Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Scott Benigno April 12, 2022

Fighting (Over) Zulu: Race, Empire, and Zulu Representations in the British Metropole 1820s – 1910

by

Scott Benigno

Brian Vick
Adviser

History

Brian Vick

Adviser

Tehila Sasson

Committee Member

Sam Cherribi

Committee Member

2022

Fighting (Over) Zulu: Race, Empire, and Zulu Representations in the British Metropole 1820s – 1910

By

Scott Benigno

Brian Vick

Adviser

An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

History

2022

Abstract

Fighting (Over) Zulu: Race, Empire, and Zulu Representations in the British Metropole 1820s – 1910
By Scott Benigno

The first Britons to encounter the Zulu, a Black kingdom from the KwaZulu-Natal region of South Africa, were traders and travelers in the 1820s. Their subsequent travelogues and histories in the 1830s begin this thesis's timeline of depictions of the Zulu in the British metropole. From the earliest understandings of the Zulu in Britain, a notion of a unique people defined by a supposedly inherent violence and militance evolved alongside general beliefs of the Zulu as "primitive."

Primarily through media and ethnographic literature, this thesis analyzes the ways in which Zulu representations were consistent and inconsistent with changing notions of British racial and imperial thinking. My first chapter deploys travelogues, missionary ethnographies, and defenses of the Zulu alongside official representations of the state of the Anglo-Zulu frontier, tracking how unofficial images of the Zulu at home merged with support for imperial-led civilizing. The chapter also reveals how forms of scientific racism were applied to the case of the Zulu at least two decades before what is usually thought to be its wider dissemination in the 1860s. My second chapter explores the changes that the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, specifically the defeat at Isandlwana and victory at Rorke's Drift, caused in metropolitan understandings of the Zulu and the imperial British mission. For a time, metropolitan representations centered the Zulu as the quintessential "noble-savage" – a gray-space between the "primitive" and "civilized" – to provide a counterpoint to British imperial civilizers, as demonstrated in artwork and the writings of H.R. Haggard. This thesis's chronological and thematic approach demonstrates the precarity with which imperial societies came to "know" their colonial opponents and subjects, as well as the implications for and the importance of context in revising our current images of the past.

Fighting (Over) Zulu: Race, Empire, and Zulu Representations in the British Metropole 1820s – 1910

By

Scott Benigno

Brian Vick

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

History

2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of those who played a part in my completion of this honors thesis.

First, the organizations that helped to fund my research: the Department of History's George P. Cuttino Scholarship for Independent Research, and the Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry's Spring 2022 Honors Fellowship.

Additionally, I would like to thank my committee members, Tehila Sasson and Sam Cherribi, and my advisor, Brian Vick, whose stimulating and considerate guidance, comments, and critiques consistently pushed me in my research and arguments.

Finally, a special thank you to my parents, Mark and Paige, for supporting me in combining my passion for history with my course of study during these four years at Emory.

Table of Contents

Figures

Introduction

> Zulus are the most famous of all African peoples and are known all over the world as proud people and brave warriors. Nobody outside of South Africa has ever heard of the Tswanas, Vendas, etc.[1]

While certainly a generalization, this 1994 letter to the editor of the *Daily News* in London offers a brief but concise analysis of Zulu identity that is widely shared in Britain and the rest of the Western world, albeit from a post-imperial and non-racial angle. The Zulu do indeed have a strong military tradition, one that they are proud of, and a history of fierce independence. When it comes to their former imperial rulers, the British are now more removed from their past connections with the Zulu as subjugators and colonizers, but the historical past is ever-present in British representations of the Zulu. The two peoples are forever connected through the imperial past, where the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and the Battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift continue to define much of our modern understandings of the Anglo-Zulu relationship as well as our own visions of who we think the Zulu are.

The quote above casts this characterization in a positive light, referencing a popular depiction of the Zulu that is promulgated primarily in contemporary military historiographies' infatuation with the Anglo-Zulu War, the surprising Zulu victory at Isandlwana in the early days of the conflict, and the subsequent, successful stand of outnumbered British troops at Rorke's Drift in the aftermath of Isandlwana. However, this widespread recognition of Zulu exploits and proper representations and understandings of the Zulu as warriors was born out of a longer historical timeline of Zulu depictions in the British metropole that began with the first Anglo-Zulu interactions in the 1820s. Surprisingly, a modern and full-scale narrative of depictions of

[1] "Klaaste accused," letter to the *Daily News* (London, ENG.), April 27, 1994, published in Stephen Leech, "'Aggressive by Nature, Depraved, and like Nazis': Images of Zulu Violence" *African Historical Review*, 30, no. 1 (1998), 89.

the Zulu in metropolitan media and literature does not yet exist. While numerous scholars have dealt with smaller and different parts of how the British understood and depicted the Zulu, such a scattered historiography diminishes the larger impact that revising the historical record can have on our contemporary and future understanding of the Zulu and Anglo-Zulu bond. That is, we cannot understand how the Zulu are so prominent today in the colonial, imperial, and military histories of Britain and Africa without first analyzing the evolution of how the Zulu were portrayed in British society.

In writing this thesis, it is my goal to fill in this scholