents*, pp. 73-74.

for travel and settlement. This prompted Livingstone to use the time available to do some exploring. Using the *Pioneer* and its British crew and accompanied by the UMCA members, he sailed up the coast of East Africa to explore the Ruvuma, a river that he suspected might connect to Lake Nyassa.<sup>26</sup> When the river proved unnavigable, Livingstone turned the *Pioneer* around, headed back to the mouth of the Zambesi, up the river to the Shire, finally reaching the lands where the mission would be stationed in July 1861. However, the Shire Highlands that Livingstone returned to had changed since his last visit to the area almost two years before. A severe drought had ravaged the lush and fertile environment of the Shire region, leaving the local population hungry and sometimes destitute. Moreover, the slave trade had increased dramatically, buttressed by the poverty brought on by the drought and - in Livingstone's estimation - by Portuguese traders moving into the area. The heightened presence of slave traders, meant that Livingstone, his crew and the UMCA missionaries encountered a large slave caravan soon after leaving the Shire to begin their inland trek to the area where the mission was to be stationed.<sup>27</sup> At the sight of the Livingstone party (which numbered more than 50 with the addition of Kololo porters), the slave traders fled, leaving the slaves. Since many of these slaves were homeless as result of the drought, MacKenzie was left with an instant congregation of eighty-four Africans.

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<sup>26</sup> The Ruvuma was situated to the north of Portuguese colonial influence, giving it strategic importance for the British. It is unclear from Livingstone's journals and letters (and Livingstone biographies), but it seems that only MacKenzie accompanied Livingstone on the actual exploration of the Ruvuma. The other members of the UMCA were left on the island of Johanna, off the coast of East Africa, where a British Consul was stationed.

<sup>27</sup> After discussion with a local 'chief,' MacKenzie decided to settle the mission at Magomero, a village south-west of Lake Chilwa (in modern Malawi).

The rapid success MacKenzie and his fellow missionaries had in frustrating the plans of the first slave traders they encountered spurred them - with Livingstone's encouragement - to attempt to rescue other slaves. But, Livingstone hoped to accomplish this through peaceful methods, cautioning MacKenzie not to use force or become involved in the conflict between the local Mang'anga and Yao peoples. MacKenzie, however, sided with the Mang'anga in raids on the Yao, whom he believed were responsible for the slave trade in the area. In a battle precipitated by the Yao, the missionaries - as well as Livingstone who was with the party at the time - were forced to fire in self-defence, killing six Yao.<sup>28</sup> After Livingstone and his crew left to explore Lake Nyassa, MacKenzie became involved in a number of 'offensive' raids on the Yao, believing it was his Christian duty to rescue as many slaves as he could. In the process, however, the village where the mission was stationed - and the mission itself - came under threat of reprisal, dooming Livingstone's hope of creating a peaceful haven where blacks and whites could co-exist. When news of armed attacks on the slavers reached Britain - spread by MacKenzie and some of the other missionaries - Livingstone was blamed for encouraging the Bishop to take up arms against Africans.<sup>29</sup> However, the condemnation of Livingstone only grew with word early in 1862 of MacKenzie's death, just a year after the UMCA mission had arrived in Africa.

MacKenzie was not killed in the battles with slavers. He and missionary Henry

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<sup>28</sup> According to Livingstone, this was the first time in close to twenty years in Africa that he had fired a gun at Africans. One of the many Mang'anga who joined the battle was also killed.

<sup>29</sup> Both Livingstone and MacKenzie's most vocal critic at the time was Dr. Edward Pusey, leader of the Oxford Movement within the Church of England. See *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 62.



Burrup succumbed to the effects of malaria and dysentery after they had gone to rendezvous with Livingstone, who had offered to bring MacKenzie's sister and Burrup's wife part of the way up the Zambesi to a specified meeting point. Livingstone had been delayed - because of circumstances beyond his control - while the missionaries had remained in a malarious area without quinine, rather than travelling to a healthier region to wait.<sup>30</sup> After MacKenzie's death, the UMCA mission continued without its leader, but was forced to relocate down the Shire valley because of the threat of Yao retaliation and the effects of the drought. Soon after leaving their healthy highland location, two more of the mission's team perished from the effects of malaria. A new Bishop was put in charge of the Universities Mission (UMCA) in 1863. He decided to move the mission - but not its African residents - to Zanzibar, enraging Livingstone who had to find new homes for the former slaves left behind.

When Livingstone was informed of MacKenzie's and Burrup's deaths, he took the Bishop's sister and Burrup's wife to the channel of the Zambesi so that they could return to Britain. Mary Livingstone (who had travelled to Africa with the two women) was also part of this journey. However, the ship that was to take the two women back to Britain was delayed and the party was forced to remain in the malarious channel area for over two weeks. By the time Livingstone and Mary returned to Shupanga - a village on the banks of the Zambesi where Rae was fitting together the *Lady Nyassa* - Mary was ill with malaria. Quinine and other medications has no effect and she died April 27, 1862, less than three months after rejoining her husband in Africa. More recent biographers, such as Jeal, have

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<sup>30</sup> MacKenzie died in this location (at the confluence of the Ruo River with the Shire), while Burrup died soon after arriving back at the UMCA mission. They were accompanied by three Africans, none of whom succumbed to malaria.

posited that alcoholism, obesity and a loss of faith may have contributed to Mary's death.<sup>31</sup>

Livingstone's letters from the period show that he was genuinely grieved by the death of his wife.<sup>32</sup> At the time of her death, he still hoped to establish a Christian colony in the Shire

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<sup>31</sup> Livingstone and most of his biographers have posited that the primary cause of Mary Livingstone's death was malaria. However, Timothy Holmes argues that while Mary may have suffered from malaria, her symptoms indicate that she likely died of hepatitis. He maintains that "given the total ineffectiveness of quinine and the nature of her symptoms, vomiting, extreme weakness, yellowing of the skin, it would appear that she was suffering from hepatitis, which alcohol would have made fatal." Here he implies that Mary's purported alcohol dependency was an important factor in her death. While it seems clear that Mary Livingstone did drink there is little proof that she is was an alcoholic. Holmes, like the vast majority of Livingstone's biographers, assumed the worst about Livingstone's wife. (He also argues that Mary was a neglectful mother). It is clear Mary questioned her faith - Livingstone admitted it. Yet, the stories about her alcoholism were likely exaggerated by rumours spread by others, including Kirk, Rae and Mrs. MacKenzie. In his journals, Kirk claimed that "she drank very freely, so as to be utterly besotted at times." However, this opinion was not based on Kirk's first-hand experience, but on stories he had been told by James Stewart, an independent missionary-trader who had 'befriended' Mary on the ship voyage to Africa. Mary's (popular) biographer Edna Healey has offered the most rational explanation for her drinking during her time with Stewart. She posits that "it is probable that Mary, like her mother, had found brandy a cure for seasickness." Because there is a paucity of documentation relating to Mary's life, particularly from her own pen, it remains difficult to verify much of the conjecture surrounding her. See Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, pp. 151, 204; John Kirk, *The Zambesi Journal and Letters of John Kirk*, Vol. II, pp. 568; Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 251; Healey, p. 42.

<sup>32</sup> In the days after his wife's death, Livingstone wrote a number of letters to family and friends explaining the tragic news. In these letters he was open about his grief and honest about his guilt. Here is an example from a letter to Mrs. Frederick Fitch, a woman who helped with the affairs of the Livingstone children:

My beloved partner whom I loved and trusted so much for eighteen years died here on the 27<sup>th</sup> and was buried yesterday morning. She was a good wife, a good mother and a good but often fearful and dejected Christian. I loved her when we were married and the longer I lived with her, the more I loved her. Our love did not die. No honeymoon, though that was spent in hard work in the Bechuana [Tswana] country. And the last three months after an unexpected separation of four years, were as pleasant as any I spent in her society. Her loss quite takes the heart out of me. Everything else I have encountered in life only made the mind rise to overcome more, but this feels crushing. One is strong only till he is tried. I have a sore, sore heart. You

Highlands, where they 'planned' to build the permanent home they never had together. After he buried Mary beneath a giant baobab tree at Shupanga, he continued to push himself and his crew to accomplish what they could before the expedition was recalled by the British Foreign Minister.

In the final year of the expedition, Livingstone first concentrated on another voyage to the Ruvuma to see if it offered a navigable path into Lake Nyassa. When this finally proved to be a lost cause, he focussed on the mammoth task of launching the *Lady Nyassa* on the lake. Livingstone's plan was to use the steamer to intimidate slave ships - usually Arab dhows - passing across Lake Nyassa. He also hoped to establish legitimate trade links with and between Africans living on the banks of the lake. However, Livingstone would first

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must excuse my saying so much about myself.

As he tenderly told his son Tom, although Mary could not swallow in her final hours, "she answered my kisses up to within a half hour of her departure." In his journal, a month after Mary's death, Livingstone recalled the 'merriment' that he and his wife engaged in during their 'private' time together: "In our intercourse in private there was more than would be thought by some a decorous amount of merriment and play. I said to her a few days before her fatal illness 'We old bodies ought now to be more sober and not play so much.' 'O no,' she said, 'you must be as playful as you have always been. I would not like you to be so grave as some folks I have seen.' .... She was always young and playful." In writing the Moffats months later (his initial letters informing them of Mary's death had failed to arrive), Livingstone continued to express his guilt over her death. Perhaps remembering his mother-in-law's stinging rebuke of his decision to take Mary and the kids along on some of his early explorations, he told them "I may be blamed for letting her come - and I blame myself very bitterly, but there were reasons which seemed at the time good and our separation was wholly unanticipated in 1858." Together, these are reflections of a man who had lost a wife whom he loved and whose loss he grieved. Yet, he clearly placed his work in and goals for Africa ahead of her well-being. As I explained in Chapter Two, as his wife, she was part of his 'team.' Together, he believed they were sacrificing comfort and giving their lives for a greater good. See David Livingstone to Mrs. Frederick Fitch, 29 April, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779; David Livingstone to Tom Livingstone, 28 April, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10701; David Livingstone, *Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 25; David Livingstone to Mary and Robert Moffat, 25 October, 1862, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184.

have to get his ship up the Shire. Because of the continued drought across the region the river was already low. It took weeks for Livingstone and his crew to reach the 'Murchison' cataracts on the Shire, where the *Lady Nyassa* was to be disassembled, carried above the cataracts, and rebuilt to sail into the Nyassa. Before this could happen, however, thirty miles of rocks and trees would have to be cleared to create a road to move Livingstone's ship. Livingstone and his crew also had to contend with a lack of adequate food supplies because of the continued drought in the area. The local inhabitants had been decimated by famine. Whole villages had been abandoned in the search for food. To Livingstone's horror, the emaciated bodies of famine victims occasionally floated down the Shire.<sup>33</sup> Depressed by this devastation and the obstacles in his path, he realized that "if the government looks upon this as I do, we may soon expect to be withdrawn."<sup>34</sup> A week later, on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1863, Richard Thornton, who had been rehired by Livingstone a few weeks earlier to collect geological samples, died after contracting malaria and dysentery. Two days later, Charles Livingstone asked for his release from the expedition. The following day, Livingstone told Kirk to join Charles. Three weeks later the two men canoed down the Zambesi to safety to begin their voyage home. Despite these setbacks, Livingstone - propelled by the desire to stop the slave

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<sup>33</sup> As Livingstone told his teenaged daughter Agnes, using a Scottish geographical analogy: "Here the country has been quite depopulated by slave hunting and famine. This last caused partly by drought and partly by the people clearing away from their cultivated fields to this river [the Shire]. It is as if all the people on the highlands about Campsie fled to the other side of the Clyde in hopes that their enemies should not cross to them. The loss of life has been frightful. I counted 35 dead bodies floating down as we came up. They seem to wrap the dead in leaves and commit them to the river." David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 24 February, 1864, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184.

<sup>34</sup> David Livingstone, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 71.

trade on Lake Nyassa - pledged to persevere. With Rae, the remaining crew of the *Pioneer*, and with paid help from local inhabitants, he worked to carve out a road through the Shire Highlands. In July, word finally came from Lord Russell that the expedition had been recalled. However, because of the drought conditions, Livingstone was unable to leave immediately for home. He and the crew that remained would have to wait for the rainy season to sail the *Lady Nyassa* and the *Pioneer* down Shire and the Zambesi. Realizing that it was too dangerous and difficult to continue to construct the route around the cataracts, Livingstone decided instead to explore the western banks of Lake Nyassa and the area west of the river on foot. With a crew of twenty Africans - including some Kololo and one of the sailors from the *Pioneer*, Livingstone trekked 760 'English' miles (or 660 in a straight line) in three months. When they returned to the ships, the water had risen to level that allowed them to sail to the channel of the Zambesi.<sup>35</sup>

Rather than return home on a British navy vessel, Livingstone decided to sail the *Lady Nyassa* to Bombay where he planned to sell his ship.<sup>36</sup> (He did not want to sell the vessel in East Africa for fear that it would fall into the hands of slave traders). Accompanied by two of the remaining British navy sailors, a British carpenter who had served with the UMCA, and nine young Africans from the UMCA mission, including Susi and Chuma,

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<sup>35</sup> As part of his cargo Livingstone took roughly three dozen Africans, many of them children, who had been at the mission, but were left without a home after the new Bishop decided to move the UMCA to Zanzibar. Waller, who resigned rather than move to Zanzibar, also joined Livingstone and supervised the placement of the Africans in a mission in Cape Town. This cemented the friendship of Livingstone and Waller.

<sup>36</sup> Livingstone only received £2300 for the vessel and later ended up losing this when the bank he deposited the money in went bankrupt.

Livingstone reached Bombay in forty-four days.<sup>37</sup> He stayed eleven days, reached an agreement to sell the *Lady Nyassa* and arrived in London July 23, 1864. From Livingstone's perspective - as well as in the public - the expedition had been a failure, if not a disaster. The Batoka Plateau had proved to be too inaccessible, the Shire Highlands were difficult to reach and beset by slavers and famine, two of the three missions spawned by Livingstone's call had resulted in death and controversy, no settlement was founded, no legitimate trade links were established, the East African slave trade now seemed unstoppable and, if this were not enough, Mary Livingstone died soon after their reunion. Livingstone's dream of building a small Christian colony based on his social, racial and economic theories, which seemed realistic at the outset of the expedition, now appeared to be untenable in the parts of Africa he had explored. Moreover, his leadership abilities, which were highly touted after his cross-continental journey, were now deemed questionable at best - unless he was leading a crew of Kololo.

## 6.2 Livingstone's African Colony: Visionary Blueprint for Change in Africa or an Impractical Dream?

After the shortcomings of the Zambesi Expedition had been exposed, explorers,

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<sup>37</sup> Livingstone scholar Gary Clendennen calls the journey "one of the most unusual sea voyages of the nineteenth century, perhaps not to be compared with the spectacular voyage of William Bligh from near Tahiti to Batavia (Jakarta) in an open boat late in the previous century, nor with Ernest Shackleton's heroic trip in a similar craft from Elephant Island [in the Antarctic] to South Georgia early in the present century, but nevertheless a tale of courage, endurance, and is often the case, good fortune." See *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 89.

geographers, geologists and the interested public came to recognize that the expedition had actually transformed the Western map of south-central and south-east Africa. If Livingstone had failed to establish a settlement or form a small colony, he had at least ‘discovered’ several lakes, charted previously ‘unknown’ rivers, mapped fertile lands where cotton could be grown and shown that the right amount of quinine could be used to fight malaria. With explorative achievements such as these, Livingstone’s Zambesi Expedition arguably laid the groundwork for the future colonization of the Shire Highlands and the territory around Lake Nyassa. Although there was no support for colonizing these areas during Livingstone’s lifetime, after his ‘heroic’ death his name was regularly invoked as his compatriots claimed the regions of Africa he had explored during the Zambesi Expedition for Britain. Even if these late-Victorian colonizers ignored his ideas about human rights and economic opportunity for Africans, Livingstone was thereafter perceived as a key figure in the colonization of Africa. While Britain held colonies in Africa, Livingstone’s name was seemingly synonymous with British colonial rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe and Zambia), Nyasaland (Malawi) and Bechuanaland (Botswana). Yet, despite his importance in British and African colonial history, Livingstone’s own colonial vision has received little attention from scholars. As I explained in Chapter Three, the anti-colonial statements he made during the British-Xhosa War of 1850-1853 have been ignored by most of his biographers (and all post-colonial theorists). At the same time, his 1857-1864 vision of how his small colony would function has been neglected or taken for granted by most scholars.<sup>38</sup> In light of

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<sup>38</sup> Alan Cairns’ six and half page analysis of Livingstone in *Prelude to Imperialism* (1965) along with Dorothy Helly’s analysis of Livingstone’s colonial vision in *Livingstone’s Legacy* (1987) are the most complex and complete analyses of the colonial ideas he put forth

Livingstone's place in African colonial history - and the lack of attention paid to him in current post-colonial theory - it remains important to investigate the nature of his colonial aspirations. There continues to be a need to demonstrate how the complexities within Livingstone's own ideas about empire were reflective of the contortions and contradictions inherent in Victorian ideas about imperialism in Africa.

In his writings and speeches, Livingstone failed to provide a concise blueprint outlining the size, political structure, racial makeup, or leadership of his proposed colony. References to his colonial plans are scattered throughout letters to friends and governmental representatives, his journal entries, as well as published sources like his *Missionary Travels*, *Cambridge Lectures* and *A Narrative of Expedition on the Zambesi and its Tributaries*. At times, he cast himself as the selfless leader of a 'benevolent' form of colonization that would, in theory, benefit all who were willing to follow his idealistic vision of racial cooperation. Elsewhere in print and in his unpublished writings, Livingstone's colonial scheme seemed exclusionist to the point of limiting emigration to racially 'respectable' white women. Underpinning his colonial vision, however, was the abolitionist desire to end the slave trade through the introduction of legitimate forms of trade, the development of African industries, the preaching of Christianity and the education of illiterate Africans. Livingstone's aims were clearly paternalistic, built on his belief in British national superiority, and further strengthened by his confidence that he was working in God's interest. Despite this cultural arrogance, his colonizing scheme was principally a humanitarian venture. For Livingstone, colonization was not a money-making process, a get rich ploy, or the path to achieving great

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at the time of the Zambesi Expedition.



personal power. It was not a means of displacing Africans with waves of British settlers who would appropriate traditional lands and resources. The Africans who lived within the borders of his proposed colony would not be compelled to provide unpaid labour or coerced to pay taxes which bound them to white landowners.<sup>39</sup> In his colonial vision, “benighted” Africans and morally-upstanding, working class Britons would cooperate to build a strong civil society, free from racial conflict, the abuse of authority, and forced labour. On this basis, the colonialism Livingstone espoused should not be seen as a retreat or departure from the anti-colonial stance he took in the early 1850s. The colonial vision that he championed during the Zambesi Expedition was in many ways a reaction to the abuse of power, settler mentality and racial conflict he decried in condemning British rule in the Cape Colony. Anthropologist John Comaroff has, for example, argued that nonconformist missionaries in Southern Africa - men like Philip, Read, Moffat and Livingstone - “took themselves to be the conscience of British colonialism, its moral commentators; to wit, it was this self appointed stance that was later to legitimize their occasional forays into colonial politics.”<sup>40</sup> Livingstone clearly believed that he could found a colony with a conscience, a Christian settlement that pursued a higher moral cause than the colonialism practised by white officials and settlers in the Cape Colony. But, to forge his colonial vision, Livingstone had to reconcile his utopian ideals with the more practical exigencies of empire-building. After all,

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<sup>39</sup> During the Zambesi Expedition, Livingstone made a practice of paying the Africans working with his crew on a daily basis. This was not common procedure among explorers. During his 1856-1858 journey with Speke, Burton only paid his African crew at the end of the journey.

<sup>40</sup> John L. Comaroff, “Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Demonstration in South Africa,” *American Ethnologist*, Volume 16, No. 4, 1989, p. 665.

Livingstone would have to attract suitably 'righteous' white settlers and traders to his colony - men and women who would exhibit the right type of morality and character. At the same time, if the colony was to effect the change he envisioned, he had to convince African chiefs and villagers to accept - and eventually join - the white settlers in their midst. Livingstone's writings lack details about how he would confront these issues when and if he encountered them in the building of his colony. Indeed, after his colonial dreams were shattered by the cataracts of the Cabora Basa rapids and the failure of the UMCA mission in the Shire Highlands, he never had the opportunity to work out the practical complexities within his colonial vision.

Despite the long list of disasters associated with Livingstone's attempt to found the settlement that would serve as the basis for his colony, he left a print legacy behind sketchily detailing his vision of colonialism. With the advice he had received from Murchison and Murray, Livingstone knew he had to tone down his criticisms of British colonial rule if he hoped to be seen as a credible colonizer working in the service of his country and his compatriots. To this end, he insisted in print that 'England' - more so than any other nation - embodied the spiritual and commercial attributes of a great civilization. He was prepared to declare that there was no society better equipped to provide the benefits of 'civilization' to Africa. "England occupies the highest position among the nations;" he wrote, "she is distinguished among them for her sterling integrity, and her sons for love of liberty in union with law. No nation equals her for practical benevolence and love of fair-play. And though unwittingly drawn into a position in South Africa by which her real character is obscured, we still have high hopes for the future; and our most earnest wishes for Africanders, both

black and white, are that they may resemble her children in virtue and honour.”<sup>41</sup> In letters to friends and supporters, Livingstone admitted that his nation had faults, having sold slaves and killed witches in its past for instance.<sup>42</sup> Yet, he believed that ‘England’ had demonstrated its power to change, revealing in the process that, “among other nations [it belonged] in the front rank of human kind.”<sup>43</sup> As I asserted in the last chapter, Livingstone took great pride in his country’s role in leading the abolitionist movement in Europe from the late eighteenth through the first decades of the nineteenth century. In his view, the ‘English’ attempt to put an end to the Atlantic slave trade brought honour and international prestige to his country. The Cape Colony might have continually failed to illustrate the ‘English’ reputation for ‘benevolence’ and ‘fair-play,’ but he believed his compatriots and even the government had exhibited his nation’s dignity, sense of morality, and even conscience, in other ways in Africa. Livingstone was proud of the fact that a squadron of Royal Navy Ships had patrolled the West Coast of Africa looking for slave ships since 1808.

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<sup>41</sup> David Livingstone, *South African Journal*, p. 95. This also appears in an appendix in Blaikie’s 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*.

<sup>42</sup> As Livingstone told his friend Bevan Braithwaite, “though we may not realize the length of the process which ended in the elevation of many [Britons], we [still] see pretty large masses of unchiselled rock among us. It is not so very long since we burned witches and even now some folks pay ‘wise one’s’ for their divination, just as the Makololo and some of the cleverest among us believe in second sight and do put faith in table turning and clairvoyances.” By coincidence, Burton practised divination, usually as a means of entertaining party guests. See David Livingstone to Bevan Braithwaite, 10 May, 1858, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20312. See also David Livingstone to Sid Strong, 25 March, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779 for similar ideas.

<sup>43</sup> David Livingstone to Frederick William Grey, 31 July, 1859, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779. Grey was the Commander-in-Chief of the Cape Naval Station, 1857-1860.

He was also firm in his belief that the State-funded Niger Expedition (1841-1842) had shown West Africans and international observers alike “the English love of commerce and English hatred of slavery.”<sup>44</sup>

A number of studies of Livingstone have noted that he was influenced by Thomas Fowell Buxton, the British abolitionist leader who conceived of the Niger Expedition. However, few of these works have reflected on the links between the type of colonialism advocated by Buxton and Livingstone’s colonial plans. Behind a wave of support from Exeter Hall, Buxton had convinced the British government to fund a expedition to West Africa with the primary goal of stopping the ongoing slave trade. Buxton had determined that the slave trade continued to flourish off the West African coast, despite abolitionist laws and the presence of the British squadron patrolling the coastline looking to stop slave ships heading to Brazil and Caribbean.<sup>45</sup> His plan, presented in detail in “two fat volumes,” called on his compatriots to combat slavery through an increased British colonial ‘presence’ along the coast and up the Niger river into the interior.<sup>46</sup> The members of the expedition were to sign treaties with local ‘tribes’ proscribing slavery while promoting the spread of lawful

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<sup>44</sup> In his view, the expedition “was therefore no failure.” David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 680.

<sup>45</sup> Buxton had estimated that over 150,000 Africans were still being exported across the Atlantic every year. On top of this, he believed that “for every slave embarked, one life is sacrificed.” Africans were dying in the slave march to the coast, in detention before being shipped, during the ‘Middle Passage,’ and soon after their arrival in South America or the Caribbean. Buxton, cited in John Gallagher, “Fowell Buxton and the New African Policy, 1838-1842,” *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1850, p. 41.

<sup>46</sup> Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, p. 299. The two books were *The African Slave Trade* (1839) and *The Remedy: Being a Sequel to the African Slave Trade* (1840). Both were published by John Murray.

trade. Buxton also called for the development of African agriculture, through the annexation of land and the establishment of a farming settlement that he hoped would become a model colony marrying racial cooperation and “the habits of settled industry.”<sup>47</sup> As part of this ‘civilizing’ mission, missionaries were also to provide religious and moral ‘enlightenment.’ Comprised of three ships, close to 150 Britons, a future African Bishop and dozens of African shipmates and translators, the Niger Expedition was considerably larger and more costly than the Zambesi Expedition.<sup>48</sup> In the public mind, it was also a greater disaster than Livingstone’s expedition - mainly because of the high death toll and rapid collapse of the highly touted expedition. Livingstone, however, was not deterred by the failure of the Niger Expedition in developing his own strategy to fight slavery and bring ‘civilization’ to the African interior. In Chapter Two, I mentioned that he had attended an 1840 meeting of the African Civilization Society at Exeter Hall in which Buxton had extolled the virtues of his plan to stop the Atlantic slave trade and ‘civilize’ West Africans. As historian Dorothy Helly has argued, Buxton’s “vision remained with Livingstone over the next twenty years.”<sup>49</sup> Livingstone’s unparalleled explorative experience and firsthand knowledge of the problems that faced Africans separated from him from Buxton, who planned the Niger expedition but did not accompany it to Africa. Yet, he clearly shared Buxton’s belief that a strategy that introduced legitimate trade, developed Africa’s natural resources, taught Western agricultural

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<sup>47</sup> Buxton, *The Slave Trade*, pp. 55-56, cited in Curtin, p. 301.

<sup>48</sup> The total cost of the Niger Expedition was £79,143. Samuel Crowther was a former slave from the Niger region who joined the Church Missionary Society and later rose to become a Bishop.

<sup>49</sup> Dorothy Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, p. 230.

techniques, spread Christianity, allowed for some British settlement, and used one of the continent's great rivers as a pathway into the interior, would go a long way to stopping slavery and 'civilizing' Africa. In Livingstone's view, the Niger Expedition had failed mainly because it sailed up the Niger at the time of the year when the crew of its three vessels would be most susceptible to malaria. For Livingstone, the problems that plagued the expedition were related to the health of the crew, not to Buxton's vision.

As Livingstone prepared to forge his way up the Zambesi with his crew, he pledged to avoid the mistakes that had cost the lives of so many of the men who had attempted to use the Niger as a pathway into the interior.<sup>50</sup> His letters and journals show that he had read many of the narratives written by members of the expedition.<sup>51</sup> The ideas of some of the surviving expedition doctors had convinced him that inactivity led to malaria, while regular doses of quinine and frequent physical exertion prevented fevers and led to good health. For example, he praised Dr. James Ormiston M'William's "admirable" *Medical History of the Niger Expedition* for revealing the active measures he had to taken avoid malaria during the expedition, including working on Sundays.<sup>52</sup> A subscriber to the British medical journal the

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, David Livingstone to J.J. Freeman, 14 November, 1849, *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence*, p. 140 and his comments in *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, pp. 270, 288, 310, 326-327, 388, 393.

<sup>51</sup> Livingstone had read Allen and Thomson's *Narrative of an Expedition to the River Niger in 1841* (1846), leading him to criticize these two expedition leaders for giving "trifling" presents to the African chiefs they encountered on the journey. See *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. II, p. 387. He was also in letter contact with Henry Trotter, commander of the expedition. See *David Livingstone: A Catalogue of Documents*, p. 234. See also *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 310.

<sup>52</sup> David Livingstone to the Earl of Malmesbury, 10 September, 1858, in *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 288. Livingstone actually seems to have struck

*Lancet*, Livingstone also had most likely read Dr. Thomas Thomson's "On the Value of Quinine in African Remittent Fever," published in the journal in 1846.<sup>53</sup> Thomson had dosed himself daily with quinine as a preventative to the 'African fever.' Even though he had spent considerable time on the shoreline, the doctor had escaped 'the fever' until he stopped taking the drug in the late stages of the Niger Expedition. Livingstone had consumed quinine when he could during his cross-continental journey and had his crew take it "regularly" during the Zambesi Expedition.<sup>54</sup> As he (and Kirk) told the Court Physician of Queen Victoria: "Warned by the fate of the Great Upper Niger Expedition, it was resolved that no necessary delay should take place in the [malarious Zambesi] and that the prophylactic aid of Quinine should be tried."<sup>55</sup>

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up a friendship with M'William and wrote him from the Zambesi giving his thoughts on the value of quinine as a preventative and cure for 'the fever.' See *David Livingstone: A Catalogue of Documents*, p. 165.

It should be noted that Livingstone's decision to work on the Sabbath initially caused some conflict between him and his crew. Both Bedingfeld and Rae initially refused to work on Sunday, as did some of the British missionaries and sailors associated with the expedition. In his *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi...*, Livingstone, without naming names, denigrated those who took this position: "This was a time .. for the feeble-minded to make a demand for their Sunday full of rest and full-meal hours, which even our crew of twelve Kroomen though tampered with, had more sense and good feeling than to endorse. It is a pity that some people cannot see that the true and honest discharge of the common duties of everyday life is Divine Service." David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, p. 23. .

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Thomson, "On the Value of Quinine in African Remittent Fever," the *Lancet*, February 1846. See Howard Temperley, *White Dreams, Black Africa: The Antislavery Expedition to the River Niger 1841-1842*, Yale University Press: London, 1991, p. 169 for a brief discussion of Thomson's article.

<sup>54</sup> See *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 310.

<sup>55</sup> Livingstone and Kirk combined to write a report to Sir James Clark, entitled "Remarks on the African Fever in the Lower Zambesi," and published in *The Zambezi*

With ample supplies of quinine and what he believed was a superior work ethic, Livingstone presumed he and his small crew could realize many of the same goals in Central Africa than Buxton had hoped to bring to fruition twenty years before in West Africa. Like Buxton, Livingstone was guided in his vision by the long established abolitionist conviction that 'legitimate trade' could destroy the slave trade. As early as 1789, William Wilberforce had championed a trade system which he believed would meet the African demand for British finished goods and the British demand for African raw materials, undermining any necessity Africans found in engaging in the slave trade.<sup>56</sup> In following Wilberforce's hypothesis, Livingstone envisioned that the introduction of British goods traded by merchants along the Zambesi would generate an impetus for change in African society and "soon drive the slave dealer from the market."<sup>57</sup> Similarly, he hoped the *Lady Nyassa* could be used both to trade with Africans and stop slavers attempting to cross the long and narrow lake. At the same time, he planned to introduce new crops to East and Central Africa, as well as show Africans how to best develop existing products - like cotton, coffee, sugar, tobacco, oil, wood and indigo - for trade. During his cross-continental journey, Livingstone had already begun this process. His Kololo crew had carried fruit trees and seeds from Angola to be planted for future harvest in Kolololand. One of Livingstone's plans as he and his British crew sailed up the Zambesi was to distribute cotton seeds to 'influential' chiefs in villages along the banks of the Zambesi. His goal was to help different African nations

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*Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 310.

<sup>56</sup> See Curtin, p. 69.

<sup>57</sup> David Livingstone, as cited by Cairns, p. 194.



develop crops for trade on world markets. As he explained to his crew at the outset of the expedition:

it will be our duty to visit [the most influential chiefs] and invite them to turn the attention of their people to the cultivation of cotton by giving them a supply of better seed than that which they already possess, and also explain the benefits that they would derive from an exchange of the natural productions of Africa, [such] as ivory, cotton, buaze, etc, for the manufactures of Europe, and generally hold every encouragement in order to induce them to give up their warlike and predatory habits, and substitute the more peaceable pursuits of agriculture and commerce.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to stimulating both the African and British economies, Livingstone hoped that the development of a strong African cotton industry would end the British reliance on cotton produced in the “American slave states.”<sup>59</sup> On the eve of the U.S. Civil War, he envisioned that African cotton - picked by waged African labour - could be an important tool in destroying the American use of slave labour.

As with the Niger Expedition, Livingstone’s economic agenda ultimately changed

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<sup>58</sup> David Livingstone to John Kirk, 18 March, 1858, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 420. Livingstone also asked the members of the UMCA mission to bring a supply of English seeds with them to Africa. To give the missionaries the skills necessary to teach Africans British agricultural techniques, Horace Waller “received elementary instruction in the cultivation and management of cotton.” See Helly, pp. 248-249, note #1.

<sup>59</sup> “Farewell Banquet to Dr. Livingstone,” *The Times*, 15 February, 1858. Livingstone told all who would listen that “cotton was now cultivated very extensively” in Africa. He had found that ‘many parts of the soil’ contained minerals which helped the cotton grow “almost spontaneously.” When he reached the Shire Highlands, he believed he had found a region “superior to the American, for, here we have no frosts to cut off the crops - and instead of the unmerciful toil required in the slave states, one sowing of foreign (probably American) seed already introduced by the people themselves serves crops for three years, even though the plants should be burned down annually. There may be evils to counter-balance these advantages, but I don’t know them yet.” David Livingstone to John Washington, 10 November, 1859, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10777 and David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 1 November, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 64.

few African lives. Crops had been planted at Buxton's model farm along the Niger, but when the expedition retreated soon after, the potential harvest was left to grow wild. Similarly, Livingstone and his crew managed to hand out seeds to some villagers during the expedition, but the bountiful yields that he imagined failed to materialize as a result of his efforts. After Livingstone's death, his compatriots put profits ahead of any humanitarian concerns they might have had, but did manage to grow crops in some of the regions he had explored. These colonial profiteers made a practice of trading British manufactured goods at inflated prices for undervalued African crops often picked by indentured African labour. Like his abolitionist predecessors who put so much faith in the idea that legitimate trade could drive out slavery, Livingstone had little interest in engaging in trade for profit.<sup>60</sup> As Kirk candidly wrote during the expedition: "He is honest himself, but as verdant as grass on money matters, and would only enter into [a mercantile venture] to benefit [Africa] and to work out his plans."<sup>61</sup> To the dismay of Kirk - who seemed to want to capitalize on his participation in the expedition - Livingstone's humanitarian concerns outweighed his desire for financial gain. Also implied in his comments, however, was the idea that Livingstone's lack of economic sense actually kept the expedition from establishing viable trade links or from developing Africa's natural resources.

The Zambesi Expedition was not only directed at helping raise the economic and

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<sup>60</sup> Livingstone's commission as British Consul prohibited him from engaging in trade for personal profit. However, it is clear that even without this constraint on his activities, his focus would not have changed.

<sup>61</sup> John Kirk and Alexander Kirk, 7 August, 1862, *The Zambesi Journal and Letters of Dr. John Kirk, 1858-1862*, 2 vols., edited by Reginald Foskett, Oliver and Boyd: Edinburgh, 1965, vol. II, p. 572.

social prospects of Africans. Livingstone's colonial vision was also built on the idea that working-class Britons - with class backgrounds much like his - could thrive in Central or East Africa, in a way they could not at home. As Alan Cairns writes: "As Livingstone trudged across Africa his mind was constantly concerned with finding some means of improving the condition of the British poor. As his thought evolved he increasingly saw the solution in an extensive emigration from the overcrowded British Isles."<sup>62</sup> In the 1840s, Livingstone had urged his parents to emigrate to North America, to join Charles in the United States or their eldest son John in Upper Canada.<sup>63</sup> However, after his cross-continental journey he was convinced that Africa presented a wonderful opportunity to help poor, 'hard-working' Britons find a better life. As he told one influential friend, "it seems to me that we ought in all our plans for the good of others, specially remember our own home poor - our honest poor."<sup>64</sup> In his class-based emphasis on British emigration, Livingstone departed from Buxton's aims with the Niger Expedition. Buxton had proposed that members of the Niger Expedition establish a model farming settlement. However, he saw no reason to send Britons - poor or otherwise - to enlarge the settlement or establish a small colony in the area. Once Africans had been taught to manage the farm, their white advisors were to return home. As part of his scheme, Buxton was in favour of Crown annexation of lands ruled by slave traders. However, he advanced no plans to place settlers alongside the British

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<sup>62</sup> Cairns, p. 195.

<sup>63</sup> After some years in Canada, John Livingstone (1811-1899) settled as a farmer in Listowel, Ontario.

<sup>64</sup> David Livingstone to General Charles Hay, 26 November, 1860, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20313.

officials who would presumably be stationed in these areas.

Although Livingstone had condemned British colonial rule in South Africa - including the white appropriation and annexation of Xhosa and Khoikhoi land and resources - he saw no contradiction in promoting his own settlement scheme on African land. In his work in Africa, Livingstone clearly believed he was operating with its peoples' best interests in mind, and in opposition to the forces of tyranny and oppression. Moreover, as a citizen of what he judged to be the most civilized society in the world, he concluded he and other like-minded Britons had a right to help 'civilize' Africans. During his cross-continental journey, Livingstone also came to the conclusion that the regions of Central Africa that he had explored could sustain a population influx. Although his journey had revealed that Central Africa was far more populated than had been assumed by generations of geographers, he maintained that there was more than enough unoccupied fertile land to support a small colony of his design. As Livingstone argued: "There is room ... to spare for English emigrants to settle on and work the virgin soil of the still untilled land of Ham. As the African need not be torn from his country and enslaved, no more need the English poor be crowded together in unwholesome dens, debarred from breathing the pure air of heaven. There is room for all in the wide and glorious domains of the Lord, the king of all the earth."<sup>65</sup> Whether or not it was simply to justify his colonial vision, Livingstone had come to argue that Africa, like England or any other geographical space, belonged first to God and only later to its native inhabitants. Moreover, he saw that "so much of this fair earth [was]

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<sup>65</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, pp.136-137.

unoccupied, and not put to the benevolent purpose for which it was intended by its Maker.”<sup>66</sup>

For Livingstone, God had intended the fertile earth to be tilled, with the intention of feeding the poor and hungry of the world. Since the lush and resource laden Batoka Plateau was unoccupied - with its former tenants, the Kololo, willing to allow British settlers - it would serve both God’s ‘benevolent’ and Livingstone’s settlement purpose. In this scenario, working-class British Christians with a good work ethic and a desire for self-improvement would be given the opportunity to escape industrial mill towns like Blantyre for the clean air and open fields of Africa.<sup>67</sup> “My heart is sore when I think of so many of our fellow countrymen in poverty and misery,” Livingstone told his daughter Agnes, “while they might be doing so much good to themselves and others where our Heavenly father has so abundantly provided fruitful hills and fertile valleys. If our people were out here, they would

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<sup>66</sup> David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Tributaries*, p. 264. And, as he argued elsewhere, “as there is enough land in this fair large world for all to spare, why should not the children of man not be spread abroad over all the world and receive its bounty...” David Livingstone, “Bombay Journal, 1864-1866,” National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10775.

<sup>67</sup> Although Livingstone wanted “hardworking” Christians to populate his colony, he envisioned that their new work life would be a respite from the grind of working in industrial Britain. In a statement that seemingly belied his own work ethic as both a mill hand and explorer, Livingstone imagined that his colony would be founded on a ethic “where time is absolutely of no account, a man may always sit down and rest himself when he is tired.” Perhaps recalling the toll mill work took on his fellow labourers, he theorized “[h]ow different all this is to the state of competition which in England wears out life.” This recalls a statement I cited in the previous chapter in which Livingstone wrote: “Had I been a slave, I would not have done anything after getting my freedom, but sunned myself by a hedge to the end of my days...” The first statement is found in Livingstone’s “Bombay Journal,” 29 March, 1864, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10775. The second, written a year later, is in a letter from David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 26 August, 1865, British Library, Additional Ms. 50184.

not be a need to cultivate little snatches by the sides of railways as they do...”<sup>68</sup>

In Livingstone’s mind, his proposed colony served a clear humanitarian purpose in helping the ‘deserving’ poor. His focus on the working-class in his emigration plan separated him from the mid-nineteenth century colonial theorists who advocated middle-class emigration.<sup>69</sup> However, Livingstone was far more concerned with counteracting what he saw as Britain’s traditional working-class emigration strategy than he was in contesting the approaches aimed at the middle-classes. He believed State policy placed too much emphasis on sending out workhouse residents on rate-aided emigration schemes.<sup>70</sup> In Livingstone’s view, more ‘respectable’ and ‘honest’ members of the working-class, people like his parents and unmarried sisters, were needed to populate the colonies. He concluded that they deserved the opportunity to represent ‘England’ in Africa or wherever else they chose to emigrate. Livingstone was particularly concerned that poor unwed mothers from workhouses be left out of his colonization scheme. This sexually exclusionist view led to his most racially charged call for British emigration. “Colonization from a country such as

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<sup>68</sup> David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 1 June, 1858, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184.

<sup>69</sup> For the early and mid Victorians who supported middle-class emigration schemes see Klaus. E. Knorr, *British Colonial Theories, 1570-1850*, University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1944. See also A. James Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1919*, Croom Helm: London, 1979. See also Helly, p. 258, note 45.

<sup>70</sup> As Dorothy Helly writes: “Schemes for the state supported emigration of paupers dated to the Colonial Office of the 1820s, when R.J. Wilmot-Horton proposed that Irish parishes mortgage their poor-rates to pay for the sending of paupers to Canada.” She adds that: “The Poor Law Commissioners of 1834 favoured this form of state-aided emigration; nearly 24,000 workhouse paupers were sent out between 1834 and 1853. See Helly, p. 258, note 43.

ours ought to be one of hope, and not of despair,” he declared in an 1859 journal entry labelled “private thoughts.”<sup>71</sup>

It ought not to be looked upon as the last and worst shift that a family can come to, but the performance of an imperative duty to our blood, our country, our religion and to human kind.... It is a monstrous evil that all our healthy, handy, blooming daughters of England have not a fair chance, at least, to become the centres of domestic affections. The state of Society which precludes so many of them from occupying the position which the English women are so well calculated to adorn, gives rise to enormous evils in the opposite sex, evils and wrongs which we dare not name. And national colonization is almost the only remedy. English women are in general the most beautiful in the world, and yet our national emigration had often, by selecting the female emigrants from workhouses, sent forth the ugliest huzzies in creation to be the mothers, the model mothers, of new empires.<sup>72</sup>

In response to this statement, historian Dorothy Helly has accurately commented that “Livingstone must have been aware that young women in workhouses were generally unwed mothers unable to support themselves and their children. Their sins of the flesh and their dependence upon state charity evidently made them ‘ugly’ in his eyes, in comparison with the beauty of ‘honest’ poor women.”<sup>73</sup> For Livingstone, workhouse women did not have the moral character he believed was necessary to participate in a Christian colony. Although Livingstone made no comment on moral characteristics of male workhouse residents, he seemed to believe that weak-minded men of any class lacked the character required to resist the temptations of sex offered by economically needy women. The practice of prostitution among colonists, in Livingstone’s mind, was definitely not the way to set a high moral

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<sup>71</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journals of David Livingstone*, vol. I, pp. 126-127.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* Note that huzzy was an alternative spelling of hussy.

<sup>73</sup> Dorothy Helly, pp. 257-258, note #43.

example in the colony that was supposed to exhort Africans to join the settlement and convert to Christianity. He was so adamant that the ‘deserving’ poor be given the chance to be a part of his colonization scheme that he pledged to “give £2000 or £3000 [of his own money] for the purpose.”<sup>74</sup> In letter to his close friend James ‘Paraffin’ Young, he wrote that he was prepared to anonymously sponsor the emigration of twenty to thirty poor British families who would act as the vanguard of his colony. He also asked Young to consult Lord Shaftesbury, the Duke of Argyll and two influential cotton merchants to see if these men would also be willing to support his class-based colonization scheme. “Much is done for the blackguard poor. Let us remember our class,” he told Young who had also been born into an ‘honest’ working-class family before achieving his great wealth.<sup>75</sup>

Livingstone firmly believed that if his colony was to have the ‘regenerative’ effects upon Africans that he envisioned, it would have to include the type of colonists who would lead by their Christian example.<sup>76</sup> Unlike the Cape Colony which attempted to segregate

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<sup>74</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 120. “They seem just the men we want and I have recommended them to ... try to set an example of independent industry and Christian industry before the inhabitants of the lake.”

<sup>75</sup> Cited in Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 222. James Young (1811-1883) was born in Glasgow and grew up in the city. In his youth he began to work with his carpenter/coffin-maker father. At university age, he continued to work with his father during the day, while attending evening classes in chemistry at Anderson's University in Glasgow. In 1832, he became an assistant to Thomas Graham, one of the foremost chemists of the day. Experimenting with shale and bituminous coal during the 1840s, Young discovered that by slow distillation he could obtain paraffin oil and paraffin wax, both of which were in high demand for lighting and heating and many other industrial processes.

<sup>76</sup> Livingstone did manage to attract a group of possible British male settlers to the ‘colony.’ During the final year of the expedition he received word from the Governor of Cape Town that six “Scottish mechanics” were willing to join him in building the settlement. The group was actually headed by Englishman John Jehan, a one time member of the London



blacks and whites in separate settlements, his colonization scheme proposed to bring Africans, like the Kololo, Mang'anga and Yao, into contact with righteous British colonists. As Livingstone argued, “[b]y linking the Africans there to ourselves, in the manner proposed, it is hoped that their elevation will eventually be the result.”<sup>77</sup> Livingstone hoped that his colony would act as a beacon of ‘civilization’, drawing Africans to Christianity, while demonstrating the evils of slavery and the material and moral benefits of legitimate commerce. As part of this scenario, he imagined that “thousands of industrious natives would gladly settle round [the British colonists] and engage in the peaceful pursuit of agriculture and trade of which they are so fond, and, undistracted by wars and rumours of wars, might listen to the purifying and ennobling truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>78</sup> Here Livingstone envisioned former British mill workers and onetime African warriors working

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City Mission. After reading *Missionary Travels*, Jehan was convinced that “a few mechanics could be induced to enter into a journey of exploration” into the African interior. He then formed a collective with five young Scottish men - 2 masons, 2 carpenters and a blacksmith - their wages going into a common fund. They travelled to Cape Town and plied their trades there with the hope of later joining the Zambesi Expedition in the Shire region. As Livingstone told the Governor, “they seem just the men we want and I have recommended them to ... try to set on example of independent industry and Christian life before the inhabitants of the Lake [Nyassa].” However, as Gary Clendennen writes, the men “never reached Livingstone, perhaps because they heard of the high death toll in the Zambesi-Shire valley in 1863, or because they were advised of the Expedition’s imminent recall.” See David Livingstone to Frederick William Grey, February 1863, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10777; John Jehan to John Burnet (a Civil Commissioner in the Cape Colony), 8 September, 1862, *David Livingstone’s Shire Journal*, p. 51. Clendennen, *David Livingstone’s Shire Journal*, p. 107, note 213. See also Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 261

<sup>77</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 680.

<sup>78</sup> Livingstone, cited in Blaikie, p. 228.

side by side cultivating the fertile fields of the Batoka Plateau or the Shire Highlands.<sup>79</sup> Free from 'tribal' tyranny and the threat of slavery, Africans would have the opportunity to live a better life. When they understood the economic and social advantages brought by cotton

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<sup>79</sup> Based on their use of a statement Livingstone made after the Zambesi had been completed, a number of Livingstone scholars have misinterpreted the working relationship he envisioned between his British settlers and the Africans whom he hoped would join the colony. As he sailed from Africa to Bombay in 1864, Livingstone wrote: "Englishmen cannot compete in manual labour of any kind with natives. But he can take a leading part in managing the land.... [I]n all public matters he would be an unmixed advantage to every one around and below him for he would fill a place which is now practically vacant." Blaikie, Seaver and more recently Cairns, Jeal and Helly have used this statement to argue that Livingstone planned to establish a hierarchical working relationship in his colony based on race. In citing these remarks, scholars have failed to note that they were not part of the colonial vision he planned to carry out during the Zambesi Expedition. Moreover, he made no other statements which indicate that he believed whites should manage Africans in the colony. The 'honest' and 'hardworking' British 'poor' that he hoped would join his colony were chosen for this role specifically because they were largely landless labourers needing a space to farm. These people were not coming to Africa to 'manage' Africans. They were emigrating to Africa to manage their own lives after being given an opportunity to improve their lot in life. The statement should be seen more as a reflection of Livingstone's opinion about the physical abilities of Africans and Britons. During the expedition, he had seemingly come to believe that Africans were willing and able to apply themselves to physically taxing work, while Britons - as reflected by his crew - were averse to such a work ethic. For example, in February 1863, he asserted that he would rather work with an African crew than the British crew provided with the *Pioneer*. He complained that all the British sailors were "sick or pretending to be so. It would be well to get rid of them all and have no more man of war's men. This crew is a complete nuisance. The black crew does all the work and the white all the growling and swearing." Given this opinion and his feelings about his own British crew it remains curious why Livingstone would want whites as managers. Clearly, he had no intention of using Africans as indentured labourers. Finally, note that studies of Livingstone have ignored a comment he made during his last expedition about the racial makeup of his proposed colony which conflicts with his 1864 statement. As he told Bevan Braithwaite, he now thought that British emigration to Africa was an unworthy cause because "English people in a new country often show themselves to be born fools." Livingstone's journal entry is found in his 'Bombay Journal,' National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10775. His remarks about the *Pioneer's* white crew are in *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 68. His letter to Bevan Braithwaite, is dated 15 January, 1872, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779. See also Blaikie, *The Personal Life of Livingstone*, p. 279, Seaver, p. 444, Cairns, p. 196, Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 223, Helly, p. 245.

farming and other forms of legitimate commerce, they would associate these gains with the morality of the settlers in their midst. Africans would then be more willing to accept the gospel and the other 'civilizing' tools he believed the British offered. Over time, these factors would work together to produce a strong African 'civilization.' Livingstone, however, made no comment about whether the future society he envisioned within the borders of his colony would be a 'mulatto' community. He may not have considered the moral implications of bringing Africans and Britons to work and live together. Or, he may have judged that the idea of blacks and whites marrying and producing 'civilized' offspring would be too objectionable to mention when trying to sell his colonizing scheme. Yet, as I established in the last chapter, Livingstone realized one of the legacies of colonialism was the development of inter-racial societies. As his thoughts on polygenism and the African-Portuguese peoples of Angola confirm, he believed racially-mixed communities could flourish under the 'right conditions.'

As my narrative account of the Zambesi Expedition demonstrates, the 'right conditions' failed to materialize during the expedition to enable Livingstone to live out his colonial dream. The Batoka Plateau proved unreachable because of the Cabora Basa rapids, the Zambesi and the Shire rivers were unnavigable for most of the year, the Shire Highlands were beset by slave traders and drought, the mission stations he had called for were devastated by malaria, the Britons he had selected to join him on his quest had proved, in his mind at least, to be ill prepared for the job, and finally the death of Mary meant she could not join him at the settlement if it was ever established. Some of these outcomes were beyond his control, but others were entirely due to his own a lack of planning, want of judgement and

naive sense of overconfidence. As one of the few writers willing to look critically at Livingstone's colonizing scheme, Alan Cairns has argued that his colonial vision suffered "seriously from an oversimplification" which largely robbed of it any practical "value." He posits that only Livingstone's "uncritical optimism" allowed him to balance the multiple objectives within his scheme harmoniously. Even if Livingstone's plans had somehow come to fruition, Cairns adds, "the transition from [African] tribalism to a way of life dominated by western standards and values was inevitably bound to be a disruptive process."<sup>80</sup> Although Livingstone seemed to be convinced that his plans to establish a settlement and wipe out slavery with legitimate trade were practical and entirely realizable, the scope of his scheme was a utopian dream. Buxton's Niger Expedition had not failed for the simple reason that many of its crew were stricken with malaria - as Livingstone and others posited. The death rate due to malaria during the expedition was no higher than during previous expeditions in West Africa.<sup>81</sup> Even with three ships, a large crew and an even larger budget, the expedition quickly proved to be unfeasible. The scope of Buxton's vision was too broad to be realizable given the planning and resources that had been devoted to the expedition. With a smaller crew, fewer resources, less planning and an even broader ambition, Livingstone's expedition and colonial vision appeared condemned to a similar outcome.

After the enormous success of his cross-continental journey, Livingstone seemed to believe he could transcend any obstacle he set for himself, no matter if it seemed unattainable

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<sup>80</sup> Cairns, pp. 198-199.

<sup>81</sup> Curtin writes that the mortality rate "was no higher than should have been expected; but it was higher than the planners had anticipated, and the disaster was magnified by the false hopes of the enthusiasts." Curtin, p. 303.

or impractical. In *Missionary Travels*, and in lectures and speeches like the one he gave at his 'farewell banquet,' he also convinced the British public and their public representatives that he could attain goals that might have seemed impossible. The British reading public knew his story, his rise from poor mill-worker, to university-student, to doctor, to missionary-explorer. In 1857-1858 - at the height of his living influence - he was Samuel Smiles' archetype of the self-improved, self-made man. He had eclipsed all previous explorers in Africa by crossing the continent, revealing his 'character' and the previously unknown geography of Central Africa in the process. If he said he could introduce legitimate trade, end the slave trade, sail the Zambesi, or establish a settlement in an area he had mapped, then why should he be doubted? On this basis, fifteen years after the disaster of the Niger Expedition, Livingstone managed to assure Britons that he could succeed where Buxton and his representatives had failed. In Livingstone's view and in the public mind, his colonial dreams were not utopian. To his mass of supporters his plans may have been idealistic, but they were not necessarily unrealistic. Livingstone was a hero and heroes were meant to succeed against the toughest odds.

When the news that Livingstone's expedition was not going as planned reached Britain, even his closest friends and greatest partisans could see that his vision had been flawed. RGS President Roderick Murchison, who had been instrumental in securing Livingstone's Consulship as well as state funding for the expedition, tried to warn his friend that his plans no longer captured the British imagination. "Your colonization scheme does not meet with supporters," Murchison wrote, "it being thought that you must have much more hold on the country before you attract Scotch families to emigrate and settle there, and

then die off, or become a burden to you and all concerned, like the settlers of old Darien.”<sup>82</sup> Murchison’s analogy to the failed 1698 Scottish trading settlement in Central America was a stern warning to his friend.<sup>83</sup> The RGS President had looked beyond Livingstone’s overconfidence to anticipate that ‘fever,’ dissension, inter-African conflict and clashes with surrounding Africans threatened his friend’s proposed colony. Additionally, after apprising the British government of his desire to establish a colony in the Shire Highlands, Livingstone had been informed by Prime Minister Palmerston that the British government was “very unwilling to embark on new schemes of British possessions.”<sup>84</sup> In the note, which had been sent to Livingstone by Foreign Minister Russell, Palmerston added that “Dr. L’s information is valuable, but he must not be allowed to tempt us to form colonies only to be reached by forcing steamers up cataracts.”<sup>85</sup> Like Murchison, Palmerston had initially supported Livingstone’s plans. However, his experience in dealing with the Niger Expedition twenty years before as British Foreign Secretary had seemingly forewarned him that Livingstone’s

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<sup>82</sup> Roderick Murchison to David Livingstone, no date provided, cited in Blaikie’s *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 243.

<sup>83</sup> For an examination of Darien, see John Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, Secker and Warburg: London, 1968.

<sup>84</sup> Foreign Office 63/871, cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 222.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* However, as Livingstone told his friend Bevan Braithwaite, Lord Russell did have some kind words for the work ethic, if not the manliness, he had exhibited during the expedition. According to Livingstone, Russell had informed him that “the reports of the proceedings of your expedition have been read with great interest and the discretion, courage and perseverance that you have shown in the face of great trials [and] difficulties merit the highest approbation.” David Livingstone to Bevan Braithwaite, 21 November, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20312.

plans had become impractical.<sup>86</sup>

Livingstone, however, was not deterred by these votes of non-confidence. He literally continued to try to 'force steamers up cataracts' in an effort to overcome the barriers that plagued his path. As Jeal has argued: "Whenever circumstances had threatened to crush Livingstone in the past he had fought back by forcing himself to go through some physically gruelling exploring."<sup>87</sup> As the expedition progressed, Livingstone's "previously inflexible determination [only] hardened into an obsessive, almost masochistic desire to push himself to the limits of human endurance."<sup>88</sup> At the same time as he pushed himself, he continued

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<sup>86</sup> According to Curtin, Palmerston "was not favourably impressed with Buxton's plans for the Niger Expedition." Palmerston's position at that time was that "diplomatic negotiation with the European slaving powers [w]as the best weapon against the slave trade." Russell, often at odds with Palmerston over pressing political issues during their long tenure together in the British Parliament, gave crucial support to Buxton's plans which allowed them to proceed. See Curtin, p. 302.

Livingstone continued to have a high opinion of Palmerston, despite the Prime Minister's stance on his plans for the Shire (and previous opposition towards the Niger Expedition). Throughout the 1860s, Livingstone saw Palmerston as the most important British figure concerned with the abolition of slavery in Africa. Despite widespread criticism that the policy was ineffective and overly costly, Palmerston had continued to support the funding of British anti-slave cruisers off Africa's West Coast. As Livingstone told his daughter Agnes, he had once joined people like Burton in criticizing Palmerston's policy, but later realized he had made a mistake: "This plan was begun by Lord Palmerston whose name will be held in everlasting remembrance. People told no end of stories to throw discredit on his policy and they did it so plausibly that I formerly believed them and got a lesson never to again give implicit belief to anything till I have seen to the bottom of it." He later told Agnes of his great respect for Palmerston "who had been working silently and hard for many long years to put down the slave trade. I feel very proud and thankful that our country produces such men.... My dear imitate him in sticking through life to what's in your heart and conscience..." See David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 18 December, 1862 and 24 February, 1863, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184.

<sup>87</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 261.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

to expect that his crew to display a comparable level of ‘manly’ perseverance. However, with the exception of Kirk, the white men under his command usually failed to live up the standard of effort that he demanded. Ironically, for a man who took pride in Britain and hoped to build a colony with its representatives, Livingstone had little faith in the ability of the small band of Britons he had personally selected to carry out his colonial vision. The next section examines how these men failed to live up to the level of manliness Livingstone expected of them during the expedition.

6.3 “I do not like to say all my companions had courage and perseverance because some had neither the one nor the other:” Manliness and the Failure of White Males During the Zambesi Expedition

As Livingstone and his initial crew of six Britons journeyed from Britain to Africa to begin the Zambesi Expedition, he presented the men with a list of instructions and directives that each man was to follow throughout the expedition. Each of the men received certain orders that were specific to their position. Yet, all of the men also received a set of common commandments that conveyed the basic aims of the expedition, such as the development of African agriculture and trade and the “extinction of the slave trade.”<sup>89</sup> In these common directives, Livingstone also enjoined his crew to demonstrate a high sense of morality in the way they comported themselves during the expedition, particularly in the way

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<sup>89</sup> See David Livingstone to Commander Norman Bedingfeld, 10 April, 1858, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 413 or David Livingstone to John Kirk, 18 March, 1858, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872: David Livingstone’s Correspondence in the Brenthurst Library Johannesburg*, edited by Maurice Boucher, Brenthurst Press: Houghton, South Africa, 1985, p. 103.



they acted in the company of Africans. For example, he exhorted the men to recognize that

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moral influence ... may be exerted on the mind of the natives by a well regulated and orderly household of Europeans setting an example of consistent moral conduct to all who may congregate around the [proposed] settlement, treating the people with kindness and relieving their wants, teaching them to make experiments in agriculture, explaining to them the more simple arts, imparting to them religious instruction as far as they are capable of receiving it and inculcating peace and good will to each other.... The chiefs of tribes and the leading men of villages ought to always be treated with respect and nothing should be done to weaken their authority.... No great result is ever attained without patient long-continued effort. In the enterprise in which we have the honour to be engaged, deeds of sympathy, consideration and kindness ... if steadily persisted in are sure to exercise a commanding influence.<sup>90</sup>

The directives that Livingstone gave to his men clearly placed an emphasis on the moral character of the expedition.<sup>91</sup> At the outset of the expedition, he seemed to believe that the six Britons he had selected for this task would uphold a morality that mixed a healthy respect for Africans with a hatred of slavery. As he told his crew in the closing statement of the instructions: "I rejoice most unfeignedly in being associated with you in this noble undertaking and feel... the fullest confidence in your zeal in the great cause of African

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 415-416 and pp. 104, 106.

<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, Livingstone's instructions showed that he also attached a sense of morality to the hunting of animals, particularly the protection of endangered species. As he told his men, "I would earnestly press on you the duty of a sacred regard [for animal] life and never to destroy it unless some justifiable end is to be answered by its extinction.... The wanton waste of animal life which I have witnessed from night-hunting and from the ferocious but childlike abuse of instruments of destruction ... make[s] me anxious that none of my companions should be guilty of similar abominations." See David Livingstone to John Kirk, 18 March, 1858, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872*, p. 106.

civilization...”<sup>92</sup> Conversely, Livingstone’s instructions contained no description of the physical effort he expected of them as “influential pioneers” in Africa.<sup>93</sup> In reading *Missionary Travels*, the men may have got a sense of the physical hardships Livingstone was willing to endure to reach his goals, whether they were morally grounded or more corporeal based. Yet, he did not try to communicate this ideal - at least in writing - to the men as they began the expedition.

As mentioned, Livingstone had met Norman Bedingfeld in Luanda in 1854, while the navy commander’s vessel was docked at the Angolan port town. At the time, the two men became friends, although Livingstone was not clear on the reasons why they bonded. However, judging by Livingstone’s great respect for the efforts of Britain’s navy in detaining slave ships off the coast of West Africa, it seems that he assumed Bedingfeld was a fellow Briton who shared his fervour for the abolitionist cause. As Livingstone selected his crew, a friendly Royal Navy Commander - with experience leading his own (larger) crew in the fight against slavery - would have been an obvious choice to act as his second in command. Soon after they arrived at the mouth of the Zambesi, however, it was clear that the two ‘friends’ could not work together. Bedingfeld’s career had been built on the command of hundreds of men. As Livingstone’s naval officer, he captained a much smaller vessel than he was used to and held rank over only five of his fellow Britons. Judging by his behaviour during his brief time with the expedition, he was a man used to functioning through the

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<sup>92</sup> David Livingstone to Commander Norman Bedingfeld, 10 April, 1858, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 417.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

hierarchies of rank, regiment and discipline. However, under Livingstone's command these attributes held little sway. With only slow progress up the Zambesi after the expedition reached the river, Bedingfeld had little opportunity to carry out his traditional duties and began to question Livingstone's orders. He soon offered his resignation, but it was refused by Livingstone who was unsure of his own ability to command the *Ma-Robert*. However, after what he judged to be Bedingfeld's continued "carping, complaining and raising objections," Livingstone officially dismissed his second in command.<sup>94</sup> As Livingstone explained it, Bedingfeld presumed that as the only crew member who could steer a vessel, he was irreplaceable and used this situation to his advantage over Livingstone and the rest of the crew. "My naval officer thought we could move neither hand nor foot without him and resigned first, when we entered the Zambesi, and subsequently when he thought I could not get rid of him," Livingstone told William Oswell. With a sense of triumph he added, "I was mild as possible till I saw that he meant to ride rough shod over all authority -- but then I assumed the charge of the steamer, and when I made the first trip more successfully than he had ever done, I never saw a human face lengthen as did Bedingfeld's."<sup>95</sup>

Livingstone's letters and journals reveal that his grievances with his naval officer went much further than Bedingfeld's refusal to except the chain of command. In

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<sup>94</sup> David Livingstone to Lord Malmesbury, 31 July, 1858, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 273. Livingstone was also angered that Bedingfeld had "insisted on stopping in the [malarious Zambesi] delta ... to paint the ship though it had been thoroughly painted both inside and out and ... was only six weeks in the water. The whole Expedition had to stand in a most unhealthy spot for some days even after it was found impossible to paint more than 18 inches of the sides..." David Livingstone, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 2 April, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 58

Livingstone's view, Bedingfeld also lacked both the mettle and moral character to succeed in his position. In particular, Livingstone believed the naval officer had come to Africa to serve his own agenda, rather than work in support of the expedition's goals, even going so far as to try to lead the other crew members into mutiny. According to Livingstone, Bedingfeld

came to exalt himself, and began to scheme his own promotion by my fall. He tampered with the Kroomen telling them he would soon be out again to Sierra Leone in command of another ship and would give jobs to those he knew, but they nobly declined to be led into mutiny by him..... At the Cape [after his firing] he tried all he could to damage my character and work. In so far as he was concerned, my plan [for Africa] does not seem to have possessed much 'far seeing wisdom.' I never before met with such a barefaced dirty hypocrite as he.<sup>96</sup>

Livingstone thus gave the impression that he had been duped into thinking Bedingfeld shared his philanthropic goals for Africa. Provoked by this 'duplicity,' he mocked Bedingfeld's ambitions, telling a friend that "though this 'Philanthropist' did his best to leave us like a sucked orange, we don't give in.... Fancy our great gawky naval officer possessed of the idea that instead of coming to seek Africa's health, he came to discover the ten lost tribes [of Israel]."<sup>97</sup> It is not clear whether Bedingfeld was actually interested in finding 'the ten lost tribes' or whether Livingstone used the idea as an allegory for the naval officer's lack of interest in the expedition's goals. He may also have been attempting to slight Bedingfeld's religious beliefs. Bedingfeld was a Christian, but his faith seemed to be the type that

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<sup>96</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 135-136 and David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 2 April, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 58.

<sup>97</sup> David Livingstone to Frederick Fitch, 28 October, 1859, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779. Note that Livingstone's printing of health was difficult to discern and may have been wealth. The intent is the same, no matter the word.

Livingstone had rejected in embracing Congregationalism. “I may tell you that between ourselves,” he informed William Oswell, “Bedingfeld was an awful bore from extra ostentatious piety – associated with terrible forgetfulness of statement. His *private* devotion[al] needs must be performed in the most public place in the vessel.”<sup>98</sup> Although Livingstone did not include it in his official report on Bedingfeld, he enjoyed telling his friends about this pious Christian’s great ‘moral’ lapse. According to Livingstone, a younger Bedingfeld had contracted syphilis which subsequently developed into an embarrassing bladder problem. “You think me uncharitable about Bedingfeld,” he told Bevan Braithwaite, “but one cannot feel lovingly to a dirty venereal Christian. He had the most intractable of the all the sequella of syphilis - syphilitic irritable bladder and used a gutta-percha tube in England for the perpetual recovery of discharge in public streets to the effect of his sins.”<sup>99</sup> In the letters he had received from Livingstone, Braithwaite had evidently thought his friend had been too harsh in his condemnation of his naval officer. However, it is clear from these remarks and from those he made about other Britons during the Zambesi Expedition, that once Livingstone turned against a crew member, he felt there was no moral difficulty in discussing their real or rumoured ‘vices’ or ‘weakness’ with his friends. As far as Livingstone was concerned Bedingfeld’s “cantankerousness,” ‘hypocrisy,’ ‘piety’ and sense of morality were synonymous with his lack of character and hence his failure to demonstrate manliness during the expedition. If these purported shortcomings were not enough to

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<sup>98</sup> David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 2 April, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 58. Emphasis in original.

<sup>99</sup> David Livingstone to Bevan Braithwaite, 7 February, 1860, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20312.

convince Braithwaite or anyone else about Bedingfeld's shortcomings as a British citizen in Africa, Livingstone was ready to proclaim the Royal Navy Commander a "coward."<sup>100</sup> He made this charge explicit in telling James Young to "[a]sk Rae about Bedingfeld's performance on the battlefield at Mazaro. It was a regular case of showing the white feather. He was quite pale and so frightened he forgot my order to send the Kroomen."<sup>101</sup> If the charge of cowardice was not enough to lay against a naval commander, Livingstone also questioned his mettle as a seaman by informing others, including a British ship's captain, that he regularly saw Bedingfeld "seasick."<sup>102</sup> This provoked him to tell Oswell: "If you have a war with such fellows to command woe betide our navy."<sup>103</sup>

Livingstone likely overstated Bedingfeld's faults to justify his firing, as he did with Baines and Thornton. However, as Tim Jeal writes "few members of the party were sad to

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> David Livingstone to James Young, 7 February, 1860, *Letters and Documents*, p. 67. Early in the expedition Livingstone and his crew had encountered about 200 African anti-Portuguese "rebels" at Mazaro, a settlement near the mouth of the Zambesi. Livingstone reported that the rebels "were well armed [and] ready to dispute our progress [but] on my calling out that we were English they raised a shout of joy and at once ran off to bring bananas and fowl for sale." Apparently Bedingfeld, Rae and some of the Kru men were on the *Ma Robert*, while Livingstone and a Portuguese Governor were on shore. When shots were fired Rae reported that Bedingfeld yelled 'Let's get out of this as soon as possible,' without care whether the others boarded the vessel first. He also refused to go on shore to try to rescue Livingstone and the Governor. It turned out the Governor had been shot and that Livingstone carried him to safety. See David Livingstone to Sir Morton Peto, 21 June, 1858, *Letters and Documents*, p. 53 and Livingstone's journal entry for February 27, 1860 in *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, pp. 152-153.

<sup>102</sup> David Livingstone to Captain Denman, 19 February, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 57.

<sup>103</sup> David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 2 April, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 59.

see him go.”<sup>104</sup> John Kirk, for example, pinpointed that the naval officer refused to accept Livingstone’s authority as expedition leader. Bedingfeld, Kirk declared, “seems to have expected to live the life of a Man of War Commander and [had] no idea of being a subordinate... I did not see much desire for scientific observations and of surveying. He had no more knowledge than any other one with little common sense. We have certainly been unfortunate in our men. Bedingfeld was not the man at all...” that he was expected to be.<sup>105</sup> Livingstone failed to realize that a man of his stature and influence to did not have to go to extremes to discredit the character of another man. Bedingfeld’s continued insubordination was enough to justify his firing.<sup>106</sup>

Bedingfeld’s firing motivated Livingstone to question whether his leadership was responsible for the early departure of the naval officer. Moreover, as he told Kirk, he hoped that problems with Bedingfeld would be the last turmoil to plague his relationship with his crew. “I am not conscious of anything disagreeable or harsh in my conduct,” he informed Kirk, “nor have I been quarrelsome with anyone, and in sending evidence to the foreign office I do so with extreme regret and sorrow that public duty requires it to be done against any of our number. I earnestly hope and pray that nothing may arise to disturb the harmony

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<sup>104</sup> Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 207. Actually every crew member was willing to write a letter in support of Livingstone’s decision to fire Bedingfeld.

<sup>105</sup> John Kirk, *The Zambesi Journal and Letters of John Kirk*, vol. I, p. 45 and vol. II, p. 546. See also Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 207.

<sup>106</sup> Bedingfeld’s run-in with Livingstone and quick departure from the expedition did not hurt his career. During the 1870s, he rose in rank to become an Admiral in the British Navy.

which has hitherto existed among the rest of us.”<sup>107</sup> Harmony, however, was never a characteristic of Livingstone’s crew. Within a year of Bedingfeld’s departure, the firing of Thornton and Baines shattered whatever cohesion Livingstone imagined had existed within the team he had assembled.

Young Richard Thornton had been plagued by malaria and a lack of experience from the time of his arrival in Africa. As the expedition entered its second year, Livingstone and Kirk concentrated on exploring the Shire Highlands and Lake Nyassa, leaving the remaining crew members to live and work in and around Tete. Before his second voyage to the region - commencing in mid-March 1859 - Livingstone ordered Thornton to work at mining an exposed coal seam near Tete. He had been disappointed with his geologist’s work effort to that point, writing in his journal that “Thornton is evidently disinclined to geologize and has done next to nothing the last three months.”<sup>108</sup> Livingstone understood that the young geologist had been ill and was willing to give him one more chance to prove he deserved to keep his job. However, when he returned to Tete in June he found that Thornton had failed to perform his duties at an acceptable level. He quickly sent Thornton a letter explaining that he was to be relieved of duty because of his failure “to fulfill the object of his appointment” as the expedition’s geologist.<sup>109</sup> “According to your own report,” Livingstone told Thornton, you did as little geology as possible.... Seeing you disinclined to work at

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<sup>107</sup> David Livingstone to John Kirk, 25 August, 1858, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872, David Livingstone’s Correspondence in the Brenthurst Library Johannesburg*, p. 110.

<sup>108</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 88.

<sup>109</sup> David Livingstone to Richard Thornton, 25 June, 1859, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol I, p. 112.



general geology, I set you to run a shaft into one of the coal seams to ascertain the quality at a proper distance in... I visited you on March 14<sup>th</sup> last and you were ordered to proceed with this work. You returned from it on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, having with the people accomplished only 13 feet nine inches. And though in perfect health, you have continued idle ever since. Hearing you were remaining here idle, I sent an order from Senna for you to go on with the geological examination of the district. This you have not attended to. I am therefore compelled by your repeated disobedience of orders, to inform you that your salary is stopped from the third of May, the date at which you retired from one duty and declined beginning another. It is with great reluctance that I take this step, but your failure to do your duty forces me, however unwilling, to do mine to H. M's Government and separate you from the Expedition.<sup>110</sup>

This served as Livingstone's explanation for his overall judgement that Thornton was "insufferably lazy."<sup>111</sup> This was enough for Livingstone to question the young man's manliness. In his journal, moreover, he left no doubt not only that he thought Thornton was unmanly, but also that he believed the geologist was 'guilty' of effeminacy. After his firing, Thornton stayed in the Tete area and continued to look for geological samples, but again was set back by malaria. He was treated by Kirk at which point Livingstone believed he responded in a manner that was unbecoming in a man. Thornton's, Livingstone wrote, "is a case of complete collapse. [He] wished to be invalided by giving Dr. K[irk] many contradictory symptoms. He several times had hysteria, the fits of laughing and crying, rising

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol I, p. 136. This was a charge Livingstone levelled at Thornton in other writings. For example, he told Roderick Murchison that "It is with extreme regret that I have to inform you that your protege Thornton has turned out insufferably lazy and so absolutely useless as a geologist that much against my will I have stopped his salary and must soon send him home." David Livingstone to Roderick Murchison, 22 July, 1859, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872, David Livingstone's Correspondence in the Brenthurst Library Johannesburg*, p. 140.

in throat and flatus, resembling exactly that met with in females.”<sup>112</sup>

If Livingstone believed Thornton lacked the temperament to “rough it in the field,” he also judged that this personal shortcoming was matched by a lack of moral character. Livingstone was clearly upset that his young and presumably impressionable young geologist had become friendly with the “filthy” Portuguese at Tete, including slave traders.<sup>113</sup> The Mayor of Tete - a onetime slave trader himself - had even given Thornton a young slave boy.<sup>114</sup> Livingstone had been offered many young slaves as gifts or for trade during his time in Africa and always admonished the Africans who attempted to make the deal.<sup>115</sup> As a member of an expedition assembled in part to suppress slavery, Thornton’s actions - even if he was treating the ‘boy’ well - were only aiding and abetting the slave trade. If this were

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<sup>112</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol I, p. 115. For an analysis of male/female hysteria see Mark S. Micale, “Hysteria Male/Hysteria Female: Reflections on Comparative Gender Construction in Nineteenth-century Medicine” in *Science and Sensibility: Gender and Scientific Enquiry, 1780-1945*, edited by Marina Benjamin, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1991.

<sup>113</sup> Livingstone wrote that “our [British] presence seems a constant protest against the.. filthy living [of the Portuguese], and anyone who joins their orgies, as Baines and Thornton did, is sure of their sympathy.” It is more than likely that when Livingstone talked of orgies he was referring to boisterous, rowdy parties that involved drinking, but not sexual intercourse. David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol., p. 150. See also Clendennen, *Livingstone’s Shire Journal*, p. 157.

<sup>114</sup> The boy’s name was Segwati. After Thornton’s death, he was returned to the mayor, a man named Clementino de Souza. See *The Zambezi Papers of Richard Thornton: Geologist to Livingstone’s Zambezi Expedition*, 2 vols., edited by Edward Tabler, Chatto and Windus: London, 1963, vol. II, p. 178, note 1.

<sup>115</sup> For example, late in the Zambesi Expedition Livingstone told Waller that a “headwoman asked ... if I wished to buy a child or a boy. We are often asked the same question...” See David Livingstone to Horace Waller, 1 September, 1863, National Library of Scotland, Acc. 10115.

not enough to provoke Livingstone's ire, he also heard that the geologist had "struck and kicked" some of the Africans that had been assigned to work with him in his mining projects.<sup>116</sup> One of Livingstone's instructions to Thornton and the rest of the crew had been to 'treat' Africans with "kindness" in order to "inculcate peace and goodwill to each other."<sup>117</sup> In Livingstone's mind, Thornton had failed to understand that the crew's morality - if not its 'civilizing' power - was demonstrated in part in the way its members treated the Africans they worked with. Because of these character flaws, Livingstone was compelled to tell his friend Murchison - the man who had recommended Thornton - that the geologist was "a disgrace to the English name."<sup>118</sup>

Despite this, Livingstone was willing to give Thornton another chance to demonstrate his importance to the expedition. Three and a half years after he was fired, the now twenty-four year old geologist was re-hired by Livingstone. In the intervening years, Thornton had remained in Africa, first looking for a fabled silver mine and then joining an expedition to Mount Kilimanjaro led by the German explorer Baron Carl Von den Decken. He returned from this experience a seasoned geologist and explorer intent on the "restoration" of his

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<sup>116</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 114.

<sup>117</sup> See David Livingstone to Commander Norman Bedingfeld, 10 April, 1858, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, p. 416 or David Livingstone to John Kirk, 18 March, 1858, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872: David Livingstone's Correspondence in the Brenchurst Library Johannesburg*, p. 104.

<sup>118</sup> David Livingstone to Roderick Murchison, 22 July, 1859, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872, David Livingstone's Correspondence in the Brenchurst Library Johannesburg*, p. 140.

“character.”<sup>119</sup> Several months before he was re-hired, Livingstone had met with Thornton and noted that he had “been working ... with greatly improved health and energy and it is likely that he will give a good account of this river [the Zambesi].”<sup>120</sup> Livingstone was apparently willing to overlook Thornton’s earlier moral shortcomings in view of his improved work ethic. He also seemed to want to have Thornton’s company in order to hear about the exploits of Von den Decken. It might have been from Thornton that Livingstone heard that the German explorer “made a great mistake in never losing an opportunity of showing the contempt in which he held the natives. He never believed that any one of them [Africans] would dare to touch a Baron bold. [Von den Decken] thrust away the hand of the chief in disdain when he offered it in [a] token of friendship.”<sup>121</sup>

In re-hiring Thornton, Livingstone may have hoped the geologist could somehow help revive the spirit of the expedition before its recall. However, the young man succumbed to the effects of malaria and dysentery a little over a month after rejoining his former crew mates. Perhaps as an effort to prove his manliness and good character to his commander and fellow crew members, Thornton undertook a difficult overland journey to buy food, including live animals, for the UMCA missionaries. Livingstone had warned Thornton not

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<sup>119</sup> Richard Thornton to David Livingstone, 7 May, 1861, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 177.

<sup>120</sup> David Livingstone, *David Livingstone’s Shire Journal*, p. 47.

<sup>121</sup> Von den Decken was killed by Africans in 1865, leading Livingstone to declare: “That nasty negrophobia spirit which is spreading in England won’t to do travel with.” David Livingstone to Horace Waller, 6 February, 1866, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20313.

to take the trip, knowing that it had almost killed Kirk and Rae on an earlier journey.<sup>122</sup> Yet, he recognized Thornton's desire to learn more about the area between Senna and Tete, in addition to acknowledging the young man's "kindness to the missionaries."<sup>123</sup> Thornton, who had been "very strong" according to Livingstone on rejoining the expedition, returned "completely knocked up by his trip" and died soon after.<sup>124</sup>

In comparison to Thornton, if not the other members of his crew, Livingstone had no early doubts about Thomas Baines' work ethic. The artist/storekeeper of the expedition had earned a reputation as "hardworking, tough and anything but a quitter" as a member of an 1855-1857 RGS expedition to northern Australia.<sup>125</sup> When Livingstone's expedition had arrived on the Zambesi, Baines set out to demonstrate these same qualities. He drove himself incessantly, pushing himself to the limits of physical exertion as his fellow Britons and the Kru men struggled to unload the *Pearl* and power the *Ma Robert*. However, as Kirk noted at this time, Baines had "queer notions about hardening himself."<sup>126</sup> For example, he insisted on working "out in the sun without any hat on [while] ... continually exposing himself to the

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<sup>122</sup> David Livingstone to Richard Thornton, 19 February, 1863, *Letters and Documents*, p. 82.

<sup>123</sup> David Livingstone, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 71.

<sup>124</sup> See *ibid* and David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. II, 232.

<sup>125</sup> Gary Clendennen, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 147.

<sup>126</sup> John Kirk, *The Zambezi Letters and Journal of Dr. John Kirk*, vol. I, p. 51. See also Clendennen, p. 152.

midday sun for several days...<sup>127</sup> Soon he was seriously ill with heat stroke and malaria, his behaviour prompting Livingstone to tell a friend that “the only person we are likely to lose by death [during the expedition] is the artist.”<sup>128</sup> As a result, when the Shire region became Livingstone’s new focus, Baines was left at Tete to recover, paint and administer the expedition’s goods. Livingstone had no complaints about Baines during the first months of these arrangements and even sent him on a short journey to the Cabora Basa cataracts with his brother Charles. However, just before departing on his third Shire journey, Livingstone was disappointed to find that Baines had “sent for four bottles of Brandy” and was not attending to his duties.<sup>129</sup> As Livingstone wrote: “I was obliged to speak sharply to him about it. He receives £1 a day and does next to nothing.”<sup>130</sup> As he had with Thornton, Livingstone had cautioned Baines to demonstrate better character or face the consequences upon his return. Despite this warning, when Livingstone arrived back in Tete four months later he discovered that the expedition’s stores were in shambles with some goods unaccounted for by Baines. When questioned by his commander about the missing goods, Baines admitted that he had given some of them away to his Portuguese friends at Tete. At

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<sup>127</sup> Richard Thornton, *The Zambezi Papers of Richard Thornton*, vol. I, p. 37.

<sup>128</sup> David Livingstone to Frederick Fitch, 28 October, 1859, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779. Livingstone wrote in his journal, that Baines’ “head is a little touched by the sunstroke of the island.” He added that “He is to be watched, as it is known he formerly had brain fever.” Note that brain fever is known as cerebrospinal meningitis. In a footnote to Livingstone’s statement, editor and Baines biographer, J.P.R. Wallis asserts that “Baines had never been so afflicted with the disease. See *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 59.

<sup>129</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, pp. 85-86

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

the time, Livingstone made allowances for this and other 'unprincipled' behaviour because Baines' "head [had] been affected by the fever."<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, in a stern letter Livingstone warned the artist/storekeeper:

If I find you go off again skylarking with the Portuguese, as you did, taking the whaler without authority and very materially damaging the boat, or if you waste the Expedition's time and materials in painting Portuguese portraits, I shall have no option: however much I should like to favour you, I must do my duty.... [H]aving seen the goods left to anyone who chose to steal them, and Thornton even allowed to take what he liked in your presence, I hereby caution you that [if the stores] be not properly attended to, I must perform the painful duty of separating you from the expedition.<sup>132</sup>

Whether it was after Livingstone had received information about Baines from another crew member or some other factor drove him to change his mind, two weeks later he fired Baines.<sup>133</sup> It is clear that Livingstone was concerned about the morality of an

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116. Livingstone, who was never happy with the way Baines depicted Africans, also informed him: "You are required to furnish me on my return with a series of portraits of natives for the purposes of Ethnology, giving them, if necessary, in groups so as to show the shapes of the heads and bodies as accurately as you can. You have not yet got their colour [right] nor in the drawings I have seen is the native countenance depicted except by exaggeration of certain features." Six years after this and likely after he had seen more of Baines work, Livingstone still complained that "Baines cannot draw human figures without caricaturing them." David Livingstone to John Murray, 3 March, 1865, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.

<sup>133</sup> Both Charles Livingstone and Rae reported Baines' misappropriation of the expedition's stores to Livingstone. Rae also complained that Baines had stolen a piece of his clothing. In an appendix to *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, editor Gary Clendennen provides a thorough analysis of "The Dismissal of Thomas Baines from the Zambezi Expedition, pp. 147-173. Clendennen takes issue with Jeal, Wallis and others who have come to Baines' defence, either in attacking Livingstone (in Jeal's case) or Charles Livingstone (in Wallis' case). His analysis shows that in addition to being a poor storekeeper, Baines was also likely a thief, if not a kleptomaniac. Clendennen concludes that Baines received a fair hearing to present his defence. The artist met with Livingstone and Kirk on November 23, 1859 at the mouth the Zambesi where they debated the charges. After

artist/storekeeper whom he believed “took the opportunity thus afforded of secretly disposing of quantities of public goods, going off skylarking with certain low [Portuguese] characters” and who “took to drinking and debauchery in [his boss’s] absence.”<sup>134</sup> Like Bedingfeld and Thornton, Baines had pushed his boss too far. In Livingstone’s estimation, he was unwilling or unable to do his job properly and incapable of demonstrating the type of morality expected of a foe of slavery on a ‘humanitarian’ expedition. Then again, perhaps Livingstone was looking for any excuse to fire a man who had served on the side of the British colonial forces fighting to decimate and displace the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi from their South African homelands. In his journals and letters, Livingstone made no mention of whether he had discussed South African racial politics with Baines. However, Baines had stories to tell about his eleven years in South Africa. In 1849, he had met and sketched Sandile.<sup>135</sup> Unlike Livingstone, Baines demonstrated no sympathy or support for the Xhosa leader’s ‘independence’ cause against the British.<sup>136</sup> Later, in his role as official war artist, he had

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his firing, Baines attempted to restore his reputation and damage Livingstone’s, first in Cape Town and later in Britain. He had some success in pleading his case in the British colonial town, but little luck elsewhere. Note that Jeal claimed that Baines was David Livingstone’s “whipping boy.” There is however little evidence to support this claim. During the time they spent together in the first year of the expedition, Livingstone said relatively little about Baines. See Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 210.

<sup>134</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 136 and David Livingstone to Frederick Fitch, 28 October, 1859, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.

<sup>135</sup> See Chapter Three for an analysis of Livingstone’s support for Sandile’s cause against the British.

<sup>136</sup> Clearly influenced by phrenology and other racial biases of his day, Baines described Sandile in thoroughly unflattering terms in his journal, writing: “Sandillah [is] a tall thin fellow with a long body, the motion of which reminded one of the writhing of a



accompanied the 74<sup>th</sup> Highlanders in their attempted extermination of the Xhosa and the Kat River rebels during the Eighth Frontier War.<sup>137</sup> Baines' journals show that he was not a gung-ho supporter of the white settler cause in the Cape Colony, nor was he an open critic of their racial politics. He seemed primarily to be looking for adventure and for subjects to sketch and paint. However, given Livingstone's impassioned views concerning Sandile, the Xhosa and the cause of the Kat River Khoikhoi, a debate over Baines' participation in the war and his attitude to Sandile would have aroused Livingstone's indignation. Yet, on their final meeting in December 1859, after again enumerating Baines indiscretions as a crew member, Livingstone simply told him that he had been fired "on account of an entire failure of duty."<sup>138</sup>

Not long after Thornton and Baines had been dismissed, Livingstone wrote that the

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snake or eel, one well-made leg and the other, the left, from some former accident, not larger than might belong to a boy of fourteen. [I was made to feel] sundry bumps and organs under his wooly hair, which I did not understand – but I suppose might be guessed nearly enough as acquisitiveness, secretiveness, and destructiveness. His physiognomy was a rather insipid cast, and though he had, like most of the chiefs, a better nose than the commonality, – I mean in shape, not in capacity for smelling out a farmer's cattle – indeed, a rather aquiline one, the effect of it was destroyed by a half idiotic smile giving him an appearance of low cunning which did not beseem once so mighty a potentate." Thomas Baines, *Journal of Residence in Africa, 1842-1853*, 2 vols., edited by R.F. Kennedy, The Van Riebeeck Society: Cape Town, 1961, vol. I, p. 145.

<sup>137</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Three, the 74<sup>th</sup> Highlanders were noted for the barbaric tactics they used against their enemies. In his journals, Baines makes no mention of any of these atrocities.

<sup>138</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 148. After parting from the Zambesi Expedition, Baines joined trader James Chapman on an expedition to Victoria Falls. He later became a gold prospector, working in the region of modern Zimbabwe that brought Cecil Rhodes his fortune and later his empire. Baines died in 1875

expedition “would have been better done alone, or with my brother alone.”<sup>139</sup> Six months later he likely would have fired his brother as well, if family loyalty had not been a factor. Most of Livingstone’s biographers have cast his younger brother Charles as ‘narrow-minded’ and ‘priggish,’ if not the cause of much of the dissension between David Livingstone and his crew.<sup>140</sup> In contrast, historian Gary Clendennen has argued that this is a shortsighted characterization of Livingstone’s younger brother.<sup>141</sup> At nineteen, “in spite of complete poverty, poor health, and inadequate preparation for college-level studies,” Charles left-home at a much younger age than his brother in a quest to receive a college education.<sup>142</sup> Like his brother, he exhibited a “willingness and ability to learn” and reached his educational goals despite the odds against him.<sup>143</sup> According to Clendennen, this prepared Charles for his role in the Zambesi Expedition. Yet, whatever good qualities Charles had acquired, he was not equipped to get along with his brother - or with the Kololo - during the expedition.

Like Baines and Thornton, Charles was plagued by malaria and other illnesses during the first year of the expedition and was left at Tete while his brother and Kirk explored the Shire region. In February 1859, Livingstone came to an agreement with the Kololo at Tete

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>140</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, pp. 226-229. See also J.P.R Wallis’ “Introduction,” to *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone* as well as his biography of Baines, *Thomas Baines of King’s Lynn*, Jonathan Cape Ltd: London, 1941.

<sup>141</sup> See in particular his criticisms of Jeal, Wallis and some other authors who have maligned Charles in “Appendix IV: The Dismissal of Thomas Baines from the Zambezi Expedition,” in *David Livingstone’s Shire Journal*, p. 151.

<sup>142</sup> Clendennen, p. 148.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

to send them back to Linyanti with Charles, but they soon changed their mind thinking that Sekeletu would not be happy with this decision.<sup>144</sup> Fifteen months later, when Livingstone finally honoured his promise to return with the Kololo to their homeland, he invited his brother (as well as Kirk) on the trek. However, by this point in the expedition, Livingstone had developed serious reservations about his brother's character, leading him to question Charles' continued role as a member of his crew. In his journal, he complained that Charles

seems to let out in a moment of irritation a long pent up-feeling, I am at a loss how to treat him. As an assistant he has been of no value. Photography very unsatisfactory. Magnetism still more so. Meteorological observations not credible, and writing the journal in arrears. In going up with us now he is useless, as he knows nothing of Portuguese or the native language. He often expected me to be his assistant instead of acting as mine.<sup>145</sup>

Perhaps even more disillusioning for Livingstone was the fact that his brother did not seem to like or respect his beloved 'Makololo.' Charles believed the hundred or so Kololo at Tete were a debauched people who had failed to learn any 'civilized' practices in the time they spent with Livingstone on the second leg of his cross-continental journey. Charles also informed his brother and fellow crew members that he believed the trip to Kolololand was a waste of time and a threat to his well-being. According to Kirk: "Mr C.L. is sore against going up to Sekeletu. He is for risking nothing in the way of health for the men [the Kololo], although they did bring the Doctor down..." from Linyanti on his cross-continental journey.<sup>146</sup> As the journey progressed, Livingstone grumbled that Charles had been "keeping up his

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<sup>144</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 82. The Kololo leader would have been upset that Livingstone himself had not made the journey.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>146</sup> John Kirk, *The Zambezi Journal and Letters of Dr. John Kirk*, vol. I, p. 298.

sulks ever since we left Tete.”<sup>147</sup> Then as the party neared Linyanti, a frustrated Charles kicked the Kololo ‘headman’ “with iron nailed boots.”<sup>148</sup> According to Kirk, “nothing but the high personal regard for Dr L. [by the Kololo] averted bloodshed in that case. The spear was poised and needed only a stroke of the arm to send it to the heart.”<sup>149</sup> After the party arrived at Linyanti and learned about the tragedy that afflicted the LMS mission, Charles implicitly blamed the catastrophe on Sekeletu. He later wrote: “I have no doubt he treated the mission body badly ... I suspected at the time that he stole from Mr. Price [who] was no doubt very much frightened, and they [the Kololo] seeing this, took advantage and plundered him. I believe they would have treated us the same had we been afraid of them.”<sup>150</sup> If Charles communicated these thoughts to his brother - and he likely did - it would have engendered Livingstone’s enmity. As news of the deaths of the six Britons spread - concurrently with Price’s charge that they had been poisoned by the Kololo - Livingstone was adamant that the Kololo were not to be blamed in any way for the calamities that afflicted the mission. In his mind, if anyone was responsible for the disaster connected with

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<sup>147</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 174.

<sup>148</sup> John Kirk, *The Zambezi Journal and Letters of Dr. John Kirk*, vol. I, p. 307. The Kololo man kicked by Charles is not named by Kirk and the incident does not appear in Livingstone’s journals. However, the man was likely Kanyata, who became “principal headman” after Sekwebu’s death. He was the only ‘true’ Kololo in the group and had accompanied Livingstone from Linyanti on the second leg of his cross-continental journey. See the Livingstone’s *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi...*, p. 156.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.* Demonstrating that his own opinion of the Kololo - if not Africans in general - might have closer to Charles’ than David’s, Kirk added: “I never expected so much moderation from savages.”

<sup>150</sup> Charles Livingstone to Frederick Fitch, 8 August, 1862, as cited by Jeal, in *Livingstone*, p. 184.

the mission it was LMS missionary Price. He believed that despite the goodwill of the Kololo towards the missionaries, Price had “lost his head [and] sparked a great deal of the Makololo by sheer want of tact, then got frightened and came away declaring he was poisoned...”<sup>151</sup> For his brother to take Price’s side was taken as a betrayal of whatever bond Livingstone believed existed between brothers.<sup>152</sup> For Livingstone, the Kololo were beyond reproach. To declare that they had ‘plundered’ the missionary party was, in his view, a reflection not of the Kololo, but of the person who would make such an accusation.

If Livingstone believed that the Kololo (men) were a manly people, where did this leave his brother Charles? In his statement about his brother’s failings as a crew member, Livingstone did not question Charles’ qualities as a ‘moral agent.’ But, his brother’s support for Price and continued disapproval of the Kololo would have led Livingstone to doubt Charles’ capacity work with Africans and thus his moral character. In Chapter Three, I mentioned that Livingstone had sent a speech by Sandile to Charles to be published in

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<sup>151</sup> David Livingstone (likely to) Robert Moffat, 25 November, 1861, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184 and David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 18 December, 1862, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184.

<sup>152</sup> Livingstone seemingly came to hate Price in the aftermath of the failed LMS mission to the Kololo. Ironically the two men became brothers-in-law after Price married one of Mary’s sisters not long after his own wife’s death. As late as 1872, he continued to complain about Price’s “mistakes” in his letters and journals. On the other hand, Livingstone had great respect for Henry Helmore, the other LMS missionary sent to the Kololo. In his view, ‘the noble hearted Helmore’ had succeeded in gaining the respect of the Kololo, unlike Price. According to Livingstone, he was told by the Kololo that they believed Helmore “‘was just like you - a man with a heart’ i.e. a kind man.” See David Livingstone to John Wilson, 24 January, 1872, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20312; David Livingstone to General Wynyard, 18 March, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20313; David Livingstone to Arthur Tidman, 25 February, 1862; David Livingstone, *David Livingstone’s Shire Journal, 1861-1864*, p. 92.

America. This was indicative of a bond between the brothers, or at least it reflected Livingstone's assumption that they shared a belief in abolitionism and the principles of racial equality. However, when they were brought together for the Zambesi Expedition, their contrasting racial politics engendered a mutual antipathy. Charles did not share Livingstone's 'blind spot' when it came to the Kololo, nor did he demonstrate his brother's ability to challenge racial difference. He seemingly made no attempt to judge the Kololo within their own culture. Even though he might have had a 'willingness and ability to learn,' as Clendennen argues, he did not learn the Kololo language, or the language of any of the other people at Tete, despite the time he spent in the town.<sup>153</sup>

After their journey to the Kololo homeland, Livingstone rarely mentioned his brother in his journals and letters, in spite of their close proximity for much of the remainder of Charles' time with the expedition. After Thornton's death in April 1863, Charles announced his wish to "retire" from the expedition.<sup>154</sup> Livingstone likely wished he had made this announcement sooner. Despite their many differences, after they had both returned to Britain, the Livingstone brothers developed a closer relationship. Livingstone agreed to give Charles the American profits from a *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, while Charles let his brother use his 'notes' in the writing of the book.<sup>155</sup> A

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<sup>153</sup> In contrast, the Kololo at Tete attempted to learn Portuguese. Livingstone noted: "Makololo learn Portuguese, but as usual always the bad words first..." David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Journal of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>154</sup> David Livingstone, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 71.

<sup>155</sup> See the October 18, 1864 entry in Livingstone's 'Bombay Journal,' National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10775.

moderate success when it was published, the book is more forthcoming than *Missionary Travels* in its condemnation of racial intolerance and in the challenge it offers to racial difference. While it is evident that Livingstone championed this perspective on racial issues, it is unclear whether the book's second author had much faith in its racial politics.

In Livingstone's view, his brother and the three fired men had failed to embrace the spirit of the expedition. They lacked the will to perform the duties specific to their positions and the desire to persevere in pursuit of the expedition's stated goals. They were not the type of men Livingstone wanted by his side, nor were they the compatriots Livingstone hoped would act as the vanguard of his projected colony. However, two members of his crew - George Rae and John Kirk - earned Livingstone's praise throughout the expedition for their work ethic and dedication to their duties. Livingstone had differences with Rae early in the expedition because of his initial refusal to work on Sundays and later over the engineer's unexplained refusal to join the rest of the crew on board the *Pioneer*. Livingstone also questioned Rae's honesty at one point during the expedition, but was always willing to give him the benefit of the doubt because of his invaluable engineering skills and willingness to work.<sup>156</sup> Throughout the expedition, Rae's ability to please his boss by demonstrating his

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<sup>156</sup> Clendennen, one of the few Livingstone scholars to remark on Rae's value to Livingstone, remarks that "As a first-class engineer/mechanic Rae was regarded by Livingstone as indispensable. Time and again his expertise solved a problem perplexing to Livingstone which threatened to delay plans." Gary Clendennen, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 61. Most of Livingstone's biographers have ignored Rae, in part because Livingstone said relatively little about him and because he generated little controversy (for later biographers to tackle). Blaikie, who said little about of Rae, wrote cryptically that he had "peculiarities," but does not hint what these might have been. See Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 276.

mechanical genius invariably eclipsed any doubts Livingstone had about his character.<sup>157</sup>

Rae spent a large part of his time with the expedition separated from Livingstone. While his commander was off on an explorative journey, he was often left to work on one of the vessels. He earned Livingstone's approbation because he continually completed the tasks that Livingstone assigned to him. He may have been friendly with the Portuguese, but unlike Baines and Thornton he did not let this interfere with his duties. This may not have made him a favourite among the other crew members - who may have seen his behaviour as an attempt to ingratiate himself with Livingstone - but it did secure the respect and esteem of his commander.<sup>158</sup> Rae did not have to be a moral crusader or a conspicuous humanitarian for Livingstone to sing his praises. His example demonstrated that a morally respectable crew member with a superior work ethic could remain in Livingstone's 'good books.' In many ways, Rae exhibited the type of character that Livingstone hope to find in his working-class British colonists - hardworking, morally decent and willing to toil for the good of the collective.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> For Livingstone on the matter of Rae's honesty versus his work ethic and mechanical acumen, see David Livingstone to James Young, 14 May, 1861, 19 February, 1862 and 5 May, 1862, *Letters and Documents*, pp. 68, 73, 75.

<sup>158</sup> Indicative of Livingstone faith in Kirk's abilities was an official letter to Lord Russell, informing the Foreign Minister that Rae "is thoroughly trustworthy and, besides great nautical experience in his profession, possesses knowledge of the kind of vessel necessary to navigate the rivers and lakes we have lately discovered... He had behaved exceedingly well all the time he has been with us..." David Livingstone to Lord John Russell, 27 February, 1860, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol., II, p. 347.

<sup>159</sup> After the Zambesi Expedition, Rae joined forces with William Sunley, British Consul to the Comoros Islands, with the plan of earning his wealth running a sugar plantation on one of the islands. However, this plan fell through and Rae was briefly associated with an English firm at Zanzibar, (which Livingstone disapproved of because of the firm's use of



In contrast to Rae and the other crew members, John Kirk was by Livingstone's side throughout most of the expedition. He joined Livingstone on all the major explorative journeys of the expedition, except the last (when Livingstone explored the area west of Lake Nyassa in the weeks after the expedition's recall). Despite all of the failures that marked the expedition, he became his commander's friend and earned higher praise than any man Livingstone travelled with, with the possible exception of Henry Stanley. Importantly, Kirk shared Livingstone's ambition to stop the slave trade, a cause he continued to fight for as British Consul to Zanzibar in his years after serving as a member of Livingstone's crew. Unlike his fellow crew members, he was always willing (and able) to push himself to the limits of physical and mental endurance on his explorative journeys with Livingstone. Coupled with his moral character, this quality made Kirk a paragon of manliness in his commander's estimation. According to Livingstone, Kirk "never once failed to do his duty like a man."<sup>160</sup> Thornton, for one, took issue with Kirk's enthusiastic sense of duty, noting in a letter: "Kirk is a very good fellow, but he has too much of the army drill about him. He talks too much about his duties as second-in-command - and the duties of others."<sup>161</sup> But, Kirk's attention to his responsibilities as physician/botanist/explorer, as well as to the larger

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unpaid African labour). By October 1865, Rae was in Glasgow "where, on the tenth of that month he married, only to die suddenly the next day." See Gary Clendennen, *David Livingstone's Shire Journals*, p. 89.

<sup>160</sup> David Livingstone to Roderick Murchison, 17 November, 1864, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872*, p. 192.

<sup>161</sup> Richard Thornton to Helen Thornton, (no day, month), 1861, cited in *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872*, p. 136. Thornton added that Kirk "is a very clever fellow and very pleasant companion, but he will not go one iota beyond his own interests for anything or anybody."

ambitions of the expedition, is what earned Livingstone's friendship and respect. As a sign of his affinity for Kirk, Livingstone even wrote the man's mother to try to assuage her worries about her son's long absence. He also let her know that Kirk had "been extremely useful in this Expedition and was always kind and obliging to every one. He was my right hand man and you may well be proud of such a son."<sup>162</sup> As the expedition came to an end, Livingstone made it a goal to find Kirk a job with the Crown that was reflective of his talent and ambition. As he told Murchison (with some nationalistic humour): "Being a Scotchman, and really a very amiable and able fellow ... I am quite sure he would be a credit to any appointment either at home or abroad."<sup>163</sup> As Livingstone prepared for his search for the source of the Nile, Kirk was the only Briton he deemed worthy enough to ask him to join the expedition.<sup>164</sup> However, after the Zambesi Expedition, Kirk sought a different line of work and decided to take the position with the British Consul's office at Zanzibar.

Kirk's journals and letters indicate that this decision was not a reflection on his feelings towards Livingstone. As Livingstone's 'right-hand man' during the Zambezi Expedition, Kirk had the opportunity to offer insight into their relationship and into Livingstone's character. Earlier I discussed how Kirk found fault with Livingstone's

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<sup>162</sup> David Livingstone to Mrs. Kirk, 17 December, 1863, *The Zambesi Doctors: David Livingstone's Letters to John Kirk 1858-1872*, edited by R. Foskett, University of Edinburgh Press: Edinburgh, 1964, p. 162.

<sup>163</sup> David Livingstone to Roderick Murchison, 17 November, 1864, *Livingstone Letters, 1843-1872*, p. 192.

<sup>164</sup> Kirk claimed that Livingstone even told him that he could lead the expedition, with Livingstone serving as his second in command. See John Kirk to Helen Cooke, 23 August, 1866, National Library of Scotland, Acc. 9442.

economic sensibilities. In a letter to his future wife, he summarized his thoughts on his commanding officer in terms that were occasionally critical, but mostly laudatory. “As to Livingstone and myself,” Kirk wrote,

I must tell you that we got on very well. Few men have gone through what we did together and had less dispute. We have had our differences. On one occasion near the end of the expedition these became serious on one topic. I do not think he behaved well to several other members of the Expedition; but remember, that leadership is a trying part and five years is a long time together.... I took my course and did my work ... and in general was successful.... He must have men who can work with him.... He is our greatest African explorer ... [and] ... truly desires to improve Africa.... He is a man of great powers of mind and body. He can start on one idea and work it out varying his means [such] that a careless onlooker might think he had no plan at all. [But], he is an unsafe politician, unless in the barbarous state of society in which for fifteen [actually 22] years he learned the mind of the African. The real clue to his wonderful success [is in his work] as an explorer of unknown lands.<sup>165</sup>

Kirk’s remarks reveal that Livingstone could earn the respect and admiration of a British crew member, despite his flawed leadership abilities. In turn for Livingstone, Kirk showed the work ethic and good character he believed were needed by all men who hoped to prove their worth to society, if not their manliness. With these qualities, Livingstone was confident that Kirk was the type of man who could bring change to Africa.<sup>166</sup> Yet, in his arrogance, he found it difficult to admit that not all of his crew shared his zeal to ‘help’

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<sup>165</sup> John Kirk to Helen Cooke, 23 August, 1866, National Library of Scotland, Acc. 9442.

<sup>166</sup> Livingstone might have thought differently about his friend, if Kirk’s feelings about Mary Livingstone had come to light. Moreover, it is clear from reading Kirk’s journals and letters that he did not share Livingstone’s respect for Africans, despite his abhorrence of the slave trade. The language he used to characterize Africans was often derogatory and based on racial stereotypes. For example, “nigger” is spread throughout his journals. For two examples of Kirk’s racial intolerance, see *The Zambesi Journal and Letters of Dr John Kirk*, vol. II, pp. 378 and 406-407.

Africans, or for that matter, that they even believed Africa needed Britain's help. Taking into account the crew of the *Pioneer*, many of the white men who were part of Livingstone's expedition went to Africa because they hoped for adventure or to advance their careers. They did not share Livingstone's dreams, his sense of purpose or his esteem for Africans and thus could not be induced to manfully strive or struggle for a cause they did not believe in.

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The missionaries associated with the Zambesi Expedition were not members of Livingstone's crew, nor did he have a role in personally selecting the men who volunteered for the Universities (UMCA) and LMS missions. Nevertheless, he was responsible for influencing their decision to join his cause in Africa. And, when the Shire region was adopted as the new focus of his expedition, the UMCA missionaries became integral to his plans for Africa. In many ways, the missionaries - led by Bishop MacKenzie - usurped Livingstone's crew in importance upon their arrival on the Zambesi. After the failures that had marked the first years of the expedition, Livingstone pinned his hopes on the missionaries' ability to establish a successful mission in the Shire Highlands. Yet, like the expedition itself, the UMCA mission was beset by failures and disasters. Livingstone realized that the slave trade, drought and ethnic tensions in the Shire region were the cause of some of the mission's difficulties. But, Livingstone also blamed the missionaries when it became evident that their mission would not succeed in the Shire Highlands, or in the lowlands where it was moved after MacKenzie's death.

In his tenure with the LMS, Livingstone clearly came to prize the ability of missionaries to withstand the physical rigours of their work, while in the process showing

a respect for Africans and a desire to ‘improve’ Africa. He was confident that he had shown these qualities and expected the UMCA missionaries to confirm their physical abilities and sense of racial tolerance in their work in Africa. Livingstone claimed that at its outset, he believed that the Cambridge-Oxford-Durham- Trinity College sponsored mission represented “all that is brave and good and manly, in the chief seat[s] of English learning.”<sup>167</sup> However, it is clear that he came to believe that most of the men involved in the mission failed to live up to these qualities.

For Livingstone, Bishop MacKenzie was the exception to his fellow missionaries. Like Livingstone, he was a man who led by his example. When he arrived on the Zambezi, MacKenzie immediately demonstrated his eagerness to put down his crozier and join the Africans Livingstone had hired to help power the *Pioneer*. As Timothy Holmes writes: “MacKenzie’s success lay in his willingness to put his hand to anything that helped keep the *Pioneer* moving forward, from hauling and winching anchor chains, and pulling the ship across sandbanks, to working the engine room.”<sup>168</sup> This effort to persevere through early difficulties and disappointments earned the Bishop Livingstone’s esteem, at least initially. As mentioned in section 6.1, Livingstone was frustrated by MacKenzie’s naivety when it came to ‘inter-tribal’ relations. After the Bishop’s armed forays against the Yao, he was indignant about being “mixed up” with “men coming out to convert people [and then] shooting them.”<sup>169</sup> For Livingstone, MacKenzie’s offensive against the mission’s neighbours

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<sup>167</sup> David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi*, p. 574.

<sup>168</sup> Timothy Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, p. 195.

<sup>169</sup> David Livingstone, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 5.

was “an ill-concerted and ill-conceived affair.”<sup>170</sup> In time, and particularly after MacKenzie’s death, Livingstone changed his attitude towards the Bishop’s armed anti-slaving actions. “At first I thought him wrong,” he explained, “but don’t think so now. He defended his 140 orphan children when there was no human arm to invoke.... Bishop MacKenzie was every inch of him a missionary.”<sup>171</sup>

With the ‘martyred’ MacKenzie forgiven, Livingstone turned to attacking the High Church members of the UMCA mission for failing to uphold his or the Bishop’s sense of purpose. In a letter to the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, Livingstone declared that “MacKenzie was let down by his associates who were pious but (except Scudamore) unsuited to be missionaries. He was too gentle to order them to work, and they wrote journals while he built. Their sedentary life might have killed all in the lowlands.”<sup>172</sup> Livingstone added that he did “not wish to be [seen as ] an accuser, but he was not convinced that “only specially educated men should be sent [to Africa] in the future.”<sup>173</sup> In specifying

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>171</sup> David Livingstone to Sir Culling Eardley, 23 January, 1863, cited by Clendennen in *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 97, note 43. The final statement comes from David Livingstone to James Young, July-August, 1863, *Letters and Documents*, p. 86.

<sup>172</sup> David Livingstone to Samuel Wilberforce, 5 November, 1864, see *David Livingstone: A Catalogue of Documents*, p. 251. Livingstone considered Scudamore, “a real good fellow [who] will never give in.” As Clendennen reports, he “was the most beloved and steadfast of the missionaries on the Shire.... Judging by what can be gleaned from his companions’ letters and journals, he was a hard-working, ‘true-blue’ missionary of the most altruistic motivation.” He succumbed to the effects of malaria, New Year’s Day, 1863. See *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 14 and 100, note 101. It is important to note that Livingstone did not include lay supervisor Horace Waller in his general criticisms of the missionaries.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

that these men be ‘specially educated,’ Livingstone was also suggesting that only “younger men” who were “willing to rough it, and yet hold quietly and patiently on” should be trained and selected to join future missions in Africa.<sup>174</sup> He also maintained that a missionary who possessed “an athletic frame, hardened by manly exercise [would] excel him who is not favoured by such bodily endowments...”<sup>175</sup> This was Livingstone’s way of saying that “a missionary ought to be a man of pluck” and that he believed the High Anglicans of the UMCA mission lacked the manly qualities needed by British men in Africa.<sup>176</sup> To this end, he derided the “weakness” and “inefficiency” of most missionaries when confronted by physical tests of will.<sup>177</sup> He condemned the “arrant cowardice” of one missionary who became “sick to the stomach” when passing through an area menaced by slave traders.<sup>178</sup> He later told the same man to recognize “that the eyes of the most influential people in England are upon you and should anything prevent you from doing your duty manfully you

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<sup>174</sup> Livingstone voiced this opinion at a meeting of the British Association at Bath in 1864, soon after his return from Africa and India. For excerpts from Livingstone’s speech see “Livingstone on Africa: Livingstone’s Speech at Bath,” from *The Eclectic Magazine*, Vol. LXIII, September to December, 1864, p. 374.

<sup>175</sup> David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi...*, p. 568.

<sup>176</sup> David Livingstone to Frederick Fitch, 19 January, 1861, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.

<sup>177</sup> David Livingstone, 2 June, 1864, unpublished journal, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10775.

<sup>178</sup> David Livingstone, *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone*, vol. I, p. 187.

will be set down.”<sup>179</sup> He even went so far as to blame the (unspecified) missionaries “who died down in the low Shire” for their own deaths, telling Robert Moffat that they were victims of their own “sheer idleness.”<sup>180</sup>

Livingstone justified remarks such as these in part by arguing that the missionaries’ behaviour set a poor example of British character for the peoples they hoped to convert. In his view, “in the native mind” the men of the UMCA mission were “cowardly coons” and thus could not hope to exemplify the ‘superiority’ of Christianity and British ‘civilization.’<sup>181</sup> To prove their ‘civilizing’ power, the missionaries did not have to follow MacKenzie’s example by firing on suspected African slavers. However, they did have to emulate the Bishop’s work ethic - if not his fearlessness - if they hoped to convince Africans that they offered an alternative to ‘backwardness’ and ‘tyranny.’

By observing the missionaries at work, Livingstone became convinced that their failure to push themselves physically was synonymous with their lack of respect for Africans. “[N]o teaching was attempted,” he complained in noting that the missionaries, including the

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<sup>179</sup> David Livingstone to Henry Rowley, 15 March, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10779.

<sup>180</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 10 December, 1863, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10780. It is unclear to whom Livingstone was referring to here. Given the timing of his remarks, it was likely surgeon-naturalist John Dickenson and shoemaker-tanner John Dickenson, both members of the mission, but not actual missionaries. However, MacKenzie and Burrup also died after imprudently waiting for Livingstone in a low-lying area.

<sup>181</sup> David Livingstone to James Young, 28 May, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10775.



Bishop, had failed to see the ‘civilizing’ power of literacy.<sup>182</sup> In his view, they had made little effort to learn a native language or understand African ideas, mores and traditions. Nor, had they attempted to teach their missionary flock to read and write English. In Livingstone’s estimation, a racial and cultural arrogance seemed to deter the missionaries from conceiving of Africans as little more than simple heathens to be feared as much as pitied. This led him to conclude that most of the UMCA members “dislike[d] [Africans] more than they loved them.”<sup>183</sup> Livingstone admitted that with more time their attitude might change. Yet, by the time of his recall and the subsequent news that MacKenzie’s successor planned to move the mission to Zanzibar, he had lost all hope in the Universities Mission. In a final denigration of the manliness of the missionaries, Livingstone made the sexist remark: “Between ourselves the High Church Missionaries of whom I fervently hoped [for] better things are fit only for well-behaved ladies’ boarding schools. They have no idea what a missionary should do.”<sup>184</sup>

The collapse of Livingstone’s plans - if not the knowledge that his influence would be greatly diminished when he returned to Britain - certainly prejudiced his opinion of the UMCA missionaries. His egotism convinced him that only he and a select group of others had the character necessary to work in Africa’s ‘best’ interests. Throughout his life, Livingstone exhibited an incomparable work ethic, an incessant desire to push himself

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<sup>182</sup> David Livingstone to George Frere, 22 December, 1863, *Letters and Documents*, p. 88.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>184</sup> David Livingstone to James Young, July-August 1863, *Letters and Documents*, p. 86.

physically and mentally to achieve his goals. The intensity he brought to his work only added fervour to his desire to 'help' Africans. Yet, it also fed his dissatisfaction - if not his vehement discontent - with most of white men he worked with in Africa. As I discussed in the introduction, during the colonial era most of his biographers either ignored or carefully obscured this aspect of his personality. However, the volumes of letters and journals that were published beginning in the late 1950s exposed Livingstone's own shortcomings to scholars who were willing to question previous scholarly and popular 'wisdom.' Given the opportunity to recast the normative understanding of Livingstone, Tim Jeal arguably went too far and exaggerated his subject's character flaws. Subsequent work has generally employed a more balanced approach in interpreting the complexities in Livingstone's actions, views and conduct. Yet, as writer/explorer Aisling Irwin has recently asserted, there remains a contradiction between Livingstone "the selfless moralist" and Livingstone "the heartless egotist."<sup>185</sup> An idealist and a humanitarian with great faith in the ability of Africans, Livingstone was quick to perceive weakness in his compatriots. Convinced of his own physical and moral superiority, he was ready to lay blame elsewhere when his own poor planning resulted in the suffering of others. "Categorically fearless," he had no time for the trepidation for his companions.<sup>186</sup> Willing to work to his death to reach his goals, he had little empathy for most of those who died in carrying out *his* vision for Africa.

These contradictions in Livingstone's character were bound up with the importance

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<sup>185</sup> Aisling Irwin and Colum Wilson, *In Quest of Livingstone: A Journey to the Four Fountains*, p. 154.

<sup>186</sup> Gary Clendennen, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 82

he placed on manliness in his relationships with other white men. If a countryman 'could not bear to be beaten by difficulties,' if he refused to "swerve one hair's breadth from [his] work," if he respected Africans, was adamantly opposed to slavery and was prepared to work to 'civilize' Africa, then, like Kirk, he likely exemplified Livingstone's vision of British manliness.<sup>187</sup> However, if a male compatriot in Africa failed to work hard, took his duties lightly, if he disliked Africans, fraternized with slave traders or travelled to Africa purely for adventure, his manliness was likely scorned by Livingstone. As the Zambezi Expedition sailed for Africa, Livingstone seemed to hold the naive notion that his compatriots - as members of his crew or as missionaries associated with expedition - could demonstrate the manly qualities he believed were needed for his plans to succeed. However, by New Year's Day 1862, he was ready to declare: "The whole of the exploration would be more easily accomplished by the commander alone - then when burdened by the baggage of his European underlings - and the unflinching energy which surmounted every obstacle and rendered the Expedition so far successful, would have received the approbation of his countrymen had he been alone."<sup>188</sup> His crew and the missionaries had become unwanted cargo, obstacles towards his continued repute and influence in Britain.

It is important to remember that Livingstone's fellow Victorians had little inkling that their hero had given up on his compatriots or that he thought the members of a distinguished missionary society were better suited for work in a "lady's boarding school" than at a mission

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<sup>187</sup> Livingstone swore by self-penned epithets like: "I shall not swerve a hair's breadth from my enterprise unless death intervenes." See David Livingstone to General Wyngard, 18 March, 1862, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20313.

<sup>188</sup> David Livingstone, *David Livingstone's Shire Journal*, p. 3.

in Africa. Almost all of the remarks made by Livingstone about his compatriots that have been cited in this chapter are from his private letters and journals. This material was not made public during Livingstone's lifetime and what is now in print was published long after it could do much damage to Livingstone's reputation. During the Zambesi Expedition, Britons may have read about Livingstone's firing of three 'unsatisfactory' crew members or about the death of a fighting Bishop. They might even have heard their first criticisms of Livingstone, but this was primarily because a government-funded expedition had failed to live up to expectations. Other than the largely unheard voices of Bedingfeld and Baines, complaints about Livingstone's 'character' were rare and went largely unnoticed by the British public.

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Although Livingstone's expedition had failed to reach its stated goals and his colonial dreams looked like a lost cause, he still had influence and commanded respect on his return to Britain in 1864. When he spoke to the public, he could still draw a large crowd ready to listen to his every word, as he had for his speaking tour and his 'farewell banquet' during his previous return home. Moreover, Murray, Murchison and other influential friends remained by his side ready to offer advice about how best to protect his reputation and renew his celebrity. Perhaps it was one of them or Livingstone's own grasp of the public mind that influenced the content of the speech he gave at the 1864 meeting of the British Association at Bath. Before a crowd of 2,500, including Burton, Speke and a host of other Victorian explorers, Livingstone spoke in a manner that belied his conceptions of his travelling

companions, his nation and even the British women whom he hoped would join his colony.<sup>189</sup>

“Some seem to take a pleasure in running down their fellow countrymen,” he declared, masking his true feelings in front of the audience,

but the longer I live I like them the better. They carry with them [a] sense of law and justice, and a spirit of kindness, and were I in a difficulty I should prefer going to an Englishman, in preference to any other, for aid. And as for Englishwomen, they do, undoubtably, make the best wives, mothers, sisters and daughters in the world. It is this conviction that makes me, in my desire to see slavery abolished, and human happiness promoted, ardently wish to have some of our countrywomen transplanted to a region where they would both give and receive benefit, where every decent Christian Englishman, whether a churchman, dissenter, learned or unlearned, liberal or bigoted, would certainly become a blessing by introducing a better system than that which has prevailed for ages.<sup>190</sup>

One week after making these remarks, Livingstone began writing *A Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*. In drafting the narrative, he clearly found it easier to simply omit most discussion of his crew and the missionaries, than to fabricate truths about them for publication. As he confessed to William Oswell, who was serving as one of his editors: “I do not like to say all my companions had courage and perseverance

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<sup>189</sup> At the Bath meeting, Burton and Speke were supposed to debate their opposing theories about the source of the Nile. Speke’s death the day before the debate led a shaken Burton to present his ideas about the river’s sources on his own. Speke had either committed suicide or died accidentally by shooting himself with his own gun the day before the planned event. His death remains a controversy today. For the latest theories on Speke’s death, see Mary S. Lovell, *A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton*, W.W. Norton: New York, 1998, pp. 447-455.

<sup>190</sup> During the speech, Livingstone also had the audacity to proclaim: “Dr. Kirk, Mr. Livingstone and others, composed it; and when I speak I speak in the plural number I mean them, and wish to bear testimony to the zeal and untiring energy with which my companions worked. They were never daunted by difficulties, dangers, nor hard fare, and were their services required in any other capacity, might be relied upon to perform their duty.” “Livingstone on Africa: Livingstone’s Speech at Bath,” from *The Eclectic Magazine*, Vol. LXIII, September to December, 1864, p. 376, 374.

because some had neither the one nor the other..."<sup>191</sup> He thus said very little about his crew and the missionaries in the book and blamed many of the expedition's shortcomings on the Portuguese in East Africa.<sup>192</sup> Both the preface and the postscript of the book are replete with statements condemning the system of Portuguese colonial rule in the region.<sup>193</sup> Hence it is the Portuguese, rather than Livingstone's collaborators, who became the public scapegoats for the collapse of his plans and the failure of his colonial vision.

Beyond Livingstone's character flaws, his discontent with his compatriots and the impractical nature of his colonial vision, stood his bond with Africa and his respect for Africans. As he wrote his account of the Zambesi Expedition, Livingstone was already

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<sup>191</sup> David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 13 February, 1865, *Letters and Documents*, p. 111.

<sup>192</sup> Neither Bedingfeld or Baines are mentioned by name in the book. Many of the missionaries associated with the expedition remain anonymous when their roles are discussed.

<sup>193</sup> For example, on the matter of trade in the region, Livingstone blamed Portuguese colonial policies for blocking most legitimate foreign trade and all legitimate African trade in Portuguese held areas. "The Portuguese interdict all foreign commerce," he declared, "except at a very few points where they have established custom-houses, and even at these, by an exaggerated and obstructive tariff and differential duties, they completely shut out the natives from any trade, except that in slaves." Elsewhere, he blamed the prevalence of the slave trade in the region on the Portuguese. See David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*, pp. vii, 8.

Livingstone was less tempered in attacking the Portuguese in letters to friends. For example, just over a year into the expedition he told Oswell that "Nothing can be done with the Portuguese [in East Africa] - they are an utterly effete, worn out, used up, syphilitic race: their establishments are not colonies, but very small penal settlements." Clearly, John Murray would not have allowed a statement such as this to appear in a book he published. Note that the change in Livingstone's opinion of the Portuguese from his time in West Africa when he praised the Portuguese in Angola for their racial tolerance and attempts to forge a more equalitarian colonial society. David Livingstone to W.C. Oswell, 1 November, 1859, *Letters and Documents*, p. 64.

formulating plans to return to the continent. His dreams of ending slavery, introducing commerce and Christianity and of establishing a Christian colony in Africa did not end with the Zambesi Expedition. Africa had long been his life and his home. When Roderick Murchison offered him RGS funding to search for the source of the Nile, Livingstone thus had little hesitation about returning to Africa as soon as he finished his book. Here, exploring Africa without the incumbrance of other white men, he could work to recapture the glory of his cross-continental journey and engender the type of change in Africa he had long hoped for.

## Chapter Seven

### Manliness and the Making of the Livingstone Myth: Livingstone's Last Expedition and the Genesis of his 'Saintly' Afterlife, 1865-1880

After spending much of the past 30 years exploring Africa, with his health in decline after repeated bouts of malaria and dysentery, and suffering from malnutrition, painful haemorrhoids and foot ulcers, David Livingstone contemplated retirement. On February 5, 1871, from deep in the lake regions of Central Africa, he wrote his eldest daughter Agnes that he planned to persevere in pursuit of one last discovery - the still disputed source of the Nile- before calling an end to his days as a missionary and explorer. Livingstone had set out five years earlier to solve this elusive geographical question, but his long, often circuitous, journey from the East coast of Africa into the 'unexplored' centre of the continent had been beset by hardships. The theft of his supplies, plunder of his trade goods and the loss of his medicines had tested his ability to endure the privations that accompanied the expedition. The fifty-seven year old Livingstone was ready to admit to his daughter that the exigencies of African exploration had taken a great toll on his body: "I shall not hide from you that I am made by it very old and shaky, my cheeks fallen in, space round my eyes too, mouth almost toothless, the few teeth that remain [are] out of their line so that a smile is that of a hippopotamus, a dreadful old fogie."<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, Livingstone vowed to tenaciously prevail over the forces of age, illness or any other obstacle in his path toward the headwaters of the Nile. "I commit myself to the Almighty ... and if I fall, will do so doing my duty, like [a

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<sup>1</sup> David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 5 February, 1871, British Library Add. Mss. 50184.



member] of the stouthearted sex,” he declared in calling forth the principles of manliness he had long espoused in pursuing the goals he set in exploring Africa.<sup>2</sup> Having devoted so many years to his attempt to bring his vision of ‘civilization’ to Africa, Livingstone wanted to be recognized as an archetype of manliness among his compatriots after his ‘retirement.’ As he declared in the letter to Agnes: “I hope to present to my young countrymen an example of manly perseverance.”<sup>3</sup> By emulating his work ethic and moral character, Livingstone hoped that those who followed him to Africa would demonstrate the same example of manliness in the line of duty.

The fame and influence that Livingstone gained from the explorative achievements detailed in *Missionary Travels* assured that he would be grouped with the great Victorian explorers of Africa by his contemporaries as well as by historians. But, the Livingstone legend would not have gained such potency if not for the coalescence of circumstances during his ‘last expedition’ and its immediate aftermath. In the years Livingstone was immersed in his labourious search for the source of the Nile, cut off from contact with Europeans during much of the expedition, his whereabouts, his well-being and his manliness increasingly became matters of public concern. This preoccupation with Livingstone endured throughout his long search for the source of the Nile. His name rarely disappeared from British newspapers during his last expedition, even if his accounts of his latest

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<sup>2</sup> This letter is also cited in Blaikie’s *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 341. In his role as Livingstone’s first ‘official’ biographer, Blaikie often edited Livingstone’s words, as he did with this letter, changing “like of the stouthearted sex” to “like one of His stouthearted servants.” Blaikie, perhaps unwittingly, edited out the explicit gender exclusivity of Livingstone’s comment.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

'discoveries' often failed to materialize while he searched for the Nile's source. When news came during the summer of 1872 that he had been 'found' alive and well, six years into his journey by Henry Morton Stanley, interest in Livingstone was brought to a fever-pitch. Stanley's description of the elusive hero's ability to transcend the difficulties of exploration through his enduring energy, boundless courage and immutable faith, brought Livingstone's work ethic and moral character back to the forefront of public discourse. In the aftermath of the adulation generated by Stanley's newspaper articles and book, Livingstone's death, funeral and the publication of his *Last Journals* propelled him into a status close to 'sainthood.' The efforts of his first authorized biographer only further strengthened the Livingstone myth. In death, Livingstone's name carried greater influence among his "countrymen" than he could have even hoped. The failure of his Zambesi Expedition, his egotism and his problems with white crew members and missionaries, were seemingly erased from the public memory. Iconoclastic or critical characterizations of Livingstone - challenging his proficiency as a geographer, disputing his leadership abilities, doubting his integrity or insinuating that he was in any way lacking fortitude, mettle or courage - had sporadically come from isolated faultfinders and rumour mongers. But, they quickly proved unacceptable and dissipated in the years following his death.

This chapter examines the development of the Livingstone myth during his search for the Nile and in the aftermath of his death. In contrast to previous chapters, I focus less on Livingstone's thoughts and ideas and concentrate instead on how other actors and sources were integral in constructing Livingstone's public identity in his absence. Since gaining fame and influence with his cross-continental journey, Livingstone had been concerned about

how his ideas and actions were perceived by his contemporaries. In the last years of his life and after his death, his friends and supporters took on the tasks of defending, managing and refashioning his public image. The chapter's first section is a short narrative account of Livingstone's last expedition, his journey in search of the Nile's source which marked the last years of his life (1866-1873). Section 7.2 examines the public response to the 'lost Livingstone' by analysing how his greatest supporters and his most vocal critics used his manliness to debate the merit of sending out an expedition to search for him. Stanley's explorative efforts finally ended the speculation about Livingstone's well-being. Section 7.3 analyses how Stanley's subsequent characterization of Livingstone propelled the missionary-explorer into the realm of myth. The final section of the chapter examines how the editing and publication of Livingstone's *Last Journals*, followed six years later by William Blaikie's authorized biography, secured a lasting representation of Livingstone as a flawless, saintly figure and archetype of manly perseverance for future generations. In the end, the Livingstone myth that was created was so strong that it spawned an icon for a British empire on the cusp of colonizing much of Africa.

### 7.1 Searching for the Source of the Nile: A Short Narrative Account of Livingstone's Last Expedition, 1865-1873

Even before his *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries* had gone to press, Livingstone had left Britain to begin his next African expedition. He first sailed to Bombay, where he spent three months gathering supplies and assembling a crew

that included the Africans he had left in India in 1864, as well as a group of Indian sepoys. Livingstone then sailed to Zanzibar, his passage supplied by the Governor of Bombay, Bartle Frere (who later became Governor of the Cape Colony). He began his inland journey with his crew of 60 just north of the Ruvuma river in April, 1866. Livingstone was being sponsored by the Royal Geographical Society to find the source of the Nile, to finish the work begun by Burton and Speke a decade earlier. Although he was interested in the geographical pursuit of this great ‘discovery,’ Livingstone saw the expedition as a means of achieving a greater set of goals. As I explained in Chapter One, Livingstone saw the glory that came with the discovery of the Nile’s source as a way of recapturing the great public influence he had enjoyed after his cross-continental journey. He believed this would give him the power and authority to gather the support he needed to finally stop the East African slave trade and establish his small colony. But first Livingstone needed to reach the African interior and solve the long perplexing mystery of the Nile’s source.

Livingstone’s plan was to trek along the Ruvuma and then across the Shire Highlands south of Lake Nyassa (Malawi), a region he knew as well as anyone after the Zambesi Expedition.<sup>4</sup> He would then head north-west towards the region south of Lake Tanganyika where he believed he would find the Nile’s source. However, by the time he had crossed the Shire region, six months into the expedition, Livingstone had fired the Indian sepoys, while a group of Anjouans he had hired at Zanzibar had deserted and returned to the island.<sup>5</sup> By

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<sup>4</sup> See Map 4, Appendix 1, for the actual route Livingstone took during his 1865-1873 search for the source of the Nile.

<sup>5</sup> Anjouan (sometimes also referred to as Nzwani) is one of four islands that comprise the Comoros islands, located between Madagascar and Zanzibar. Note that Anjouan was

the time Livingstone reached the southern end of Lake Tanganyika in April 1867, he was seriously ill, dangerously low in supplies and seemingly no closer to finding the Nile's source. At this point, he was also forced to make one of the most difficult moral decisions of his life. 'Friendly' Zanzibari-Arab slave and ivory traders offered to let Livingstone and his crew join their well supplied caravan. It is clear that Livingstone's decision to accept their offer was, as Jeal writes "forced upon him by absolute necessity."<sup>6</sup> In making the choice, "he squared his conscience on logical grounds: if he starved he would not be able to write the reports that alone would persuade the British government to outlaw all seaborne transport of slaves."<sup>7</sup> In the process of "travelling with the enemy he also learnt" that not all slave traders were "as bad as the generality."<sup>8</sup> To this point, Livingstone had universally condemned all slave traders in his writings. Yet, his experience during his last expedition influenced him to at least rethink his view of some who engaged in the practice. For example, one of the Arab traders he often travelled with after this point - a man named Mohammed Bogharib - often cooked for him and nursed him back to health when he was sick.<sup>9</sup> Livingstone even found that Bogharib treated his slaves with respect, unlike the preponderance of other traders he had encountered on his journeys.

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called Johanna by the British. As a result, Livingstone often referred to the Anjouans as "Johanna men."

<sup>6</sup> Jeal, "David Livingstone: A Brief Biographical Account," p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> See Livingstone's *Last Journals*, pp. 201, 219, 275, 286, 287.

In the company of the traders, Livingstone travelled west to Lake Mweru and then on to the land of Cazembe, a powerful kingdom just south of the lake.<sup>10</sup> After making a journey to Lake Bangweulu with what was left of his crew, he again joined the Zanzibari-Arab caravan for a long trek north to Ujiji, an Arab trade-hub on the eastern bank of Lake Tanganyika.<sup>11</sup> By the time Livingstone reached Ujiji in March 1869, he was confident that the Nile's source lay in a watershed south of Lake Bangweulu between the Luangwa and Chambeshi rivers. However, at Ujiji Livingstone had more immediate concerns than proving his theories about the Nile. His main reason for making the long trek to Ujiji had been to collect an order of food, medicines and other supplies that he had had shipped from Zanzibar. However, when he arrived he discovered that most of his stores had been stolen. Sick and destitute, Livingstone was again forced to rely on the charity of Mohammed Bogharib to continue his journey. At this point, he could have decided to make the lengthy journey to Zanzibar to collect new supplies and porters, or he could have resolved to return home. But for Livingstone these were not viable options, particularly when he believed he was so close to solving the Nile mystery. He thus sent a letter to John Kirk, who was acting British Consul at Zanzibar, asking that a shipment of supplies and some new porters be sent to Ujiji.

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<sup>10</sup> Cazembe was an offshoot of the once Lunda people (examined in Chapter Five). The King of the lands of Cazembe was traditionally known himself as Cazembe.

<sup>11</sup> Livingstone's six month trek to Ujiji was one of the most difficult of his life. In January 1869, mid-way through the journey, he developed a severe case of pneumonia and was plagued by other illnesses. As a result, he was unable to walk for the first time in his long explorative career. However, as Livingstone remarked "Mohammed Bogharib offered to carry me [in a stretcher]. I am so weak I can scarcely speak.... This is the first time in my life I have been carried in illness, but I cannot raise myself to the sitting posture." See Livingstone's *Last Journals*, p. 286.

After his health had recovered sufficiently, Livingstone and his crew of nine joined Bogharib for a journey west across Lake Tanganyika into an area called Manyuema. His plan was to meet up with the Lualaba river, which he knew from reports headed north. His hope was that the Lualaba was the southern portion of the Nile and that it flowed out of Lake Bangweulu. (In fact, as Stanley later confirmed, the Lualaba was actually the Congo river which turned west and emptied into the Atlantic). After reaching the town of Bambarre in mid-1869, Livingstone made an attempt to reach the Lualaba later in the year. However, he and his small party were forced to turn back because Zanzibari-Arab slavers had recently infiltrated the area.<sup>12</sup> On his return to Bambarre, Livingstone was debilitated by painful foot ulcers which kept him largely immobile and confined to his hut from July 1870 to early 1871. During this period he read the Bible (four times) and continued to theorize about the source of the Nile. In August 1870, two Arab visitors to Bambarre had told him that the sources of four rivers, including the Lualaba, were found in a watershed west of Lake Bangweulu.<sup>13</sup> Inspired by his reading of Herodotus, Ptolemy and the Bible, Livingstone used this information to posit not only that the Nile's source was found in this area, but also how

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<sup>12</sup> One of the most powerful Zanzibari-based slave traders in Manyuema was a man known as Tippu Tip. Livingstone had met Tip in Cazembe in 1867 and remarked on his generosity. Tip later came to dominate the slave trade in Manyuema and the eastern Congo. When Stanley returned to Africa for future explorations, he sometimes travelled in Tip's company and used slaves provided by Tip as porters. In 1887, on Stanley's advice, King Leopold named Tip the Governor of the eastern province of the Belgian Congo. See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1998, pp. 130-131.

<sup>13</sup> As Jeal writes, the two Arabs were not wrong in their information: "The sources of the Zambezi and Kafue can indeed be found in that locality within a hundred miles or so of two minor sources of the Lualaba." Jeal, "David Livingstone: A Short Biographical Account," p. 61.

biblical figures had once travelled the region.<sup>14</sup>

In January 1871, ten Banian porters that Kirk had sent arrived in Bambarre after leaving most of the stores they had brought from Zanzibar at Ujiji.<sup>15</sup> Although Livingstone strongly suspected the Banians were slave traders, he needed their cooperation in order to proceed with his explorations. By February, Livingstone's foot ulcers had healed enough to allow him to again try to reach the Lualaba. With the mutinous Banians in tow, he managed to reach the river by the end of March. Livingstone spent the next three months exploring the area around Nyangwe, a village on the banks of the Lualaba, while at the same time trying to secure the canoes he needed to travel the river. Despite his frustrations, Livingstone clearly enjoyed Nyangwe and its people. His journal entries and letters of the period are filled with enthusiastic descriptions of the village's bustling marketplace, with particular emphasis on the enterprising, cheerful and attractive African women who ran the market.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter One, note #6 for further reference to these ideas.

<sup>15</sup> The Banians were members of a Hindu merchant caste who worked with the Arabs at Zanzibar in the slave and ivory trades. A Banian at Zanzibar named Ludda Damji had organized the caravan that was sent to Livingstone at Kirk's request. As Helly writes, the Banians "took over a year and a half to make a trip of ordinarily a few months duration. Livingstone quickly discovered that they had malingered along the way, sold his goods, and lost all his letters but one." When they arrived, they demanded higher pay from Livingstone and claimed that Kirk had told them to bring Livingstone back to Zanzibar. See Helly, p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> For example, in an official letter to Lord Clarendon, Livingstone wrote: "Markets are held at stated times and the women attend them dressed in their best. They are light-coloured ... and [have] perfect forms. They are keen traders and look on the market as a great institution, to haggle and joke, and laugh and chat." Livingstone also noted that the women were expert divers for oysters. David Livingstone to Lord Clarendon, 1 November, 1871, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20318. See also Livingstone's *Last Journals*, pp. 377-378.



In mid-July 1871, Livingstone finally made a deal with one of the Arab traders in the area for the canoes that he so desperately needed. However, shortly after this, on a day when Livingstone had walked through the busy marketplace “on a bright sultry summer morning,” he witnessed a scene which “gave [him] the impression of being in hell.”<sup>17</sup> As he was leaving the market he had seen three armed Zanzibari-Arabs arguing with a local vendor over a chicken. Two or three minutes later, the armed men opened fire on the marketplace, shooting the villagers as they attempted to flee by jumping into the Lualaba. The Arabs themselves estimated that between 400 and 500 Africans were killed, but Livingstone thought the number was much higher.<sup>18</sup> After this, Livingstone knew he could no longer rely on the slave traders for his canoes or anything else. He immediately abandoned his plans to confirm whether the Lualaba was the Nile and headed for Ujiji to collect his supplies.

After an arduous three month journey, Livingstone arrived in Ujiji in late October to discover once again that his stores had been pilfered. However, his desolation was allayed a few days later when Henry M. Stanley marched into town. With a crew of 192 Africans carrying close to six tons of supplies, Stanley was well equipped to provide Livingstone with the food, medicines and other supplies he had lacked for so long. After their meeting, the two men spent nearly five months together, allowing Livingstone to recuperate somewhat from the physical and mental strains of his long and difficult expedition. During this time they even paddled to the north end of Lake Tanganyika, proving in the process that Burton’s

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<sup>17</sup> David Livingstone, *Last Journals*, p. 382.

<sup>18</sup> See Livingstone’s *Last Journals*, p. 382-384 and David Livingstone to Lord Granville, 14 November, 1871, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20318 for his description of the massacre. Note that Mohammed Bogharib was not in Manyema during the massacre.

theory that the lake served as the source of the Nile was wrong. Stanley tried to convince his new friend to accompany him back to Britain, but a reinvigorated Livingstone insisted on completing his mission. Fortified with fresh supplies and a crew bolstered by reinforcements from Stanley's party, Livingstone slowly made his way to Lake Bangweulu and the area where he believed he would find the Nile's source. However, he was soon plagued by the dysentery and internal bleeding that had beset him for much of the expedition. When he could no longer walk, his crew carried him through swamplands on their shoulders. A little more than a year after parting from Stanley, the sixty-year old Livingstone succumbed to the rigours of exploration on the banks of Lake Bangweulu. He died on (or around) May 1, 1873, reportedly kneeling in prayer at his bedside, his health and his body ravaged by his unrelenting need to complete the momentous tasks he had set for himself.<sup>19</sup> Ironically, what was perhaps the greatest example of Livingstone's conception of manly perseverance came about as a result of his death. Likely because of his comparative compassion and kindness, his African crew made the courageous decision to carry his embalmed body 1500 miles on a punishing and perilous nine-month journey to the East coast. The body was then shipped

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<sup>19</sup> The cause of death was likely a combination of factors. The loss of blood caused by a combination of dysentery and haemorrhoids weakened Livingstone's ability to withstand the fevers brought on by repeated malarial attacks. When his intestines and internal organs were removed (placed in a box and buried) to prepare his body for transport to the coast, it was discovered that a large blood clot had been obstructing his lower intestine. Livingstone had a tumour the size of a golf ball lodged in his intestine. The exact date of Livingstone's death has been debated. Tim Jeal places the date at May 1. This follows Waller in the *Last Journals* and the date inscribed on Livingstone's gravestone in Westminster Abbey. Jacob Wainwright (one of Livingstone's attendants and the only African to accompany his body on its voyage from Africa to England) inscribed May 4 on the tree where Livingstone's heart was buried. Henry Stanley also followed this date in his writings on Livingstone. François Bontinck differs from these dates in placing the death on April 28. See Helly, p. 92, note 2.

to England to be received with a hero's welcome.

**7.2 Livingstone 'Lost': Livingstone's Greatest Supporters and Most Vocal Adversaries Debate his Manliness and the Merits of a Search Expedition, 1867-1872**

Livingstone's February 5, 1871 letter to his daughter Agnes was one of many he had written but had been unable to mail since he had reached Manyuema in September 1869. The letters stayed with him because he could not find a Zanzibar-Arab trader making the trek to the East coast whom he could trust with his correspondence or who was willing to carry his mail on the long journey. When he had given a previous packet of forty letters to a trader to carry back to Zanzibar, the letters had never reached the island.<sup>20</sup> Many of his letters detailed aspects of the burgeoning slave trade in Manyuema controlled by Zanzibari-Arabs, with captured slaves brought to the coast for shipment to Zanzibar and on to the Middle East. Livingstone believed the letters would be destroyed if given to the traders since the Zanzibaris in the region knew of his opposition to slavery and were fearful that details of their activities would reach Europe. The few Livingstone letters that did make it to their proper destination repeatedly took so long to reach the correspondent that the details included were usually out of date. This left his whereabouts unknown for lengthy periods and open

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<sup>20</sup> Biographers mentioning the loss of these letters have often argued that they were "purposely destroyed." See Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*. P. 329; George Seaver, *David Livingstone: His Life and Letters*, p. 537. Earlier in the journey, Livingstone did entrust letters written in December 1867 to a Muslim trader named Seyd ben Ali which did reach Britain. According to H. W. Bates of the Royal Geographical Society, "Livingstone recommended [Ali] on high terms to the [British] Consul in Zanzibar." See *The Times*, September 15, 1869.

to speculation in the newspapers and among friends. Livingstone was not a “forgotten figure” before his meeting with Stanley, as Tim Jeal has asserted.<sup>21</sup> Out of contact for long periods with the world outside of his immediate surroundings, Livingstone was not out of the public mind. The absence of mail and the paucity of information received from Livingstone led to rumours about his latest actions, intentions and prospects. The innuendo went as far as to induce conjecture that he had ‘gone native,’ been captured, or had been killed through misadventure or murder. The implications about Livingstone’s fate also intimated that he had somehow, through age, delirium, or simple exhaustion, lost the ability to get himself out of the type of trying situations that he had previously surmounted with ease.

On a regular basis throughout Livingstone’s last journey, concern - legitimate or otherwise - about his status provoked calls for search expeditions to prove that he was alive and assess whether he was in good enough health to continue with his geographical quest. In March 1867, a year into his expedition, Livingstone was reported dead. This report sparked disbelief and action rather than a solemn national remembrance for a fallen hero. The group of Anjouan porters that had deserted Livingstone six months into the expedition had returned to Zanzibar and claimed that he had been murdered by the feared Mazitu

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<sup>21</sup> Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 337. In his biographical chapter in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, Jeal somewhat revises his characterization of the public and State interest in Livingstone during his last journey, asserting that “Livingstone had not been entirely forgotten after 1866.” See Jeal “David Livingstone: A Brief Biographical Account,” p. 61. Elsewhere in the volume, John Mackenzie argues that “apart from the celebrated encounter with Stanley, throughout that period he was subject to many rumours, involving supposed disasters and triumphs, which had the effect of keeping the fascination of his name constantly before a captivated public.” See John MacKenzie, “David Livingstone and the Worldly After-Life: Imperialism and Nationalism in Africa,” p. 206.

peoples just west of Lake Nyassa.<sup>22</sup> William Sunley, the former British Consul to the Comoros Islands, questioned the porters at Zanzibar and was convinced that their story was true and that Livingstone had been killed in the attack. Rather than reflect on Livingstone's great accomplishments and past exploits, sceptical friends and supporters convinced the British government to spend £1,200 to send an RGS search expedition to investigate the veracity of the report.<sup>23</sup> A search party led by Edward Young, a sailor with the *Pioneer* during the Zambesi Expedition, was quickly dispatched to the Shire region to confirm whether Livingstone was still alive. Although he did not encounter Livingstone, Young soon found ample evidence that he was alive and heading towards what is now north-eastern Zambia.<sup>24</sup> Then, as Young prepared to return to England, letters were received in Zanzibar from Livingstone confirming that he was moving west, was low on supplies and believed he

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<sup>22</sup> The Mazitu were a Zulu offshoot group who travelled to the area just to the west of Lake Nyassa after the *Mfecane*. The Anjouan porters were led by Mousa, a man who had been one of the many Africans to work for Livingstone at some point during the Zambesi Expedition.

<sup>23</sup> Other than the word of the Anjouans, the report of Livingstone's death lacked any substantive evidence.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Stafford, in a study of Murchison, argues that Thomas Baines was actually considered by the RGS Council for the leadership of the search expedition. Stafford does not assert why the Council might have considered Baines. Likely because he knew that the two men did not like each other, Murchison quashed this choice in favour of Young. See Robert A. Stafford, *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, scientific exploration and Victorian imperialism*, pp. 181-182. Samuel White Baker was the most high profile explorer to volunteer for the search expedition. In a letter to Murchison, Baker offered to use a steamer to make his way from Lake Albert to Lake Tanganyika hoping to find Livingstone in the area of the lake. Murchison turned him down, as he had years earlier when Baker had hoped to join Livingstone's crew as part of the Zambezi Expedition. Baker to Murchison, 24 November, 1867, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 20311.

was close to finding the source of the Nile.<sup>25</sup> In the aftermath of Young's journey, Horace Waller, the lay superintendent with the UMCA mission who had become a good friend of Livingstone's, wrote to tell him about the impact generated by the news of his 'death.' Already sounding like he had an agenda for Livingstone in mind, Waller claimed: "the interest in this country about you is as intense as ever I could wish it to be ... The report of your murder, Sir Roderick's vehement denial, Young's most successful clear up of Mousa's lie have all tended to surround you with a halo of romance such as you can imagine."<sup>26</sup>

In the aftermath of Young's journey occasional Livingstone letters made their way to Zanzibar or more rarely to friends or family in Britain. This news was reported promptly in *The Times* and other newspapers, providing a brief reassurance about his health and location. However, less than two years after Young's findings, Livingstone's whereabouts and well-being were again in dispute and new calls were made for an expedition to find him. Yet, at this stage the most vocal advocates of a Livingstone search expedition were not his traditional supporters. Ironically, the appeals to find the great explorer were led by some of Richard Burton's strongest and most vocal partisans. Their efforts may have been based on a sincere concern for Livingstone. On the other hand, their call for another search expedition

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<sup>25</sup> Capitalizing on the public appetite for news about Livingstone and stories of African adventure, Young and another member of the expedition, Henry Faulkner, quickly put out books based on the search expedition. See Henry Faulkner, *Elephant Haunts; Being a Sportsman's Narrative of the Search for Doctor Livingstone, with Scenes of Elephant, Buffalo, and Hippopotamus Hunting*, Hurst and Blackett: London, 1868; E.D. Young, *The Search After Livingstone*, Letts, Son and Company: London, 1868.

<sup>26</sup> Horace Waller to David Livingstone, 4 October 1869, Waller Papers, Rhodes House Library, cited in MacKenzie, "David Livingstone and the Worldly After-Life," p. 207. Waller had met Mousa during his time with the UMCA mission during the Zambesi Expedition.

could have been a calculated ploy to garner publicity for a book Burton hoped to publish.

The ‘Burton front’ was led by Burton’s wife Isabel and friend and fellow Anthropological Society member Winwood Reade.<sup>27</sup> Their appeal for a search expedition was based on a report that Livingstone was being held captive in the kingdom of Cazembe, where he stopped in late 1867. Burton, who was a frequent contributor to the editorial pages of British newspapers, did not contribute directly to the debate. However, it is evident that he had something to gain in associating Livingstone’s disappearance and need for rescue with Cazembe and his kingdom. Years before, Burton had translated the journal of the Portuguese explorer Lacerda, who had travelled to Cazembe in 1798. He later acknowledged that when the report of Livingstone’s detention in Cazembe was circulated, he had seen the opportunity to capitalize on the popularity of Livingstone’s name to find a publisher for his translation. As he stated after the book was finally published in 1873: “I thought that the publication of it might interest the public, only when Dr Livingstone was represented to be detained in the city of the Cazembe.”<sup>28</sup> Did this then give Burton the idea of asking his wife and friend to

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<sup>27</sup> The controversy generated by Isabel Burton and Winwood Reade (who I refer to as the ‘Burton front’) was noticed by newspaper readers at the time, but it has been overlooked by Livingstone and Burton biographers. This is largely because the ‘evidence’ for the ‘front’ must be pieced together from two separate sources: Burton’s library at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California and the Arundell Collection (Isabel’s family records) at the Wiltshire Record Office, Trowbridge, England. See the footnotes that follow for further reference to these sources.

<sup>28</sup> Burton actually ended up publishing two books on the subject of Lacerda’s visit to Cazembe. His translation of Lacerda’s travelogue was published by the RGS as *The Lands of Cazembe* (1873). However, the Royal Geographical Society would not allow Burton to include material in the book that it believed was critical of Livingstone. As Burton explained, the RGS, “as a public body, could hardly print any matter which exchanges the grounds of geography for those of controversy and criticism; consequently it objected, as it was justified in doing, to publish my Preface and sundry Appendices. Unwilling, however,

help create public interest in Cazembe? In championing the rumour that Livingstone was a helpless captive, did the Burton forces hope to malign the manliness of the great explorer, while making the ever-controversial Burton the hero of the story?

As I discussed in Chapter Four, Winwood Reade was a leading figure in the polygynist-based Anthropological Society of London. In his writings, he advanced theories about innate African inferiority and species difference that were antithetical to much of what Livingstone believed. Like Burton, he was also highly critical of the presence of British missionaries in West Africa. His call to find Livingstone in a June 25, 1869 letter to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* is then surprising, unless it is seen as a cynical ploy to disparage Livingstone's abilities while bringing Cazembe into public focus. In the letter, Reade argued that Livingstone had run out of money while at Cazembe and "had been imprisoned for debt."<sup>29</sup> Ignoring Livingstone's long experience as an explorer and the fact that he usually had a good relationship with the African leaders he encountered, Reade intimated that he no longer had the ability to avert a potentially dangerous situation through negotiation or more forceful means. In suggesting that the Africans who held Livingstone might be cannibals planning to feed on him during their "hungry season," Reade stressed the

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that my work, should appear in mutilated form, I have struck off, especially for the use of my friends, a few copies of the rejected matter." This material was privately published as *Supplementary Papers to the Mwátá Cazembe (Journal of Lacerda)* (1873). The "Preface" contained a critique of some of Livingstone's comments in his *Narrative of an Expedition the Zambesi and its Tributaries*. Burton's comments cited here were also from his "Preface" to *Supplementary Papers to the Mwátá Cazembe*.

<sup>29</sup> Winwood Reade, "The Livingstone Expedition," *Pall Mall Gazette*, June 25, 1869. Note that Burton had pasted a clipping of this article in his personal copy of Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* found at the Huntington Library.



urgency of saving a man whom he insisted was “suffering the horrors of real captivity and of starvation” and was facing the prospect of “death.”<sup>30</sup> Given the source and the sensational nature of this plea to find Livingstone, it is not surprising that it was ignored by the RGS or any other group that supported Livingstone.

The Burton supporter who attracted the most attention in calling for a Livingstone search expedition was Burton wife’s Isabel. Several weeks after Reade, in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* printed August 23, 1869, she appealed for national action:

The latest intelligence touching Dr. Livingstone suggests the possibility of his having been detained in the capital of Cazembe, and at once explains the non-appearance of the traveller and the want of communications so heartening to his host of friends. Why are we whispering this to one another in secret? The report, if we believe its truth, should be published throughout the length and breadth of England, whose great heart will readily supply men and means to rescue one of her favourite sons from a precarious and perhaps perilous position.<sup>31</sup>

Burton’s letter was not an innocent attempt to arouse concern for Livingstone. Although she lauded him as “a Christian hero,” her letter was cloaked in language which called into question his character and his ability to lead himself out of a difficult and dangerous predicament. According to Isabel, Livingstone was an aged hero who had “offered up the flower of his days to the grand task of regenerating the Dark Continent.” Now well past his prime, with outmoded views of the people who held him captive, he also

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Isabel Burton, letter in the *Daily Telegraph*, August 23, 1869. Note that the letter was found in the Arundell Collection, Wiltshire Record Office, 2667/26, box 3, press cutting scrapbook #3. The Arundell Collection contains a number of scrapbooks full of press clippings, published articles, letters, official documents and other papers that the Burton’s kept.

lacked the energy and daring that came with a younger, healthier body. Unable to extricate himself from Cazembe, he needed the help of a more youthful and dynamic man with the knowledge and fortitude to lead a rescue mission.<sup>32</sup>

Always active in championing her husband's views with the hope of furthering his career, Isabel used the letter to bring Richard to the forefront of her strategy to "secure the safety" of Livingstone. Livingstone, she asserted, had been prevented from leaving Cazembe because he had unwisely "never made of friend of the Moslem," whom she argued were "all-powerful" in the kingdom. Unlike her husband, an Orientalist who befriended Muslims and immersed himself in Islamic culture on his travels, she asserted that Livingstone had continually denigrated the practitioners of Islam and had senselessly advanced the cause of "the untutored African - in other words, the vile and murderous fetisher."<sup>33</sup> Casting Burton, then in Damascus, as the true hero of the story she hoped would unfold, she claimed her husband had intimate knowledge of Cazembe's kingdom which he could readily supply to emancipate Livingstone. Isabel had early realized the myth-making value in a Livingstone rescue story, joining Stanley and his *New York Herald* publisher with this honour. However, she could not garner the public support, nor did her husband have the desire or financial resources, to organize and lead a Livingstone search expedition of his own. Moreover, despite the reaction her letter generated, it did not prompt any publishers to print her husband's book on Cazembe.

Isabel Burton's rescue plan, her criticism of Livingstone's racial attitudes and her

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

implicit attack on his ability to manfully persevere when confronted by a (supposedly) perilous predicament, were quickly countered by Livingstone's closest friends and supporters in England. In a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, Horace Waller quickly answered Burton's charge that Livingstone disliked Muslims, providing evidence of his friend's good relations with several of the Zanzibari traders he had met on his travels.<sup>34</sup> Roderick Murchison then followed with a letter that indicated his strong conviction that Livingstone's ability and determination would carry him past any obstacle in the path of his goals. In asserting this point, he declared:

whatever may be the speculations entered into his absence, I have much implicit confidence in the tenacity of purpose, undying resolution and herculean frame of Livingstone, that however he may be delayed, I hold stoutly to the opinion that he will overcome every obstacle and will, as I have suggested, emerge ... on the Western shore [of Africa] on which he appeared after his great march across that region, and long after his life had been despaired of.<sup>35</sup>

Livingstone's age, health, body and character were not an issue, at least publicly, for Murchison. The image he provided of his friend in response to Isabel Burton's calculated affront against Livingstone's masculinity endowed the ageing explorer with the physical

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<sup>34</sup> Horace Waller, *Daily Telegraph*, August 26, 1869, W.R.O. 266726.3.3. Although this letter was published in the *Daily Telegraph*, during 1869 Waller began to direct his comments about Livingstone, and other issues related to events in Africa to *The Times*. Dorothy Helly has revealed that between 1869 and his death in 1896, Waller had eighty-five letters published in *The Times*, with over seventy of them appearing after 1874. The eighty-five letters were not all published during Livingstone's last journey, as John M. MacKenzie asserts in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, p. 206. See Helly, p. 273.

<sup>35</sup> Roderick Murchison, *London Scotsman*, late August 1869 [exact day not clear], W.R.O. 2667/26.3.3. The letter was reprinted in full in *The Times*, 6 September, 1869. Note that both of these letters were kept in a scrapbook by the Burton's.

attributes of an heroic God and the strength of character held by few mortal humans. For Murchison, the ravages of exploration could not quell a paradigmatic explorer like Livingstone. Livingstone was a man devoted to a cause and tirelessly working toward a greater goal; his abilities were his destiny. His friend's power to strive and prevail had been shown repeatedly in his path-breaking cross-continental journey and Murchison was confident that it would be demonstrated again in his eventual emergence somewhere on the West Coast of Africa. In Murchison's mind, Livingstone was the archetype of the great explorer: he set an honourable goal, worked with pluck to the best of his abilities, and showed his mettle in not giving up until the goal had been reached. A man who showed such manly perseverance did not need the Royal Geographical Society to send another team of men into Africa on a rescue mission.

Murchison had been a steadfast proponent of Livingstone's abilities as an explorer since first becoming aware of his discovery of Lake Ngami in 1850. On Livingstone's return from his triumphal cross-continental journey in 1857, Murchison had offered important guidance to help Livingstone further his reputation and influence. He was instrumental in securing Livingstone's consulship and his command of the Zambesi Expedition. When he saw that Livingstone's colonial vision was impractical, he had warned his friend about the potential for disappointment. After the failure of the expedition, he secured RGS funding for Livingstone's search for the Nile's source. And, until his death in February 1871 (at 78), Murchison was consistently prepared to counteract false rumours about his friend. When it had been erroneously reported in April 1869 that Livingstone had travelled the Nile towards Egypt and then returned to Zanzibar, Murchison had quickly replied with a letter to *The*

*Times* that he knew the dispatch was altogether false, having received letters from Zanzibar which showed Livingstone to be in Ujiji.<sup>36</sup> As he demonstrated in his response to Isabel Burton, Murchison was also ready to use the press to extol his faith in Livingstone's capacity to surmount any obstacles in his path.

Murchison also had another motive in supporting Livingstone throughout his search for the source of the Nile. In his role as President of the RGS, he also sought to promote his Society through its association with Livingstone. The success or failure of the RGS-sponsored expedition and the fate of its solitary leader reflected upon the public perception of the RGS and Murchison. The discovery of the true source of the Nile, so long a contentious and beguiling geographical issue, would bring glory to Livingstone. Yet, Livingstone's success would also deliver untold publicity and authority to the RGS, filling the Society's treasuries with new subscriptions. On the other hand, if Livingstone's expedition was unsuccessful it could tarnish the reputation of geographical exploration in Africa, the *raison d'être* of the RGS. After the controversy generated by Burton's and Speke's disagreement over the Nile's source, the RGS needed a successful resolution to the Nile question to sustain its reputation. Despite his status, Livingstone served as a relatively cheap instrument for Murchison and the RGS to achieve this purpose. For £500, Livingstone provided unremitting toil, furnished his geographical data and mineralogical findings for publication in the society's organ and offered the potential to bring increased influence and acclaim to his fellow RGS members.

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<sup>36</sup> Murchison letter to *The Times*, 20 April, 1869. The erroneous report had appeared in *The Times* a day earlier.

Aside from the ulterior motives Murchison might have had in sponsoring the expedition, he was clearly devoted to Livingstone throughout the length of their professional relationship. As the head of an organization that worked with all the great (male) mid-Victorian explorers, Murchison directed a level of praise and support towards Livingstone that was unequalled in his relationships with any of the other heroic figures of nineteenth-century exploration. Neither Baker, Burton, Speke or any other explorer was lauded in the same manner by the RGS President. Moreover, his efforts to counter the ‘Burton front’ were successful. In the aftermath of their exchange of letters in the press, public opinion seemed to be squarely on Murchison’s side and against Isabel Burton. For example, in summarizing the controversy, the *London Scotsman* agreed explicitly with Murchison’s rationalization for not sending a search expedition to find the Livingstone. Citing Livingstone’s “tenacity of purpose, undying resolution and herculean frame,” in support of their editorial stance, the newspaper concluded: “We may safely share Sir Roderick’s sturdy confidence ... [in] our illustrious countryman.”<sup>37</sup>

Yet, even after the press had had its say, the debate generated by the ‘Burton front’ was not over. One of Murchison’s - and of Livingstone’s - fiercest critics was the infamous Victorian “armchair geographer” William D. Cooley. Cooley had been one of the first Fellows of the RGS in the 1830s and had been influential in generating interest in East African exploration.<sup>38</sup> However, he became increasingly critical of RGS policy and distanced

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<sup>37</sup> *London Scotsman*, 4 September, 1869. W.R.O. 2667/26.3.3.

<sup>38</sup> Cooley’s life, work and controversial ideas about African geography are examined by Roy C. Bridges in “W. D. Cooley, the RGS and African Geography in the Nineteenth Century,” *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 142, March and July 1976, pp. 27-47, 274-286.

himself from the Society. By the 1860s he was one of a number of maverick geographers who theorized about African geography without actually having visited the continent.<sup>39</sup> Throughout the mid-Victorian period, Cooley was perhaps the most vocal critic of explorers like Livingstone, Burton, Speke and Baker, his denunciations based not on moral grounds, but on geographical questions. Always prepared to join a controversy involving African exploration, he would not let the dispute generated by the 'Burton front' die. In a rejoinder to *The Times* after Murchison's letter was republished in its pages, Cooley questioned his former colleague's rhapsodic confidence in Livingstone, as well as the RGS's wisdom in sending its star explorer on such a 'dangerous' expedition. Although he was a vocal critic of her husband's ideas about African geography, Cooley sided with Isabel Burton in challenging the Livingstone supporters who believed his work ethic and moral character would save him from danger and provide the spark necessary to successfully complete his mission. He confidently announced that according to his own sources, which included information provided by Portuguese explorers, Livingstone "ha[d] been despoiled, and if he [was alive, he was] in thralldom" within the walls of Cazembe's kingdom.<sup>40</sup> According to Cooley, the foolhardy explorer had "been warned to avoid Cazembe" and now needed to be rescued. In addition to blaming Livingstone for taking undue risk in the pursuit of what he heartily believed were ill-conceived ideas about African geography, Cooley also castigated the RGS for "sending [Livingstone] off again without a single word of caution, on so

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<sup>39</sup> Cooley served on the RGS Council and even acted as the society's vice-president in 1835. After a financial dispute with the RGS's secretary, Cooley founded the Hakluyt Society. See Bridges, pp. 31-32.

<sup>40</sup> *The Times*, 7 September, 1869. Cooley signed only his initials to the letter.

dangerous an expedition.”<sup>41</sup> Cooley scathingly argued that the RGS had left Livingstone to depend on what amounted to intangible human (and often cast as ‘male’) qualities. Assailing Murchison’s rationale for his confidence in his friend, he concluded that “under actual circumstances, to rest in unbounded hopefulness, relying on [Livingstone’s] pluck and endurance, seems to be but a flattering mode of abandoning him to his fate.”<sup>42</sup> For Cooley, the abstract ability to bravely persevere was no guarantee of success against the realities of exploration, or presumably the dangers found at Cazembe.

While he might have had influence earlier in his career, Cooley was by this time considered an eccentric and his critique of Livingstone and the RGS met with little or no public support. Shortly after Cooley’s contribution to the debate, a rare letter from Livingstone reached Britain which proved that he had not been held captive in or by Cazembe and that he had travelled to Ujiji. One of Murchison’s last letters to *The Times*,

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Early in his career Cooley had provided new insights into East and Central African geography, (and had supplied Burton with maps of Central Africa for his journey with Speke). However, many of the ideas he clung to were outmoded by the mid-1860s. For example, in his letter to *The Times*, he erroneously argued that the Loapula (or Luvua), a large river flowing north into Lake Mweru, was connected to Lake Victoria. He also held to the belief that Lake Tanganyika and Lake Nyassa were one in the same.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Cooley’s comments were answered in *The Times*, not by Murchison, but by RGS associate secretary H. W. Bates. Bates was particularly concerned with the suggestion that a man of Livingstone’s stature and influence might be seen to be ‘under the command’ of the RGS. He stated: “It seems, besides unjust to the character of a man of so much power and originality as Dr. Livingstone, to insinuate that he is ‘sent off’ by anybody. The intense devotion to a great philanthropic object and unconquerable determination in attempts to carry it out are Livingstone’s own motives, and not imposed upon him by others.” Bates also rebutted Isabel Burton’s charge that Livingstone disliked Muslims by declaring that the RGS had received a letter in November 1868 that Livingstone had entrusted to a Zanzibari carrier whom he had “recommended on high terms to the [British] Consul” in Zanzibar.” See *The Times*, 15 September, 1869.



summarizing this news, created encouragement and anticipation that Livingstone was well on the way to solving the Nile mystery and might soon return in triumph to Britain. However, as I have discussed, Livingstone's arrival in Manyema (in July 1869) had meant that no more letters were received in Britain, Zanzibar or anywhere else. Thus, through much of 1870, rumours again circulated in the press about Livingstone's fate. In February 1870, *The Times* published a letter from the father-in-law of a ship's captain off the West African coast reporting that Livingstone had been murdered and burnt by a tribe of angry Africans who believed he was a witchdoctor responsible for the death of their chief.<sup>43</sup> Zanzibari traders arriving back on the island reported sightings of a thin, gray haired, though bronzed, white man in Ujiji. Near the end of the year, Livingstone was said to be waiting in a village on the coast of Mozambique for a vessel to take him to Britain.<sup>44</sup> In early 1871, as nothing more than innuendo, it was briefly reported in the papers that the "American traveller, Mr. Stanley" might attempt to make his way through war-torn eastern Africa towards Livingstone's suspected location around Lake Tanganyika.<sup>45</sup> However, after Stanley's first

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<sup>43</sup> *The Times*, February 5, 1870.

<sup>44</sup> See Reginald Coupland, *Livingstone's Last Journey*, Collins: London, 1945, pp. 142-143.

<sup>45</sup> Henry Morton Stanley was actually born John Rowlands on January 28, 1841 in Wales. Passed between relatives, he grew up in a workhouse. At the age of 16, he sailed for New Orleans where, in 1859, he was 'adopted' by a cotton broker named Stanley. During the Civil War he served first in the Confederate Army, but in 1862 switched to the Union side. He later sailed on merchant ships and tried to make his living in the American West. In 1867, Stanley obtained his first regular journalistic position as a reporter for a St. Louis newspaper. In 1868, he persuaded the *New York Herald* to let him cover Britain's attack on Ethiopia. After becoming famous through his search for Livingstone, Stanley had attempted to keep his British past secret. When details gradually surfaced he re-adopted Britain as his homeland. He died in 1904. Of the many studies of Stanley, the best are John Bierman,

dispatches to his publisher at the *New York Herald* reached New York a year later, it was confirmed that he was indeed in search of Livingstone. On hearing this, the RGS immediately put up £500 for its own search expedition. This figure was quickly met by over £4000 in subscriptions to the society to send a relief expedition that would essentially follow in Stanley's footsteps. Ironically, Cooley's acerbic observations about RGS inaction had proved to be prophetic. When the RGS finally decided to 'relieve' Livingstone, it was in reaction to the possibility that Stanley might get to him first. The powerful British geographers presumed that when the time came to seek out Livingstone, they were the ones who should rightfully obtain the glory that came with the act. Suddenly, the RGS no longer stood by Livingstone's seemingly innate capacity to persevere and work his own way out of Africa. Then again Murchison's successor, Henry Rawlinson, was a man who did not share his predecessor's boundless faith in Livingstone's abilities and was more concerned with protecting the society's international reputation.<sup>46</sup>

The expedition team that the RGS sent off to Africa arrived in Zanzibar to begin their search only shortly before Stanley triumphantly reached the coast in May 1872 with news of

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*Dark Safari: The Life Behind the Legend of Henry Morton Stanley*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1990; Richard Hall, *Stanley: An Adventurer Explored*, Collins: London, 1974 and Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. See also *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley*, edited by Dorothy Stanley, Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1909. See Hall, p. 208.

<sup>46</sup> When Livingstone heard of Murchison's death in July 1872, he called him "The best friend I ever had - true, warm and abiding - he loved me more than I deserved: he looks down on me still." Livingstone, *Last Journals*, p. 437.

his meeting with Livingstone.<sup>47</sup> Stanley's advance messengers had conveyed the news to Zanzibar in April and by the time he had arrived at the East African port town of Bagamoyo, London was aware that the Livingstone mystery had been solved. After years of wonder about Livingstone's whereabouts and well-being, Stanley's achievement was an unexpected surprise to the general public and an annoyance, if not an embarrassment, to the Royal Geographical Society. The news also triggered an explosion of interest in Livingstone in Britain, Western Europe and North America.

### 7.3 'How I Found Livingstone': Henry Stanley and the Construction of the Livingstone Legend

Ironically, on February 5, 1871, the same day Livingstone had written his daughter Agnes contemplating retirement, Henry Stanley reached the mainland of Africa to begin his overland expedition in search of Livingstone.<sup>48</sup> He had been sent on his epic journey by the flamboyant publisher of the *New York Herald*, James Gordon Bennett Jr. To further the impact of his journalistic 'scoop' he had kept his goal and occupation secret from the British and U.S. consulates in Zanzibar as he departed on his well-equipped trek into the interior.

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<sup>47</sup> Livingstone's son Oswald was part of the RGS expedition team. After it was discovered that Stanley had found Livingstone, the three top-ranking members of the team resigned. This left Oswald to decide whether he wanted to proceed on his own (with an African crew) to join his father. But, after talking with Kirk he decided "not to expose himself to needless risk, seeing that his father had been relieved" and returned home. See Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 363.

<sup>48</sup> H.M. Stanley, *Stanley's Dispatches to the New York Herald*, edited by Norman Bennett, Boston University Press: Boston, 1970, p. 9; Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 38.

On 28 October 1871, he reached a weak, hungry and destitute Livingstone. After five months with the explorer, he made the long and difficult trek back to Zanzibar and then made plans to travel to Europe.

Stanley arrived in Europe just as the full details of his time with Livingstone hit British newspapers. Initially, there was some skepticism - most of it generated by the RGS - about whether Stanley's story was true. However, the geographers' suspicions were a result of being beaten to Livingstone by an arrogant American, brought on by the potential public humiliation that came with the news that Stanley had both found and brought relief to an emaciated RGS-sponsored explorer. In what became a question of national pride for the RGS, Livingstone's dignity was also implicitly cast as being threatened by his need for assistance from no less than a reporter out for a journalistic scoop.<sup>49</sup> Whether it was a facade or not, the RGS reaction implied that Livingstone's honour was at stake if his fortunes were left to be decided by another more mortal man. In a mocking attack on Stanley, new RGS President Henry Rawlinson attempted an act of role-reversal to restore Livingstone to his customary place as the star protagonist of his explorative adventures. "There is one point on which a little *éclaircissement* is desirable," Rawlinson proclaimed, "because a belief seems to prevail that Mr. Stanley has discovered Dr. Livingstone; whereas, without any disparagement to Mr. Stanley's energy, activity and loyalty, if there has been any discovery and relief it is Dr. Livingstone who has discovered and relieved Mr. Stanley. Dr.

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<sup>49</sup> *The Illustrated London News* was one of the critical voices that castigated the RGS for letting the 'American' outsider beat the British to Livingstone, calling it a "somewhat humiliating failure." See *The Illustrated London News*, August 3, 1872.

Livingstone, indeed, is in clover while Mr. Stanley is nearly destitute..."<sup>50</sup> Just who was the hero here and who was the weak link in need of a helping hand? Yet, as the fellows of the RGS soon discovered, they did not need to be concerned about the public image of the society's 'star' explorer. Nothing could have helped solidify Livingstone's image more after the saga concerning his whereabouts than Stanley's portrayal of the "venerable traveller."<sup>51</sup> His pride kept intact, the saintly Livingstone depicted by Stanley was a paragon of Christian manliness, a true hero and role model for the coming age of British imperialist ambition in Africa.

During the summer of 1872, the dramatic particulars concerning Livingstone's expedition, so long a mystery, filled the columns of Western newspapers. First to engross the reading public were Stanley's widely re-circulated dispatches to the *New York Herald*, which provided a detailed account of his search for and his time with Livingstone. Stanley had also brought back the packages of letters that Livingstone could not send while he was in Manyema. A number of these were reprinted (most often in extract form) in various newspapers. Also included were two widely re-published Livingstone letters to Bennett Jr., written as thanks to the *Herald* publisher, but also intended by Livingstone to reach a wider audience. One of the letters gave a full description of the Zanzibari-Arab massacre of

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<sup>50</sup> Henry Rawlinson, in his opening Presidential address to the Royal Geographical Society, May, 1872, in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 1871-1872*, as cited in John Bierman, *Dark Safari: The Life Behind the Legend of Henry Morton Stanley*, p. 127.

<sup>51</sup> H.M Stanley, *Stanley Dispatches to the New York Herald*, p. 51.

Africans at Nyangwe.<sup>52</sup> In writing about the incident, Livingstone's greatest hope was that it might rouse the British government to put more energy and resources into stopping the flow of slaves into Zanzibar. After years of effort in working to stop the East African slave trade, Livingstone's letter ultimately led to action and results. The public outrage generated by his account of the massacre led the British government to force the Sultan of Zanzibar to shutdown the slave trade within his dominion. After the Sultan was threatened with a British naval blockade, he 'officially' closed the Zanzibar slave market on 5 June 1873, a little more than a month after Livingstone's death. This had the effect of significantly curbing the flow of slaves out of the African interior and hence across the Indian Ocean. Through the attention that Stanley had generated, Livingstone had actually been able to effect the change he had hoped to engender with the discovery of the source of the Nile. Although he had failed in his geographical quest, he had reached his ultimate goal of suppressing the slave trade.

Stanley, himself, was an omnipresent and controversial figure after his arrival in Britain. He further rankled the RGS with his denunciation of Kirk and his criticisms of several other highly placed RGS members. Yet, the general public was enthralled with what he had to say about his experience in Africa with Livingstone. They demonstrated this by eagerly buying up newspapers, attending Stanley's public lectures across Britain and by

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<sup>52</sup> The first of the two letters to Bennett Jr. was written in November 1871. The second, detailing the Nyangwe massacre was begun in February and finished in March 1872. The letters appeared in the *New York Herald*, July 26, 27, 1872 and were published in *The Times* July 27, 1872. The second letter also appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, July 29, 1872. Livingstone wrote a third letter to Bennett after Stanley's departure for the coast. It was published in *The Times*, April 10, 1874, just eight days before Livingstone's burial. See Helly, p. 54, note #6.

purchasing his book when it was published in November. *How I Found Livingstone* quickly became one of the most popular books by an explorer during the Victorian period, selling tens of thousands of copies. As one of its happy publishers proclaimed, the book received “an ovation seldom, perhaps never before, accorded a book of travel.”<sup>53</sup>

If Stanley’s *Herald* dispatches laid the base for his characterization of Livingstone, *How I Found Livingstone* congealed the now faultless hero in myth. Like the highly popular works by other great male Victorian explorers, *How I Found Livingstone* is essentially a tale about the triumph of heroic manliness in what is presented as a quintessentially masculine domain. With the dramatic qualities of a classic adventure tale, it is cast as a story about purpose, adversity, chance, authority, ability, resolve and attainment. But, unlike other popular African exploration narratives, Stanley’s book develops into an account of male bonding, with the young reporter finding a father figure in the explorer and Livingstone gaining the company of man he began to think of as a son.<sup>54</sup> More than a journalistic venture to find and help an ageing hero, Stanley’s quest introduces him, to his surprise, to a father-

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<sup>53</sup> Cited in Bierman, p. 139.

<sup>54</sup> On his relationship with Stanley, Livingstone told his daughter Agnes that “that good brave fellow has acted as a son to me.” See David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, August 23, 1872, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184. Livingstone made similar comments about Stanley in a letter to Horace Waller, stating that the journalist “behaved as a son to a father.” Livingstone hoped that Stanley and Waller would become friends, but Stanley’s denunciation of Kirk, a close friend of Waller’s, made a friendship impossible between the two defenders of Livingstone. Waller, for instance, told Livingstone that “Stanley and I have not got on so well as you wished us to.” Horace Waller to David Livingstone, August 12, 1872, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10780.

like role model (which he privately had long hoped to have in his life).<sup>55</sup> During their time together, the men become “best friends,” exploring Lake Tanganyika collectively, with Stanley feeling that his weeks with the doctor had “been spent in an Elysian field.”<sup>56</sup> Their departure, became literally for Stanley a trial of his manhood, as he attempted to conceal his emotions, behaviour he deemed necessary for white men in Africa. “An audacious desire to steal one embrace from the dear old man came over me, and almost unmanned me.” he wrote. “[D]espite the intensified emotions which filled both of us, save by silent tears, and a tremulous parting word, we did not betray our stoicism of manhood and race.”<sup>57</sup> Expressing what seemed to be genuine affection after their parting, Stanley was able to tell Livingstone that “very few ... men have I found [that] I so much got to love as yourself [sic]. In the qualities which go to make the man and the gentleman, I find you possess more than any other that I remember.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, p. 30.

<sup>56</sup> H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, pp. 497, 493.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 498. In a diary entry written at the time, (but re-edited for publication) Stanley admitted that they both came to tears as they parted: “We wrung each others hands, our faces flushed with emotion, tears rushing up, and blinding our eyes. We turned resolutely away from each other; but his faithful followers, by rushing up to give their parting words, protracted the parting scene.” See *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley*, p. 280.

<sup>58</sup> H.M. Stanley to David Livingstone, March 20, 1872, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10704. Likewise, Livingstone praised Stanley’s manliness. For instance, he was highly impressed with the effort Stanley made in reaching him and returning to the coast. In the letter to Waller he wrote: “Stanley has behaved throughout like a man.... [H]e did a very plucky thing...” However, Livingstone had some misgivings about Stanley. He told his daughter Agnes, for example, that “Stanley’s temper was bad.” Although, Livingstone did not elaborate, it is likely that he came to this conclusion after witnessing Stanley’s treatment



While Stanley does celebrate his own prowess in enduring the tests of manliness that allowed him to succeed in his mission, the book's lasting legacy is its representation of Livingstone. In his extended analysis of Livingstone's character, Stanley's portrait is not marred by jealousy or professional rivalry. Whether through heartfelt admiration or astute design, he clearly wanted to lionize Livingstone. For Stanley, "Livingstone - true, noble, Christian, generous, frank man" was an idol to be emulated, "a hero," who in his life's work presented a standard of manliness that few, if any, could hope to match.<sup>59</sup> His Livingstone is flawless, an exemplar of perfect manhood. "[Y]ou may take any point in Dr. Livingstone's character, and analyse it carefully," Stanley insists, "and I would challenge any man to find a fault in it.... I grant he is not an angel, but he approaches that being as near as the nature of a living man will allow."<sup>60</sup> Any of Livingstone's personality faults, moral imperfections or physical shortcomings are banished from the book.<sup>61</sup>

If Stanley somehow saw his friend's February 5, 1871 letter to daughter Agnes, or if Livingstone communicated his wishes for posterity to the journalist, the hardened explorer need no longer have been anxious about being revered by his fellow 'countrymen' as 'an

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of his African crew. David Livingstone to Horace Waller, September 2, 1872, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10780; David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 23 August, 1872, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184.

<sup>59</sup> H.M Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 431.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 352, 348 (the statement following the ellipsis).

<sup>61</sup> In a diary extract from his *Autobiography*, Stanley admitted to having "thoughts that [Livingstone] was not of such an angelic temper as I believed him to be.... When he reiterated his complaints against this man and the other, I felt the faintest fear that his strong nature was opposed to forgiveness, and that he was not so perfect as at the first blush of friendship I thought of him." See pp. 274-275.

example of manly perseverance.’ In many ways the manner in which Livingstone’s heroic masculinity is represented in Stanley’s prose mirrors how he believed he deserved to be perceived as a member of the ‘stouthearted sex.’ For Stanley, duty above all dictated Livingstone’s actions, while his determination in pursuit of his goals distinguished his heroic nature.<sup>62</sup> Emphasis is not placed on the success of his explorations - despite the reports by Murchison, Stanley revealed that the Nile source had yet to be found - but on the strength of character involved in the quest. In thoroughly recounting the “sufferings and privations” that seemed to mark Livingstone’s journey, Stanley adroitly shifted all blame for the slow progress of the expedition away from Livingstone and towards factors seemingly beyond his control.<sup>63</sup> When confronted by the desertion of all but a few “faithful” servants and porters, the mutinous activities of the “dishonest and incapable slaves” sent as replacements from Zanzibar, or the ‘imprudent’ decision of Consul Kirk to trust these men with important supplies, he is shown to continually strive towards his noble goal.<sup>64</sup> In spite of these obstacles, Stanley vouched that Livingstone refused to give up or to return home until his task was complete. In Stanley’s view, the example of perseverance that Livingstone

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<sup>62</sup> According to Stanley: “Never was [there] such a willing slave to th[e] abstract value” of duty than Livingstone. H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 490.

<sup>63</sup> “Sufferings and privations” is one of the headings Livingstone used in the index of *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 543.

<sup>64</sup> H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 386. Stanley disliked Kirk immensely and made this clear in the first edition of *How I Found Livingstone* as well as in his *Herald* despatches. See for instance, pp. 29-35 of *Stanley’s Despatches to the New York Herald*. Publicly castigated by many of Livingstone’s closest friends, RGS members and other Livingstone supporters for his harsh criticisms of Kirk, Stanley excised all direct reference to Kirk from the text (although not the index) in subsequent editions of *How I Found Livingstone*.

consistently provided during his time in Africa, set him apart from his fellow explorers, as more noble, more virtuous, more courageous. In his *Dispatches*, for example, he asserted that Livingstone's commitment to performing his duty and executing his goals, while eschewing the opportunity to return home, showed "how differently constituted he [was] from Burton, Speke and Baker."<sup>65</sup> In Stanley's narrative, Livingstone's perseverance pays off, not in the epic geographical feat he hoped for, but in the sterling qualities he reveals in willfully suffering through the privations, frustrations, and calamities that vexed his explorative efforts. Stanley encapsulated the essence of his depiction of Livingstone's character in terms that befit an icon for the ages, or at least the age of high imperialism:

His gentleness never forsakes him; his hopefulness never deserts him. No harassing anxieties, distraction of mind, long separation from home and kindred, can make him complain.... To the stern dictates of duty, alone, he has sacrificed his home and ease, the pleasures, refinements, and luxuries of civilized life. His is the Spartan heroism, the inflexibility of the Roman, the enduring resolution of the Anglo-Saxon - never to relinquish his work, though his heart yearns for home; never to surrender his obligations until he can write *Finis* to his work.<sup>66</sup>

And what was the inner force driving this superior character? For Stanley, Livingstone's Christian faith shaped his character, endowing his fierce energy and indomitable drive with a noble dignity:

In him, religion exhibits its loveliest features; it governs his conduct not only towards his servants, but towards the natives, the bigoted Mohammedans, and all who come into contact with him. Without it, Livingstone with his ardent temperament, his enthusiasm, his high spirit and courage, must have become uncompanionable, and a hard master. Religion has tamed him, and made him a Christian gentleman: the crude and wilful have been refined and subdued;

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<sup>65</sup> H.M Stanley, *Stanley's Dispatches to the New York Herald*, p. 34.

<sup>66</sup> H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, pp. 351-352

religion has made him the most companionable of men and indulgent of masters - a man whose society is pleasurable.<sup>67</sup>

For Stanley, Livingstone's religious convictions generated a kind, benevolent passion that distinguished him as an explorer and as a "true noble Christian."<sup>68</sup> Livingstone's compassion for Africans, his commitment to eliminating slavery and even his success as an explorer were the result of his faith. Religion had guided Livingstone to Africa as missionary thirty years before and the character it gave him separated him from the other famous explorers of Africa of his day.

Although Livingstone could be emulated, in Stanley's view, he could not be equalled. Stanley readily sets his own character against his subject's in showing his readers what a perfect 'gentleman' Livingstone was in Africa. As the narrator's adventure unfolds, *How I Found Livingstone* becomes more than just a reverie about Livingstone. In praising its hero, the text also functions to 'smooth over' the hierarchies and inequalities of colonial relationships. In casting Livingstone as the perfect white man for Africa, as a Christian fighting for peace and progress for its people, the book presents an Africa free of racial intolerance and ready for benevolent white rule. For Stanley, Livingstone is clearly superior

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 351. In his *Autobiography*, in a diary entry dated February 25, 1874, Stanley found fault with aspects of his friend's (comparatively) gentle temperament when contemplating about the differences he saw in their characters. He declared: "May I be selected to succeed [Livingstone] in opening up Africa to the shining light of Christianity! My methods, however, will not be Livingstone's. Each man has his own way. His I think has its defects, though the old-man, personally has been almost Christ-like for goodness, patience, and self-sacrifice. The selfish and wooden-headed world requires mastering, as well as loving charity; for man is a composite of the spiritual and the earthy." See his *Autobiography*, p. 295.

<sup>68</sup> H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 431.

to the Africans around him. His Christian inspired gentleness and compassion bring him into generous, affectionate relationships, not just with his 'faithful followers,' but with all Africans, even Muslims. Stanley, explicitly contrasts his own treatment of his African porters, soldiers and servants with Livingstone's more empathetic relationship with the men working for him. "I have often heard our servants discuss our respective merits," Stanley recalled; 'Your master,' say my servants to Livingstone's, 'is a good man - a very good man; he does not beat you, for he has a kind heart; but ours - oh! He is sharp - hot as fire.'"<sup>69</sup> While Stanley readily admitted to flogging members of his crew, the more experienced explorer elicited the "respect" of his travelling companions through "his uniform kindness and mild, pleasant temper."<sup>70</sup> For Stanley, Livingstone was remarkable because he was "charmed with the primitive simplicity of Ethiop's dusky children, with whom he has spent so many years of his life; he has a sturdy faith in their capabilities, sees virtue where other see nothing but savagery; and wherever he has gone among them, he has sought to elevate a people that were

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 354.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 95, 354-355. Later, in *Through the Dark Continent* (1878), Stanley turned from praising to criticizing Livingstone's relationship with his African crew during his last expedition. According to Stanley, Livingstone's overly sympathetic and amicable treatment of the Africans under his command was actually responsible for many of the problems that plagued the expedition and even his death. He maintained: "Livingstone lost six years of time, and finally his life, by permitting his people to desert. If a follower left his service, he even permitted him to remain in the same village with him, without attempting to reclaim him, or to compel that service which he had bound himself to render at Zanzibar. The consequence of his excessive mildness was that he was left at last with only seven men, out of nearly thirty. His noble character has won from us a tribute of affection and esteem, but it has had no lasting good effect on the African." Stanley's method was to use force, chains and occasionally torture to threaten his crews to comply. See Henry M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent...*, 2 vols. Harper and Brothers: New York, 1878, vol II, pp. 66-67. See also Hochschild, pp. 31, 49, 55, 67-72 for examples of Stanley's mistreatment of Africans (and some of the Britons who joined his expeditions).

apparently forgotten of God and Christian man [sic].”<sup>71</sup>

Livingstone’s benign racial tolerance, a fundamental aspect of his moral character, was integral to the Livingstone legend forged by Stanley. It not only served to ennoble Livingstone’s manliness, but also fulfilled a justificatory power of the exigencies of empire. In Stanley’s view, Livingstone’s blissfully humane and altruistic treatment of Africans would open the way for increased Western engagement in the continent. In the reporter’s dulcet terms, “with every foot of new ground [Livingstone] travelled over he forged a chain of sympathy which should thereafter bind the Christian nations in bonds of love and charity to the Heathen of the African tropics.”<sup>72</sup> Livingstone had laid the groundwork for future relations between ‘benevolent’ Western countries and the needful nations and ‘tribes’ of Africa. Stimulating an affinity between his own culture and an ‘uncivilized’ people “still liv[ing] in darkness,” Livingstone’s explorations invited other explorers, missionaries, and traders to bring Western ‘light’ to Africa.<sup>73</sup>

After the success of *How I Found Livingstone*, Stanley’s portrayal of his subject’s kindly, gentle treatment of Africans was perpetuated widely in later biographies, particularly in the titles aimed at missionary societies and Sunday schools. But as a romantic characterization with great ideological staying power, Stanley’s narrative also impeded any meaningful discussion among biographers about Livingstone’s complex convictions about race. Removed from historical analysis, the normative representation of his racial views

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 490.

worked to sustain myths about Africans rather than challenge dominant stereotypes. Livingstone's condemnation of British racial prejudice, or 'negrophobia,' had the potential to act as a strong incentive for a debate about colonial policies in Africa. Ultimately, a simplistic representation of his racial politics relegated Africans to the role of stock figures and objects of colonial rule in the plethora of books written about Livingstone after his meeting with Stanley.

Adopted into the lexicon of popular culture, the meeting of Stanley and Livingstone left a far greater legacy than the words both are now best remembered for, Stanley's: "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" As Jeal notes, "the lasting effect of Stanley's character study was its acceptance by almost all those who read or heard about it at the time..."<sup>74</sup> *How I Found Livingstone* enhanced, embellished and enshrined the public perception and the legacy of one of the leading Victorian heroes. Moreover, Stanley's representation of Livingstone was reflective of key gender, racial and imperialist ideals and assumptions that captured the popular imagination in an age on the cusp of a new imperialist order. Victorians wanted to hear about Livingstone and his wondrous and often perilous adventures in enigmatic Africa. Stanley provided a clear portrait of a man he cast as a heroic role model - an archetype of manliness - for the emerging British (if not the American) empire. (He also presented a glimpse at his own explicitly less angelic example of masculinity, which would come to the fore in his follow-up best-sellers detailing further African explorations). Stanley coated the issue of race relations with a veneer that glossed over any weighty discussion of Livingstone's condemnation of British racism, providing instead a sanguine depiction of the

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<sup>74</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, p. 343.

future of European-African relations. For Stanley, Livingstone's Africa was a continent ripe for new colonial ventures, whether or not they were the type envisaged by Livingstone or by those spurred on by his heroic legacy.

#### 7.4 Livingstone's Sainly Afterlife: Horace Waller, William Blaikie and the Further Mythification of Livingstone

The Livingstone characterized in Stanley's narrative vowed not to give up his work in Africa until he verified the Nile's source or died in the process. Based on the description in *How I Found Livingstone*, the ageing explorer left by Stanley to solve the Nile mystery seemed physically rejuvenated and far from a state of retirement, if not in his prime. According to Stanley, the nearly sixty-year-old man "appeared more like a man who had not passed his fiftieth year."<sup>75</sup> It is clear that Stanley provided an accurate description of Livingstone's sense of perseverance; however, he was being charitable in characterizing Livingstone as a healthy and strong physical specimen. Close to thirty years of missionary and explorative work in Africa had taken an unremitting toll on his body. As mentioned, Livingstone lived for only a year after parting with Stanley, finally succumbed to the ravages of exploration near Lake Bangweulu on May 1, 1873.

After lying in state at the RGS offices on Savile Row, Livingstone's body was buried at Westminster Abbey on April 18, 1874. Exhaustive details about the funeral, with the names of the many distinguished Victorians participating or attending, appeared across the

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<sup>75</sup> H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, p. 348.



front pages of newspapers. Not the burying ground for mere missionaries or explorers, the Abbey was the resting place of national heroes and a historic sanctuary of the country's icons. As the historian John MacKenzie argues, "Livingstone had come back from his long period in the belly of the African whale as the most potent hero of all, the dead hero, bereft of human frailties that could have dented the massive reputation that was henceforth constructed from his life and work."<sup>76</sup> For many Victorians, particularly abolitionists and missionaries, Livingstone had died a martyr in giving his life's energy, not for personal glory or gain, but for the good of Africa and its peoples. His saintly gender counterpart, Florence Nightingale, a woman who shared Livingstone's Christian humanitarianism (as well as an interest in abolitionism and African exploration) expressed this conviction at the time of his death. For Nightingale, Livingstone had been a Christ-like figure in Africa because of his work in introducing the Gospel and in preparing Africa for 'civilization.' In her view, God had:

taken away ... the greatest man of his generation, for Dr. Livingstone stood alone .... [He] stood alone as the great Missionary Traveller, the bringer-in of civilization; or rather the pioneer of civilization ... to races lying in darkness. I always think of him as what John the Baptist, had he been living in the nineteenth century, would have been.... If God took him ... it was that his life was completed, in God's sight; his work finished, the most glorious work of our generation. He has opened those countries for God to enter in. He struck the first blow to abolish the hideous slave-trade. He like Stephen was the first martyr.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> John MacKenzie, "David Livingstone and the Worldly After-Life," pp. 206-207.

<sup>77</sup> Florence Nightingale to Agnes Livingstone, 18 February, 1874, cited in Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, pp. 386-387. Nightingale was not an admirer of Stanley's portrait of Livingstone or of Stanley for that matter. She asked a friend: "Have you read Stanley's *How I Found Livingstone?*.... It is, without exception, the worst book on the very best subject I ever saw in all my life.... Still I can't help devouring the book to the end,

Here was the quintessential manly Christian, a mythic figure who had single-handedly overcome the forces of ‘darkness’ to bring ‘light’ to Africa. While the fervour of Nightingale’s veneration of Livingstone was hard to match, this mix of evangelical and imperialist sentiment would be repeated in countless books aimed at inspiring prospective missionaries or children attending Sunday school to follow in the footsteps of a Christian (super)hero.

In the days before Livingstone’s funeral, publisher/friend John Murray and the Livingstone ‘children’ agreed that the journals he kept during his last expedition should be edited and published. The Livingstone children arguably hoped the book would honour their father’s legacy, satisfy the great public interest in his last expedition as well as provide financial security for their future.<sup>78</sup> Although Agnes was closer to her father and likely more capable of doing the job, her younger brother Tom was chosen to take on the task of editing the journals for publication. However, soon after he began the job, both Agnes and Murray realized that Tom did not have the editorial dexterity (or the personal vigour) to produce a

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though it tells little more of Livingstone than what Livingstone in [letters printed in the newspaper] has told himself already.” Florence Nightingale to M. Mohl, 24 November, 1872, cited in Edward Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, 2 vols., MacMillan and Co.: London, 1913, vol. II, p. 315.

<sup>78</sup> Livingstone had used a large portion of the ample profits from *Missionary Travels* to fund both his Zambesi Expedition and his search for the source of the Nile. He lost a great sum on the *Lady Nyassa* and had funded much of the LMS mission to the Ndebele. He had also paid to educate his five children in good schools as well as support his parents and sisters. During his last expedition, he continued to make sure all of his family members were well looked after, even though he had run out of money for his own supplies. As a result, he had to be helped financially during his last expedition by his good (and wealthy) friend James Young. As such, apart from an unknown sum he had secured for children in case of his death, the once wealthy Livingstone had little extra to leave his children.

work that would meet the project's objectives.<sup>79</sup> Stanley, who was preparing to leave on another African expedition and William Oswell, Livingstone's longtime friend who had helped edit the Zambezi book, were each offered the editorship but declined. The family initially had reservations about Horace Waller because of his adamant support for his friend John Kirk and his obvious disdain for Stanley. The children may have feared that Waller would recast the content of the journals to protect Kirk, despite Livingstone's criticisms of him in the late stages of the expedition. A great champion of Livingstone and the humanitarian and colonialist ideals he stood for, Waller ultimately proved to be a myth-maker on par with Stanley.

In *Livingstone's Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking* (1987), Dorothy Helly thoroughly examines the choice of Waller as editor of the *Last Journals* and the dramatic role he played in fashioning the content of the journals. The 706 page book that was published in early December 1874 (in time for the Christmas market) was as remarkable for what was left out as much as it was for what was left in by Waller. In working with Livingstone's own words and occasionally substituting his own, Waller crafted a book that diverted little from, but added to, Stanley's portrait of two years earlier.

Much of the material available to Waller had already been pre-edited by Livingstone,

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<sup>79</sup> Dorothy Helly describes Tom's "editorial impact" in his short time on the job "as an erratic one." Before Horace Waller replaced him as editor, Tom had begun to go through his father's journals "supplying articles and pronouns and changing some internal sentence punctuation, at other times ... indicating passages he wanted deleted" with an x. Interestingly, despite his initial desire to maintain as much of the original form of the journals as possible, "Tom's reactions [in comparison to Waller's] were more censorious and quicker to condemn whole passages without trying to save part of their content. Waller, though equally sensitive to his readership, was willing to take the time to prune in order to save the plant." See Helly, p. 125.

who throughout his journey converted his almost daily diary notes into journal form.<sup>80</sup> In the process, Livingstone often excised criticisms of his African crew (though rarely of other individuals), evidence of his personal regrets, phrases or words that he thought might upset Victorian sensibilities, or details that he deemed superfluous.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, Livingstone certainly left ample material for Waller to excise if the journals were to keep the explorer in the glorious light that enveloped his name. Little of the content of the journals and field diaries likely would have surprised Waller. He had received letters from Livingstone that showed his friend's state of mind during the expedition. In a number of letters, particularly those written in the last 2 to 3 years of his life, Livingstone had returned to incidents of a decade before to attack the integrity of men he had worked with during the Zambezi Expedition, with Baines, Bedingfeld and Price amongst his favourite targets.<sup>82</sup> During this period he had even accused one his greatest supporters (Murchison), one of his closest friends (Kirk) and a beloved family member (Agnes) of deception and disloyalty.<sup>83</sup> He also

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<sup>80</sup> On his return to Britain in August 1872, Stanley had brought Livingstone's journals, which dated from March 1866 to March 1872. His field diaries from this point to his last entry in April 1873 were carried with his body to the coast by his servants. Remaining details about Livingstone's last days and the subsequent journey to the coast were supplied in person by Susi and Chuma, who were brought to England at James Young's expense.

<sup>81</sup> For details on these pre-edits, see Helly, pp. 147-153.

<sup>82</sup> See for example the letters from David Livingstone to Horace Waller, dated November 1871, 19 February, 1872 and 2 September, 1872, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10780.

<sup>83</sup> See for example David Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 12 December, 1871, British Library, Add. Mss. 50184. In this letter, written during his time with Stanley, Livingstone complained that Murchison was crediting his discoveries to other explorers, including armchair geographers. He included a hand-drawn map in the letter which he did

attacked the late Prince Albert for his relationship with the Portuguese. Many of his hostile rants and delusions were likely induced by the countless malarial fevers he had suffered in tandem with his deteriorating health. Livingstone had always been critical of other Britons in Africa. However, he clearly became more vehement and less rational in his remarks in the later stages of his life. If the journals had been published in this state, they might have made titillating reading for some, but they would have irrevocably damaged the noble reputation the late-Livingstone then enjoyed.

What could have been just as injurious to Livingstone's status was evidence that he was not always a model of gentle benevolence with his African attendants during his last expedition. In fact, he sometimes resorted to floggings and violent threats in disciplining his 'faithful' attendants. Although far less evident than his vituperative attacks on whites in his writing, Livingstone's physical and verbal abuse of many those under his command presented a major editorial obstacle for Waller. In her study, Helly reveals the extent to which the editor worked to expurgate Livingstone's problems with his attendants, paying particular attention to censoring negative references to the Africans Livingstone was most closely associated with during the expedition.<sup>84</sup> This group of attendants encompassed the

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not want Murchison to see. He told Agnes: "I entrust it to you, and if you betray my confidence I shall never trust you again. If Sir Roderick asks, say that all your letter is 'Private and Confidential.'" Little did Livingstone know that Murchison was busy defending his friend's manliness and honour against the 'Burton front' and other nay-sayers. Livingstone was ill with malaria during his time with Stanley, which might have affected his judgement if this letter was written while he was suffering from the disease.

<sup>84</sup> This included material that Livingstone himself had transferred from his field diary to his journal. In this process, for instance, he had left out details of an incident in which he chastised Chuma (who was still a teenager at the time) for hoarding important food supplies. But, he also left a lot of potentially controversial material for Waller to edit. For details of

former slaves Chuma and Wikatani who had been rescued (with the help of Waller) during the Zambesi Expedition, Susi and Amoda who had joined Livingstone from their village on the Zambesi and had accompanied him to India in 1864, and finally a group of nine former slaves who had been trained at an English-run Christian mission school in Nasik, India. The material that Waller felt the need to excise encompassed news of desertions (temporary or permanent) and incidents where Livingstone resorted to floggings as punishments or threatened to shoot mutinous or indolent attendants. For instance, Helly's research reveals that the expunged material included the caning of the Nasik boy Andrew because of a poor work ethic and his threatened desertion and the flogging of another Nasik trainee, Albert Baraka, for overloading the caravan animals.<sup>85</sup> Also left out of the *Last Journals* were passages in which Livingstone condemned his attendants for suspected thieving (from the caravan's stocks or from villagers) or for attacking villagers in the company of Arab slave-traders.<sup>86</sup> Waller also went so far as to change racially derogatory language Livingstone used

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the incident involving Chuma, see Helly, pp. 149, 151.

<sup>85</sup> Livingstone admitted that he gave Andrew "twelve cuts with a ratan and told him that he might leave us and go to his own people as he had to do but if he remained he must do what he was told. He preferred to go and I was glad to get rid of him.... It is questionable if slave boys, however educated, will except in rare exceptions go to a tribe and work as missionaries for the good of their tribe. They might be useful as assistants to a mission but only if led with a tight rein." To Albert he "applied a stick vigorously to a part of his body where no bones are likely to be broken, till he came to his senses. On first application [Albert] said, 'You may take your gun and shoot; I'll do nothing.' This showed me that a gentle chastisement would not do, and I gave it [to] him in earnest, till he was satisfied he had made a mistake in ringleading." Each of these examples is found in Helly, pp. 164, 171.

<sup>86</sup> During his long stay in Manyuema, Livingstone discovered that Chuma, Gardner and Abraham were involved in an assault on a local village. Gardner had supposedly captured a woman, Abraham some tobacco and chickens, with Chuma shouting and "making as if discharging his gun and then mimicking shooting which he is too cowardly to do

in describing the men, usually because a frustrated Livingstone felt they were not acting manly enough when faced with danger or arduous work.<sup>87</sup> Curiously, Waller made the decision to leave in a notably rare instance in which Livingstone used the word “nigger” to describe Africans. It appeared in his journal when he was angered that two of his Nasik attendants had announced that they planned to desert Livingstone to join the camp of some Swahili-Arab traders.<sup>88</sup>

Waller had a clear fondness for Susi, Chuma and the other Africans who had remained with Livingstone since the Zambesi Expedition. As a result, he also edited material which showed them in a poor light.<sup>89</sup> In his journals, Livingstone admitted that he was not

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actually anywhere.” When chastised, Chuma retorted that during the Zambezi Expedition Bishop Mackenzie (in the company of Waller) had fired on another party. Livingstone replied that this was to free slaves, not “to make free people slaves.” These passages and Waller’s reaction are in Helly, pp. 173-174.

<sup>87</sup> When the Nasik men (all former slaves) were confronted by the threat of meeting up with the feared Mazitu, Livingstone was forced to threaten members of the group to get them to march through the suspected Mazitu territory. He interpreted their consternation to their slave past, arguing that “those who have been slaves generally cringe till ‘the end of the chapter.’ Shortly after, he described the Nasiks as “wretched cringing slavelings” or “crawling slavelings.” Waller substituted “boys” for “slavelings” in his edit. Helly also shows that Waller edited Livingstone’s criticisms of the Christian missionary training of the Nasiks. See Helly, pp. 171-172.

<sup>88</sup> The passage is: “They think that no punishment will reach them whatever they do: they are freemen, and need not work or anything but beg. ‘English,’ they call themselves, and the Arabs fear them, though the eagerness with which they engaged in slave-hunting showed them to be genuine niggers.” See Helly, p. 174 for a discussion of this passage.

<sup>89</sup> For example, Waller felt the need to edit this passage in which Livingstone tried to explain why Susi, Chuma and the Nasik boys refused to leave Cazembe with him in 1868: “Susi ... confessed [that] he has got a black woman who feeds him. Chuma for the same reason.... Came with his eyes shot out by *bange* [marijuana].... Susi stood like a mule. I put my hand on his arm.... He seized my hand, and refused to let it go. When he did I fired a pistol at him, but missed. There being no law or magistrate higher than myself, I would not

always an exemplary leader of these men. Waller left in his friend's admission that he had his "faults" in dealing with his small crew. Yet, readers of the *Last Journals* saw no evidence of his abusive behaviour towards these Africans.<sup>90</sup> Through Waller's edits, Livingstone's angelic disposition with his African crew was only strengthened in the published version of his journals. But, as Helly and others have pointed out, Livingstone's record of keeping his crew together during his last expedition was actually one of his failings. Of the original thirty-five attendants, porters and soldiers that began the expedition, only five remained at his death, his caravan having been bolstered with members from Stanley's caravan along the way.<sup>91</sup>

The exodus from Livingstone's original crew was led by two different groups: a party of eleven Indian sepoy and their corporal, who were fired, and the ten Anjouan porters led

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be thwarted if I could help it. The fact is, they are all tired.... They would like me to remain here and pay them for smoking *bange*, and deck their prostitutes with the beads which I give them regularly for their food." In the *Last Journals* all that appeared to describe this episode was: "13<sup>th</sup> April, - On preparing to start this morning my people refused to go: the fact is they are tired, and Mohamad's opposition encourages them." Helly pp. 172-173; *Last Journals*, p. 229.

<sup>90</sup> David Livingstone, *Last Journals*, p. 273, also Helly, p. 173.

<sup>91</sup> Of the nine Nasik-trained Africans, only two - Edward Gardner and Mabruki - remained to the end; Richard died of malaria; James was killed (in Manyuema); Reuben, Andrew, Albert, Simon and Abraham either deserted, quit or joined with Swahili-Arab traders. Of the four other Africans, Susi, Chuma and Amoda were with Livingstone until the end (with periodic desertions or refusals to travel with their leader when he wished); Wikatani left to remain with relatives he encountered early in the journey. The Indian sepoy and the Anjouans discussed in the next paragraph were no longer part of the expedition after its first six months.



by Mousa, who deserted and later reported Livingstone dead.<sup>92</sup> Neither of these groups remained with Livingstone past the six-month mark of the expedition. Because of their quick departure and perceived poor work ethic, Waller left in most of Livingstone's castigations and punishments of these crew members, editing only his most severe statements.<sup>93</sup> Waller, who knew Mousa from his time in Africa, shared his friend's feelings about the Anjouans and felt no need to edit any derogatory references Livingstone made about their character. In the case of the sepoys, it was still acceptable, if not popular, to disparage the character of Indian men in the aftermath of the 1857 Indian Rebellion. After all, the belief that Indian sepoys had started the 'Mutiny' and were responsible for its barbarities had been instilled in the British public mind.<sup>94</sup> The first chapters of the *Last Journals* are filled with discussion of the cowardice, indolence, cruelty and other shortcomings that Livingstone attributed to the sepoys.<sup>95</sup> (The Indians had actually been

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<sup>92</sup> The sepoy's *havildar* (or sergeant), a man whom Livingstone thought to be competent and hardworking, stayed with the caravan after the others were dismissed, but died as a result of malaria shortly after.

<sup>93</sup> For Helly's analysis of Livingstone's relationship with the sepoys and Waller's editorial reaction, see pp. 167-169.

<sup>94</sup> The literature dealing with the 1857 Rebellion is substantial. For a theoretical account, see Patrick Brantlinger's "The Well at Cawnpore: Literary Representations of the Indian Mutiny," in *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 199-224. For an historical account, see Thomas Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964.

<sup>95</sup> A prime example of Livingstone's attitude towards the sepoys is revealed in the extracts from this lengthy journal entry: "The sepoys have become quite intolerable... Retaining their brutal feelings to the last, they killed a donkey which I had lent to the havildar to carry his things, by striking it on the head in boggy places in which they have senselessly driven it loaded.... They have neither spirit or pluck as compared with the Africans... [I]f one [sepoy] saw a village he turned out of the way to beg in the most abject manner, or lay down

hired to provide an armed guard for the caravan, but had been pressed into carrying heavy loads and tending to the menagerie of animals Livingstone had brought on the journey). For Livingstone, the Indians showed the same lack of character in Africa as 'British' history believed they had generally revealed in their native land.<sup>96</sup> Although Livingstone had spent time in India (primarily in the company of Indian Christians), he made no effort to learn the language and or understand the customs of the sepoy, as he had with many of the African peoples he spent time with.

Through Waller's edits, the shortcomings of the Indians and Anjouans were attributed to their failings as men, to their inability to show the same work ethic and moral character as the African stand-outs of the crew. Their lack of perseverance and courage revealed not only Livingstone's superior character, but demonstrated that caravan leaders Susi and Chuma were of 'superior African stock.' Loyal, brave and hardworking, the Africans had shown their ability in sticking with Livingstone through the long, frustrating expedition. For Waller, this behaviour and the heroic example they showed after their leader's death revealed that they could demonstrate manly abilities on par with British men. Describing their feat as "truly Herculean" to members of the RGS, Waller believed these 'proteges' of Livingstone shared something of Livingstone's unique capacity to persevere when faced with seemingly insurmountable odds. In Victorian Britain, they had accomplished a task that most British citizens (and members of the RGS) believed Africans were not able even to strategize, never

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and slept, the only excuse afterwards being, 'My legs are sore.'" David Livingstone, *Last Journals*, p. 73.

<sup>96</sup> Dorothy Helly argues that "the legacy of [the Mutiny] made it easy for the British to expect the worst from Indians, even those trained by English officers." See Helly, p. 169.

mind complete.<sup>97</sup> In a March 31, 1874 letter to *The Times*, Waller could go as far as to ask: “is it too much to say that [Susi and Chuma] remain the greatest African travellers of the present day?”<sup>98</sup> Waller, like Livingstone, was prepared to admit that African men could demonstrate forms of manliness on par with British men. For the editor, this was particularly true of Susi and Chuma.

After they were brought to England by James Young, these two Africans also played an important role in helping Waller complete the *Last Journals*. As he worked on the book, he was prepared to rely on their memories to recall Livingstone’s last days, as well as the details about their journey to the coast with his body. Yet, while he made use of their sketch of the events, Waller drew liberally from his own imagination in shaping the public memory of Livingstone’s final days, particularly his last moments. It was Waller’s depiction of his friend’s death that made perhaps the biggest impression on the book’s readers, if not on Livingstone’s saintly legacy. Helly reveals how Waller constructed Livingstone’s celestial death scene out of Susi and Chuma’s rather matter-of-fact account of the events. Their description, inscribed in Waller’s notebook stated simply: “Dr when he died had on trowsers. The boy [Matthew Wellington who was keeping watch over the ailing doctor] said he fell

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<sup>97</sup> *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 18 (1874-1875), cited in Helly, p. 113.

<sup>98</sup> What was Waller trying to say here? Was he simply calling the two men the greatest native African explorers of the day? Or, was he attempting to state that Susi and Chuma were explorers on par with any other men who had explored Africa? Note that during the Victorian period, explorer and traveller were interchangeable terms. It was no slight against someone’s bravery, mettle or ability to call them a traveller. Livingstone, for instance, was often referred to as a traveller. Whatever Waller’s intentions, the Victorian reader of *The Times* likely saw the comment as a great compliment bestowed on Susi and Chuma, whether they agreed with it or not. *The Times*, 31 March, 1874.

asleep & when he woke he still saw him in this position & got alarmed. He was kneeling on his bed with his head on the pillow.”<sup>99</sup> Waller transformed this statement into a long, involved scene that depicted Livingstone stepping out of his death bed to kneel at its side and quietly passing on after a final prayer that his life’s work be completed. In the imagined narrative, shortened here, Waller even managed to consecrate Livingstone as a Jesus-like He, whether by mistake or by plan:

Dr. Livingstone was kneeling by the side of his bed, his body stretched forward, his head buried in his hands upon the pillow.... Livingstone had not merely turned himself, he had risen to pray; he still rested on his knees, his hands were clasped under his head.... He had not fallen to the right or left when he rendered up his spirit to God. Death required no change of limb or position; there was merely a gentle settling forwards of the frame unstrung by pain, for the Traveller’s perfect rest had come.... Is it, then, presumptuous to think that the long-used fervent prayer of the wanderer sped forth once more - that the constant supplication became more perfect in weakness, and that ... David Livingstone, with a dying effort, yet again besought Him for whom *He* laboured to break down the oppression and woe of the land.<sup>100</sup>

Did Waller want to his friend to be seen in this light, as a holy saviour for Africa? Did he believe that sanctifying Livingstone would give weight to the abolitionist cause that they were both so devoted to? Or, was this simply an unconscious error that not only got past Waller’s final edit, but also past the Livingstone children and John Murray who had final say on the book’s contents? Whatever Waller’s intent was with this passage, the cleansed *Last Journals* secured the understanding of Livingstone as a courageous and virtuous pathfinder

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<sup>99</sup> Cited by Helly, p. 111.

<sup>100</sup> See Livingstone’s *Last Journals*, pp. 512-513. The italics are added to indicate Waller’s consecration of Livingstone. Helly demonstrates that in writing this passage Waller edited his own “purple prose,” deleting sentences from a longer version of this death scene. See her analysis of the death scene, pp. 107-112.

who had brought honour to Britain by dedicating his life to bringing 'civilization' to Africa. What better role model for a British empire on the verge of expansion! The mythic Livingstone could thus provide the ideological bridge which interpreted British intervention in Africa as a national duty, the just use of power for humanitarian ends. To honour his legacy was to support the nation in its great moral mission to bring Western civilization to Africa.

After the publication of the *Last Journals*, writers and publishing houses had ample material - with Livingstone's published writings as a base - to produce quickly written, easily readable, usually short biographies. However, until 1880, an 'official' biography had yet to be written, leaving a vacuum in Livingstone scholarship after the *Last Journals* appeared. After meeting a mutual friend of Agnes Livingstone and her husband Alexander Bruce, William Garden Blaikie decided to approach the couple with the idea of producing the first authorized biography of Livingstone. Blaikie had not met his subject, but had seen him speak in 1857 in Edinburgh. Working with the Livingstone family as well as with many of Livingstone's close friends and old acquaintances, Blaikie was given unprecedented access to previously unpublished letters, journals and other documents.<sup>101</sup> The book did not have a defining moment like Stanley's "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" or Waller's death scene. But, by providing a glowing, yet thorough portrayal of his subject's momentous life, Blaikie created a work that has had its own historical legacy. Since its publication, it has help shape

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<sup>101</sup> Note that Tom Livingstone, who had been in poor health for many years, had died while working in Egypt 1876. This left Agnes, Oswell (who became a physician and moved to Trinidad) and Anna Mary, who later married and worked as a missionary in Africa (and lived into her eighties). Robert, the eldest Livingstone child, died in 1864. For more on Robert Livingstone, see Holmes, *Journey to Livingstone*, pp. 206-212.

the dominant representation of Livingstone more than any other biography. Many of the incidents and anecdotes introduced by Blaikie influenced the content of the plethora of more conventional biographies that followed, as many authors borrowed ideas (if not passages) from the book's pages.

Blaikie began *The Personal Life of David Livingstone* by stating that the purpose of the study was "to make the world better acquainted with the character of Livingstone."<sup>102</sup> The biography he produced followed the agenda of Stanley and Waller. In portraying his subject's 'character' in much the same vein as his predecessors, he sympathetically presented a picture of a faultless, saintly Livingstone, bravely striving to achieve his heroic goals for Africa. With his own Livingstone literary experience behind him and with a concern that his friend's heroic reputation be preserved, Waller actually wrote Blaikie with advice about how to approach the biography.<sup>103</sup> In the letter, written while Blaikie was still in the early stages of researching his subject, Waller warned Blaikie about what he would uncover when examining Livingstone's unpublished journals and letters: it was the material Waller had expurgated from the *Last Journals*. The letter sheds as much light on Waller's feelings about Livingstone's last years as it does on the nature of the potentially damaging material he urged Blaikie to leave out of the book. Firstly, Waller beseeched Blaikie to excise Livingstone's often harsh denunciations of Kirk. Waller believed the clash between the two friends was not Kirk's fault, but stemmed from a "misconception which arose in Livingstone's mind

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<sup>102</sup> Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. iii.

<sup>103</sup> Horace Waller to William Garden Blaikie, August 14, 1879, National Library of Scotland, Ms. 10704.

concerning Dr. Kirk.”<sup>104</sup> Moreover, Waller informed Blaikie that “Livingstone’s letters [were] incessantly mixed up with matters of the ... life and doings of the Zambesi Expedition...”<sup>105</sup> He hoped that in writing the biography, Blaikie would excise these negative comments as well. In the letter, Waller reasoned that Livingstone’s life of exploration had taken a toll on his body, but particularly on his mind. He candidly told Blaikie that as a result “it would be most unjust to Livingstone’s memory to place before the public” the revelations “of an exhausted brain...”<sup>106</sup> Waller had clearly come to the conclusion long before that Livingstone had lost his ability to make logical, level-headed decisions, despite the fact that he had characterized him as a rational, wise and resourceful explorer in the *Last Journals*. For Waller, the legacy Livingstone had built through three decades of hard work and perseverance deserved to be protected. The rantings of an heroic man driven at least partially mad by malarial fevers, dysentery and exhaustion merited no place in any biography that Waller could imagine.

Whether it was because of Waller’s pleadings or a pledge to the Livingstone family, Blaikie produced a biography that rationalized Livingstone’s character faults, covered up unflattering personal history and ignored any other contentious matters. Ironically, Blaikie argued that “[i]n the case of Livingstone, their [was] really nothing to conceal.”<sup>107</sup> Moreover, he maintained that in shaping his portrait, he “found no need for the brilliant colours of the

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 384.

rhetorician, the ingenuity of the partisan, or the enthusiasm of the hero-worshipper.”<sup>108</sup> Blaikie claimed that “a plain honest statement of the truth regarding [Livingstone] would be a higher panegyric than any ideal picture that could be drawn.”<sup>109</sup> In defending his subject’s reputation, Blaikie briefly tackled the Kirk controversy, fully excusing Livingstone and finding Kirk culpable of negligence of duty, while providing only cursory details regarding their dispute.<sup>110</sup> He was more thoroughgoing in his attempt to put to rest the persistent rumour that a selfish and overbearing Livingstone was unable to lead and work with other white men during his time in Africa, particularly during the Zambesi Expedition. Encapsulating these charges against Livingstone, he wrote: “It has sometimes been represented, in view of such facts as have just been recorded, that Livingstone was imperious and despotic in the management of other men, otherwise he and his comrades would have

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Blaikie took less than a paragraph to argue Livingstone’s case against Kirk. According to Blaikie, Livingstone “said that in complaining to Dr. Kirk of the men whom he had employed, and the disgraceful use they had made of Kirk’s name, he never meant to charge him with being the author of their crimes, and it never occurred to him to say to Kirk, ‘I don’t believe you to be the traitor they imply;’ but Kirk took his complaint in high dudgeon as a covert attack upon himself, and did not act toward him as he ought to have done, considering what he owed him.” If readers were not already familiar with the controversy (having read Stanley’s criticisms of Kirk), they would have had little idea what the dispute was about and why Kirk was offended by Livingstone’s version of the events. Livingstone had worked to get Kirk his posting at Zanzibar and in Blaikie’s view he was thus due Kirk’s full support during his search for the Nile’s source. Blaikie’s rationalization of the controversy was that Kirk had misinterpreted Livingstone’s criticisms, taking them personally, rather than an attack on the porters. As a result, Blaikie believed Kirk had become angry with Livingstone and had spurned him deliberately. Also, see the passage two chapters earlier (cited by Blaikie) in which Livingstone railed against the men sent by Kirk. William Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, pp. 366, 342-343.



got on better together.”<sup>111</sup> According to Blaikie, this “accusation ... ha[d] an air of improbability, for Livingstone’s nature was most kindly, and it was the aim of his life to increase enjoyment.”<sup>112</sup> Far from being arrogant or authoritarian in nature, in Blaikie’s estimation Livingstone actually had “the knack of spreading around ... warm sunshine” to his friends and acquaintances.<sup>113</sup> According to Blaikie, the only occasions where Livingstone was critical of his British crew was when they showed signs of laziness and immorality. In his view, Livingstone “was so conscientious, so deeply in earnest, so hard a worker himself, that he could endure nothing that seemed like playing or trifling with duty.”<sup>114</sup> Taking his argument even further, Blaikie lashed out at the British newspapers “who were too ready to believe in [Livingstone’s] tyranny” during the Zambesi Expedition.<sup>115</sup> Rather than offering their support to Livingstone, Blaikie charged that the press made “themselves the champions of any dawdling fellow who would fain be counted a victim of his despotism.”<sup>116</sup> In his defence of Livingstone, Blaikie seemingly supported his subject’s view that men like Baines

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<sup>111</sup> Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 217. Blaikie does not name the individuals who characterized Livingstone as “imperious and despotic.” However, he may have been referring to Bedingfeld and Baines. As I mentioned in Chapter Six, both of these men attempted to seek revenge on the man who fired them by going to the press with their criticisms of Livingstone.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* This comment was seemingly aimed at the press for airing the complaints of Bedingfeld and Baines.

and Bedingfeld had lacked the sense of duty to contribute positively to the Zambesi Expedition. For Blaikie, Livingstone's character meant that he was a man who pushed himself continually, braving the frequent attacks of malaria that seemed to curse the expedition, with an inner strength and sense of resolution that his compatriots could not match. The perceived failure of the Zambesi Expedition was thus not due to the nature of Livingstone's leadership or his poor planning, but to the inability of some his countrymen to follow his manly example in their work.<sup>117</sup>

Whether it was pure hyperbole or an act of honest reverence, Blaikie concluded the biography by declaring that Livingstone deserved to be an object of worship, particularly among Africans, because of his effort to bring 'civilization' to the continent. Citing an unnamed "foreigner," he wrote that: "In the nineteenth-century, the white has made a *man* out of the black; in the twentieth-century Europe will make a world out of Africa."<sup>118</sup> For Blaikie, the individual most responsible for 'masculinizing' Africa was David Livingstone. In mapping great swaths of Africa and introducing his 'civilizing' principles to its people, Blaikie believed Livingstone had prepared the continent for a future based on British Christian values and practices. Blaikie envisioned grateful twentieth-century Africans giving thanks to Livingstone for bringing the benefits of British 'civilization' to the vast tracts of Africa that he had explored. "When that world is made," he wrote "and generation after

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<sup>117</sup> Blaikie made a point to note that Livingstone was "convinced that if he had been by himself he would have accomplished more, and undoubtably ... would have received more of the approbation of his countrymen." Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, pp. 245.

<sup>118</sup> Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 397, emphasis added.

generation of intelligent Africans look back on its beginnings, as England looks back on the days of King Alfred ... or the United States of George Washington, the name that will be encircled by them with brightest honour is that of David Livingstone.”<sup>119</sup> Like Western Christians visiting Jerusalem or Muslims making the pilgrimage to Mecca, Blaikie imagined that African Christians would eagerly trek to the great holy sites where Livingstone had preached and taught as a missionary. “Mabotsa, Chonuane and Kolobeng,” Waller proclaimed, “will be visited with thrilling interest by many a pilgrim, and some grand memorial pile in Ilala will mark the spot where his heart reposes.”<sup>120</sup> In this imagery, Blaikie clearly cast Livingstone as a saviour of Africa, a Jesus-like figure who had brought a ‘backward’ continent populated by often ‘savage heathens’ to the doorstep of ‘civilization.’ As a result of the legacy he had left, this was a Livingstone capable of inciting the minions of Africa to visit the mission stations where he had supposedly converted their ancestors. Having cited a passage earlier in the biography in which Livingstone wrote that he hoped to emulate Christ in every way he could, Blaikie concluded that this “life-long prayer [had

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. Mabotsa, Chonuane and Kolobeng were the missions where Livingstone was stationed during his days as a missionary. Ilala was the village where Livingstone died. His heart and other internal organs were buried beneath a tree just outside the village. A statue of Livingstone was later erected in Ilala and the town remains somewhat of a tourist destination for those interested in the missionary-explorer. However, the three mission stations (all located near the border of South Africa and Botswana) did not become places of worship or tourist destinations. For a discussion of the ways in which Livingstone has been commemorated in Africa and elsewhere, see John M. Mackenzie “David Livingstone and the Worldly After-Life: Imperialism and Nationalism in Africa.”

been] fulfilled in no ordinary degree.”<sup>121</sup> In preaching the gospel in tandem with introducing legitimate commerce to replace the slave trade, Livingstone had shepherded in the ideals that would bring Africans the fruits of Christianity and commerce long enjoyed in Britain. For Blaikie, Livingstone, as a mortal imitation of Christ on African soil, provided a lived archetype for Africans to emulate in a future Africa ‘civilized’ by the British.

More than any full biography, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone* strengthened the Livingstone myth, in providing depth to the popular portrayals offered by Stanley and Waller and in reaffirming Livingstone’s status as one of the Victorian period’s great heroes and manly archetypes. After the rapid European colonization of Africa, scores of British biographers, writing to meet the demand for easy to read character sketches of Livingstone’s heroic life, readily followed Blaikie’s portrait. With the long absence of another biography matching or surpassing Blaikie’s insights and quality of research, his romanticized life of Livingstone remained influential well into the twentieth century.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid. In the earlier passage Livingstone states: “My great object was to be like Him - to imitate Him as far as He could be imitated. We have not the power of working miracles, but we can do a little in the way of healing the sick, and I sought a medical education in order that I might be like Him.” See Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, p. 185.

<sup>122</sup> Blaikie’s depiction of Livingstone as a saint-like figure also had a more immediate impact that stretched into the world of Victorian literary fiction. In his autobiography, Blaikie reveals that his biography motivated popular Victorian novelist Edna Lyall to cast Livingstone as the inspiration for a religious conversion in her novel *We Two* (1884). In the novel, Erica, a young freethinker, “heretic and atheist” forsakes her heterodox beliefs after reading a passage from Livingstone’s “journals” while doing research in the British Library. Lyall found the passage, written by Livingstone in 1856, in Blaikie’s biography. Cast as the daughter of a Charles Bradlaugh-like free-thought figure, Erica had been “impressed” with the “great beauty of Livingstone’s character” before her conversion. But, when reading about Livingstone’s Christian-inspired courage when he was confronted by the threat of a fatal attack and death seemed imminent, she was overcome with a sense of assurance that she had

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As John M. MacKenzie has astutely attested: “The legendary figures [that heroic myths] celebrate are partially self-made through the genuine achievements of their lives, but their usefulness in the practical world is developed by successors who create the heroic after-life by emphasizing, even exaggerating, the personal qualities, the seemingly selfless endeavours and near-cosmic objectives of their subjects.”<sup>123</sup> Livingstone did not live to enjoy the influence and authority he had hoped to generate as a result of his search for the Nile. However, his actions coupled with the work of his supporters gave his name a power that he could only dream of in the last years of his life and in the aftermath of his death. The mounting concern and escalating intrigue about his well-being and whereabouts, the sensation caused by Stanley’s journalistic scoop, the strange and valorous tale of his death and transportation back to a hero’s funeral, the message set-out in his *Last Journals* and in Blaikie’s biography solidified Livingstone’s place in the pantheon of British heroes. In contemplating retirement, if not death, Livingstone yearned to be remembered as an example of manly perseverance. However, the efforts of men like Murchison, Stanley, Waller and Blaikie meant that Livingstone was identified with far more than his manliness. After the

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found the Truth. Livingstone’s immovable faith in this most trying situation convinced Erica that her free-thought principles could not get her through the most difficult tests of her life. See William Garden Blaikie, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, pp. 295-296; Edna Lyall, *We Two*, 3 vols. Hurst and Blackwell, London, 1884. Lyall’s book was a best-seller and went into over twenty editions.

<sup>123</sup> John M. MacKenzie, “David Livingstone and the Worldly After-Life,” p. 206.

failures and disappointments associated with the Zambesi Expedition, their characterizations of Livingstone combined to erase any doubts about his character in the public mind. Together they created an heroic archetype, a Briton in Africa with the work ethic and moral character to stop the slave trade and bring 'civilization' to a 'backward' continent. Less than a decade after his death, Livingstone had become a potent figurehead, capable of being cast as the manifestation of righteous character in a variety of cultural and ideological settings. His perseverance had paid off, not in the epic geographical feat he had hoped for, but in reverence and respect for his life and what were represented as his ideals. As Britain carved out its portion of Africa in the late-Victorian period, heroic figures in general and Livingstone in particular were of great ideological and cultural use to an empire looking to popularize and justify its multifaceted colonial-imperialist schemes. With his popular image as a brave, persevering and manly Christian dedicated to fighting slavery, spreading his faith and bringing British 'civilization' to Africa, Livingstone became an icon of the rapidly expanding British empire of the late-nineteenth century.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion: “A work of civilising slaughter,” Africa After Livingstone

In late July 1872, just as Stanley arrived in London with stories to tell of his time with Livingstone, an anonymous article titled “The Political Value of African Discovery” appeared in *The Spectator*.<sup>1</sup> In rare rebuke of Livingstone, the author attacked his legacy as an explorer by arguing that his many journeys had done nothing to ‘civilize’ Africans or prepare the continent for British colonization. Ironically, the then unknown Stanley was also condemned for devoting his energies to his search for Livingstone, rather than Africa’s conquest. The author was ready to declare, for example, that “Dr. Livingstone’s discoveries do not ‘open’ Africa. Mr. Stanley’s enterprise does not bring those great Lake Regions, those numerous tribes, all the wealth of land and men, one whit nearer to the world which alone could use them well. No tribe will be civilized by that kind of contact. No nation will be enriched by that kind of knowledge.”<sup>2</sup>

The author’s implication was clear: Livingstone’s thirty years in Africa had done little to change Africa or its peoples. No new colonies had been established as a result of his explorations, nor had any Africans been brought under British ‘civilizing’ control. According to author, Africa needed an onslaught of British conquerors, not Livingstone’s

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, “The Political Value of African Discovery,” *The Spectator*, 27 July, 1872. Judging by its content, the article, which I found glued into one of Richard Burton’s scrapbooks, may have been written by Burton or one of his friends. The scrapbook is in the Arundell collection, Wiltshire Record Office, box 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

utopian colonial dreams or his visions of racial equality:

It is conquest, not exploration, which the valley of the Nile, using those words in their fullest meaning, requires - conquest of the old, vulgar, fertilising kind, conquest by bayonets and bullets, directed by a civilised intelligence, animated by a determination at any cost of immediate suffering to get itself obeyed. A thousand Dr. Livingstones, with all his splendid qualities, moral, as well as intellectual, could do nothing for [Africans] in the course of centuries, compared with what could be accomplished by one Englishman of the Clive<sup>3</sup> stamp leading a thousand English ruffians and ten thousand Arab savages to a work of civilising slaughter.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, in the author's view, Livingstone was not the type of man to champion or participate in the conquering and colonization of Africa. Colonialism required men willing to kill, to civilize "by the sword," not missionary-explorers who believed it was immoral for Britons to subjugate Africans and manly for exploited Africans to fight against their colonial oppressors.<sup>5</sup>

The author believed these proposals for action would "not get even momentary hearing."<sup>6</sup> Yet, in many ways this call for Africa's conquest proved to be prophetic. Over the next quarter century, a relatively small number of Britons often joined by groups of hired soldiers and armed with the new Maxim machine-gun, managed to conquer and colonize vast regions of Africa in the name of British 'civilization.'

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Clive (1725-1774), was a British general who led a force of 900 British soldiers and 2,000 Indian sepoys against a much larger Indian force in the conquest of Bengal in 1757.

<sup>4</sup> Anonymous, "The Political Value of African Discovery," *The Spectator*, 27 July, 1872.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



As Stanley himself ultimately attested, explorers played an integral role in this process. A decade after his journey to find Livingstone, Stanley, for example, had combined exploration with colonial exploitation in helping found the Congo Free State for Belgium's King Leopold.<sup>7</sup> In an 1897 article in *Atlantic Monthly*, Stanley looked back at what he called "Twenty Five Years' Progress in Equatorial Africa."<sup>8</sup> In tracing the history of Central Africa's conquest and colonization, he began by discussing his return to Britain in 1872 after finding Livingstone. Stanley declared that at the time "nine tenths of inner Africa remained unexplored ... and the tenth that was known had required fifteen years for Burton, Speke, Baker and Livingstone to explore."<sup>9</sup> As if responding to the author of "The Political Value of African Discovery," Stanley maintained that "the process of waking Europe to the value of Africa was slow at first."<sup>10</sup> Despite Livingstone's journeys, Britons, he asserted, remained ignorant of Africa's potential and wary of further colonization. Yet, he boastfully claimed, his own path-breaking explorations of Central Africa were "to prove, by actual practice, that African lands were habitable, their cannibal aborigines manageable, and legitimate commerce possible."<sup>11</sup>

Much of Stanley's article was devoted to documenting how he had gradually been

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<sup>7</sup> See Hochschild, pp. 61-75.

<sup>8</sup> Henry M. Stanley, "Twenty-Five Years' Progress in Equatorial Africa," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 80, 1897.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 474.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

joined by missionaries, traders, administrators and settlers in a newly colonized and civilized Africa. He provided the latest statistics documenting the size (in square miles), the population of whites, the number of the missions, schools, churches and converts, and the value of trade for each of the new colonies. In his discussion of the British Central African Protectorate (encompassing modern Malawi and parts of Zambia and Tanzania), Stanley proclaimed that the colony had “sprung mainly from the reverence which Scotchmen bear [for] the memory of Livingstone.”<sup>12</sup> He then explained that Livingstone had hoped to open the region to traders, missionaries and settlers and recounted how several missionary societies had subsequently established missions in the Shire Highlands and along Lake Nyassa (Malawi).<sup>13</sup> With the arrival of British traders and settlers, Stanley claimed that the colony began to flourish, boasting “white women teachers” and “twenty post-offices” in a region where Livingstone, his wife Mary and his Zambesi Expedition crew had struggled to prevail against malaria, drought, famine and the devastation caused by slavery.<sup>14</sup> As a further sign of the extraordinary “progress” of empire, Stanley remarked that the colonists, again inspired by Livingstone, had succeeded in placing “five steamers and one boat” on Lake Nyassa, as well as 18 steamers and 60 boats on the Shire and the lower Zambesi rivers.<sup>15</sup>

For Stanley, colonization was a remarkably smooth and peaceful process leading to

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 480.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter One, section 1.1, for a brief examination of the missions that were founded at this time.

<sup>14</sup> Henry M. Stanley, “Twenty-Five Years’ Progress in Equatorial Africa,” p. 480.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

economic growth and African renewal. As he cast it, Africans seemed grateful for benevolent white rule, while African anti-colonial resistance or rebellion was unimaginable.<sup>16</sup> In his discussion of the British Central African Protectorate, there was thus no mention that much of the land for the colony had been acquired after traders ‘negotiated’ over twenty treaties with chiefs in the fertile Shire Highlands, the region where Livingstone had hoped to place his small colony.<sup>17</sup> Among the ‘tribes’ defrauded of their lands and resources were Livingstone’s beloved Kololo, many of whom had remained in the Shire after the Zambesi Expedition. Stanley also overlooked the fact that the colony faced sustained African resistance throughout the 1890s and that administrator Harry Johnston ruthlessly subdued the rebellious Yao, Chewa, Mazitu and Kololo peoples to secure white rule.<sup>18</sup> Johnston’s battles with the African rebels were usually framed as moral struggles against slave-traders. However, as historian Kevin Shillington has attested:

in reality Johnston’s wars in the Central Africa Protectorate were a crude military conquest of the principal African authorities in the territory. He confronted each ruler in turn with a treaty of submission for him to sign and

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<sup>16</sup> Always mindful of racial politics, Stanley even maintained that white racial intolerance had been overcome with colonization and that Africans and their white colonizers had become friends. Travellers to Africa, he argued, had “ceased to generalize [about Africa and its peoples] in a bitter style. The white men retain kindly memories of the Africans among whom they lived and laboured.... The post-bags are weighted with the correspondence which [whites] maintain with their dark friends. It is only the new and casual white who speaks of the African as a ‘nigger’ and condemns the climate of the tropics.” See *ibid.*, pp. 482-483.

<sup>17</sup> For an example of one of these treaties, see the “The Great Nyasaland Land Swindle,” in the *Great Epics Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 5, August, 1997, available online at [www.greatepicbooks.com/epics/august97.html](http://www.greatepicbooks.com/epics/august97.html).

<sup>18</sup> Johnston is mentioned in Chapter One as one of the Britons who claimed that he hoped to finish Livingstone’s work in Africa.

a demand for taxation. Those that rejected this interpretation for ‘protection’ faced conquest, death and taxation of the survivors.... Ultimately it was [from the] Maxim-gun, artillery, gunboats on the Lake and a hardened professional corps of three hundred Sikhs from India which finally ensured British control of the territory.<sup>19</sup>

In his version of colonial history, Stanley also confidently forgot to mention that in the Congo, where he served as the first colonial Governor, the cover of humanitarianism and abolitionism was used to mask the brutality of the conquest and exploitation of the vast African territory and its peoples, which included Livingstone’s Manyema. Stanley’s statistics hid the fact that millions of Congolese were killed in the building of roads, the collecting of ivory and in the harvesting of rubber. For example, with a small force of white officers and an army of well armed African mercenaries used to control an indentured labour force, whole villages were coerced to gather rubber or face death. Those that did not reach their quota, were whipped or shot. Soldiers were rewarded by turning in the severed limbs of the Africans they had killed.<sup>20</sup>

For Stanley, these unmentioned activities were all part of the “progress” that came with ‘civilizing’ Africa. His actions in Africa demonstrated that, like the author of “The Political Value of African Discovery,” he firmly believed that the ‘civilising slaughter’ of Africans was a necessary part of building a colony.<sup>21</sup> It is clear that Stanley’s conception of colonial rule, his attitudes towards and relationships with Africans, his hopes for Africa were

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<sup>19</sup> Shillington, p. 325.

<sup>20</sup> See Hochschild for an in-depth examination of these practices.

<sup>21</sup> For evidence, see Hochschild. See also Stanley’s *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State: A Story of Work and Exploration*, 2 vols., Harper and Brothers: New York, 1885.

opposed to Livingstone's in many ways. However, by invoking Livingstone throughout his history of colonial "progress" in Central Africa - whether as a path-breaking explorer or as the inspiration for a later generation of missionaries and traders - Stanley implicated him in the conquering of Africa.

Throughout this study, I have argued that the British empire that was forged in Africa after Livingstone's death ultimately had little to do with the vision of change he had proffered during his lifetime. The Livingstone myth that was created by Stanley, Waller and Blaikie and championed by so many others simplified and homogenized Livingstone's complex understanding of African cultures and societies, his colonial politics and his goals for Africa. In the Livingstone myth there was thus no place for his radical conception of African manliness or his support for the anti-colonial struggles of the Xhosa and Khoikhoi against the British Crown, there was little explanation of his monogenist ethnologies or of the importance he placed on literacy in his vision of 'civilization,' and there was only superficial recognition that his vision of colonialism was about racial co-operation and not racial superiority.

In looking for and finding the conquering discourse of imperialism, post-colonial theory found a handy trope in the mythic Livingstone. In embracing the stereotype of the white male explorer championed in countless Livingstone biographies, theorists like Edward Said were able to advance the idea that Livingstone was interchangeable with countless other writers who celebrated the triumphs of imperialism. In the post-colonial conception of history, there has thus been little to distinguish Livingstone from Stanley and other explorers, missionaries and ethnographers who wrote about Africa and its peoples. In working at the

level of myth, representation and image, in casting history as an accomplice in the colonizing process, post-colonial theory has failed to look for the empirical complexities in the writings of 'colonizers' like Livingstone. As a result, his radical contribution to the nineteenth century perception of Africa and Africans has been neglected, subsumed into what has been framed as an essentialist Africanist discourse. By disregarding Livingstone's published and unpublished writings, post-colonial scholars have overlooked a key source of resistance and contradiction within the discourse of African colonialism. With close to thirty years dedicated to journeying across Africa, Livingstone brought a depth of experience to his writings about Africans that were unparalleled during his lifetime. As this study demonstrates, an in-depth, nuanced examination of his writings reveals that he did not view Britons and Africans or himself and African men as inherently different. Livingstone believed that Africans were the same as human beings appeared to be "everywhere else."<sup>22</sup> In challenging notions of racial and gender difference, he maintained that African men could be just as manly as British men. Rather than confirm and venerate the imperial undertaking, Livingstone questioned Britain's right to appropriate the lands and resources of Africans. In siding with the 'enemy,' he championed the right of Sandile and the Kat River rebels to fight against British colonial exploitation in the Cape Colony.

In 1872, the author of "The Political Value of African Discovery" posited that a collection of a thousand Livingstones could do nothing to change Africa. The message was clear: conquerors were needed to transform Africa, not a moralistic explorer like Livingstone. Yet, it is possible to imagine that the history of Central Africa might have been very different

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<sup>22</sup> David Livingstone, *Livingstone's African Journal*, vol. II, p. 446.

with a thousand Livingstones working for change, rather than conquerors like Stanley and Rhodes.

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*The Times*

### Appendix 1: Maps

- **Map 1: The Eastern Cape of South Africa in the Nineteenth Century**

This is a copy of a map that appears in Les Switzer's *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, p. 55.

- **Map 2: Map of Livingstone's Early Journeys, 1841-1856**

This is a copy of a map that appears in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, p. 9.

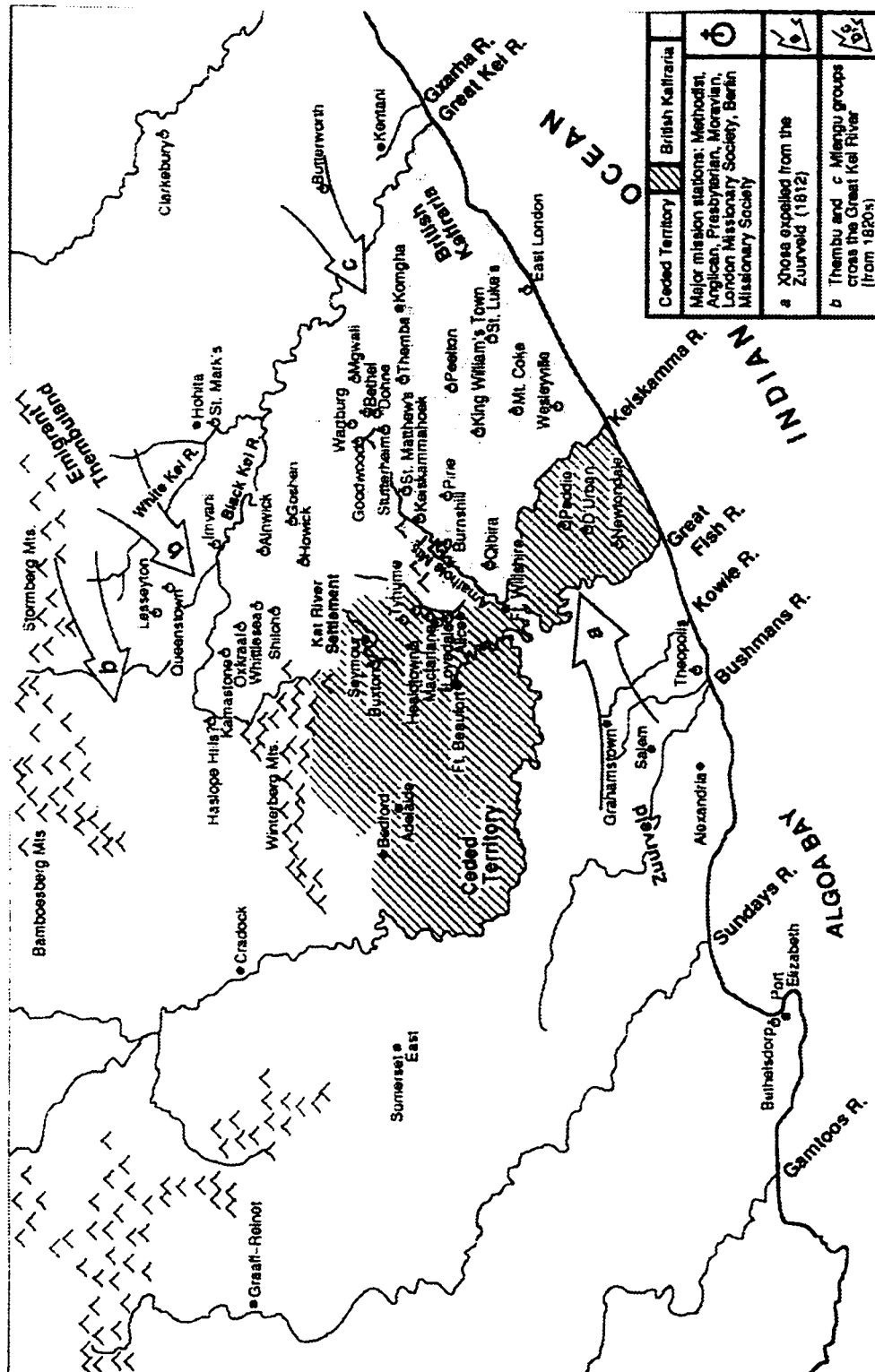
- **Map 3: Map of Livingstone's Zambesi Expedition, 1858-1863**

This is a copy of a map that appears in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, p. 64.

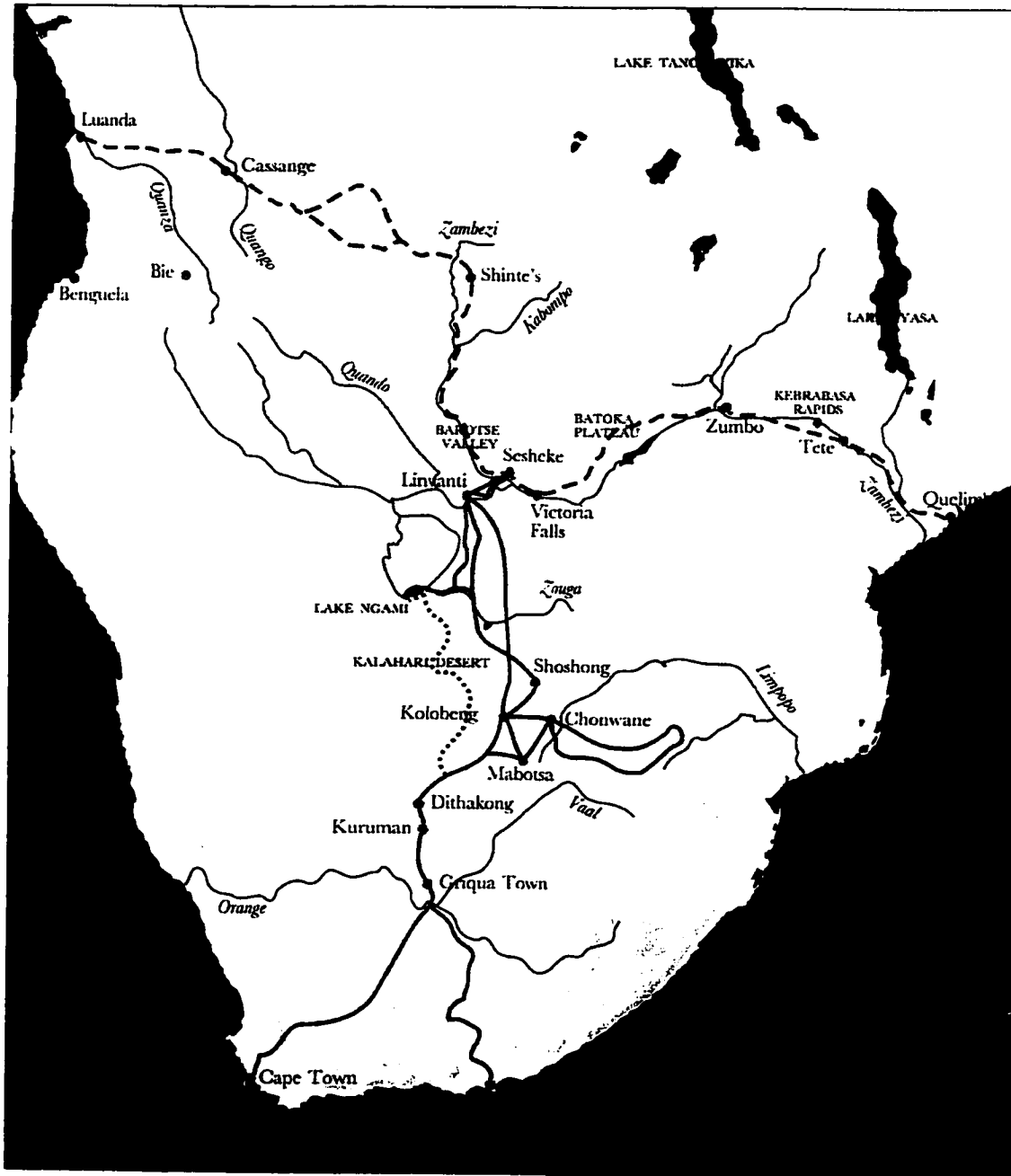
- **Map 4: Livingstone's Last Journeys, 1866-1873**

This is a copy of a map that appears in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, p. 65.

**Map 1: The Eastern Cape of South Africa in the Nineteenth Century**



**Map 2: Map of Livingstone's Early Journeys, 1841-1856**

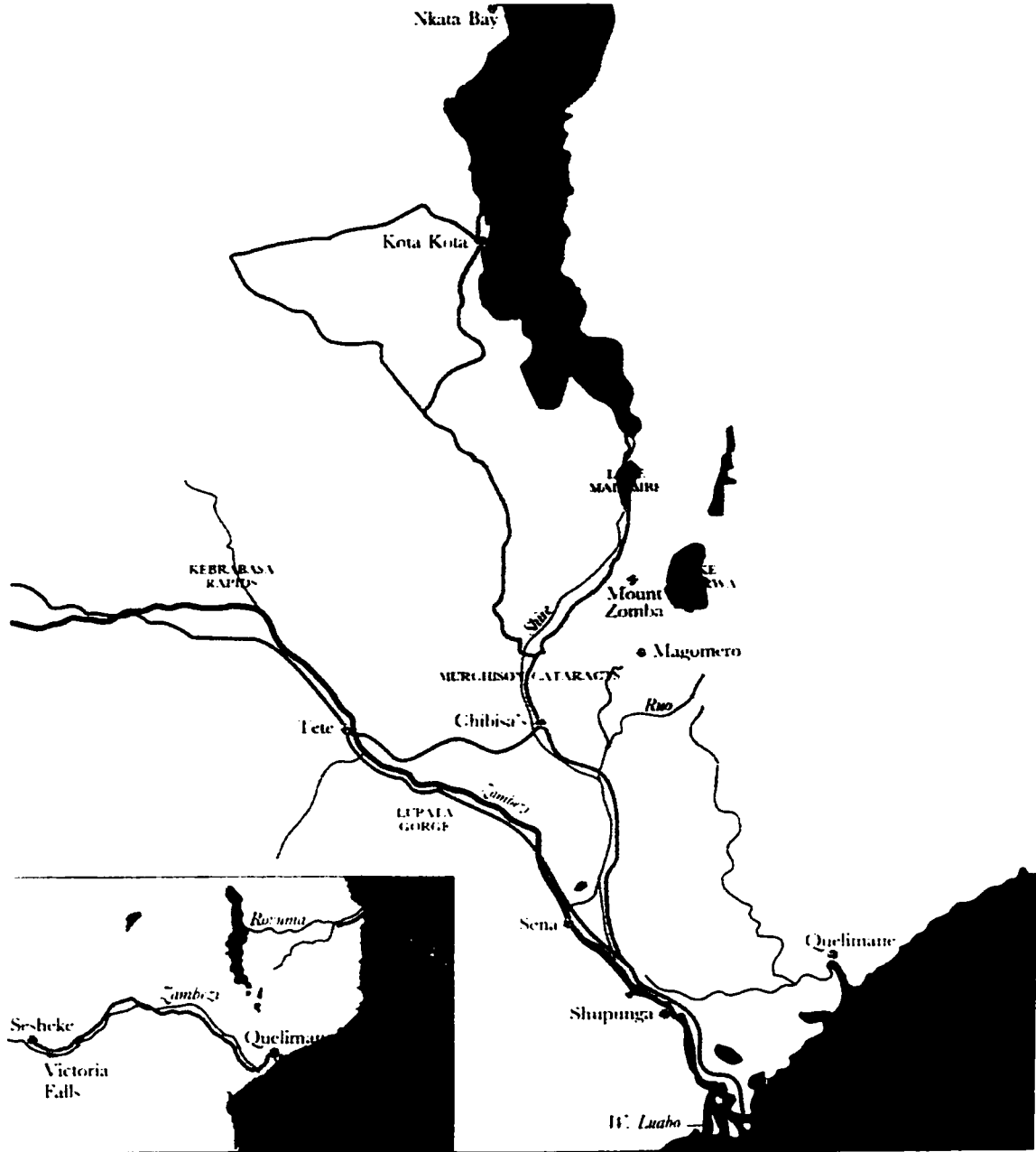


**Sketch Map of Livingstone's Journeys, 1841-1856**

- Journeys in Southern Africa 1841-1853
- - - Coast-to-coast journey 1833-1836
- ..... Lake Ngami journey 1849
- Towns and places
- Rivers

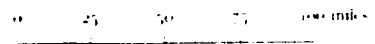


**Map 3: Map of Livingstone's Zambesi Expedition, 1858-1863**



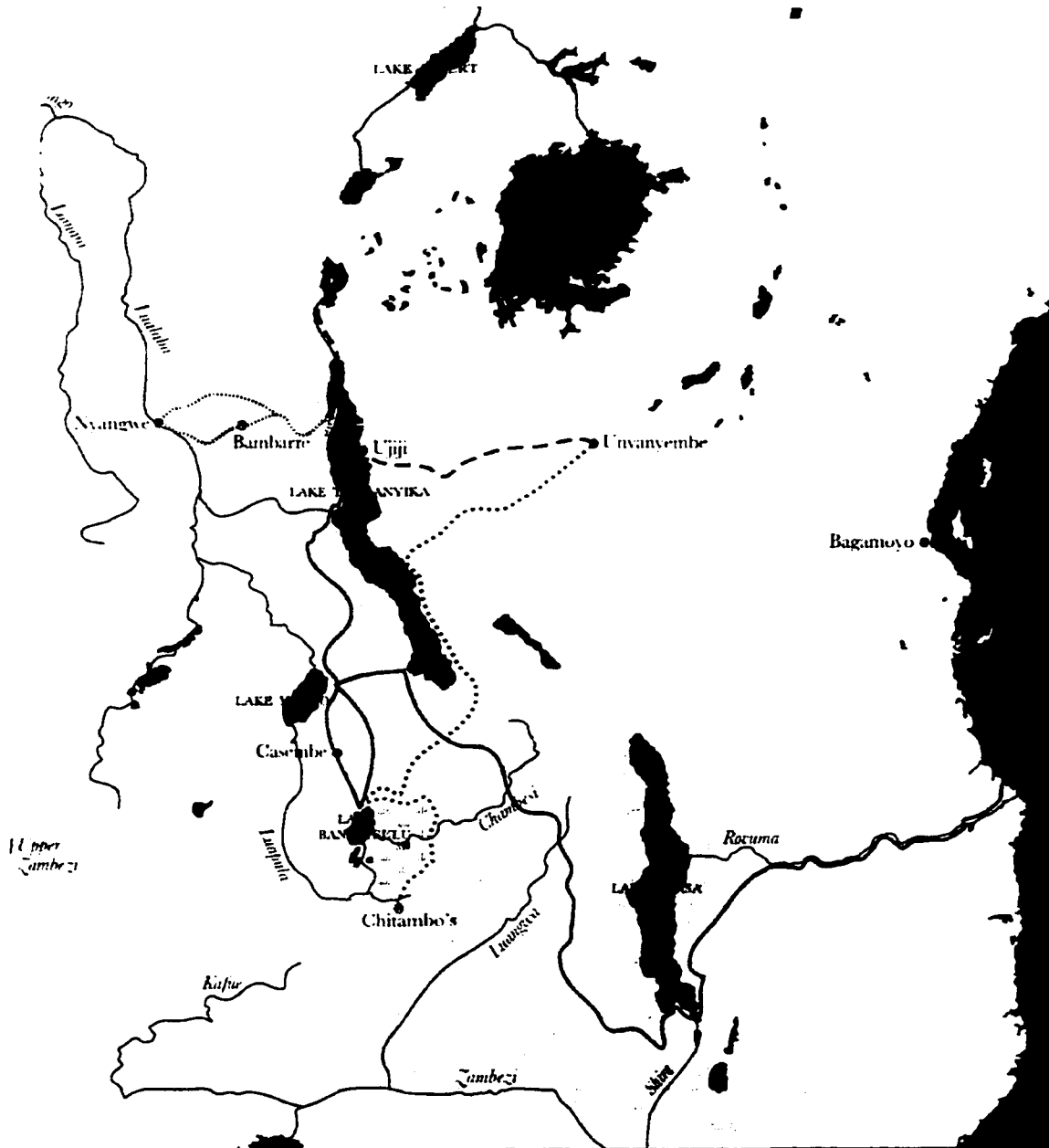
**Sketch Map of the Zambesi Expedition**

- Towns and places
- Livingstone's route
- Rivers and water-courses





**Map 4: Livingstone's Last Journeys, 1866-1873**



**Sketch Map of Livingstone's Last Journeys**

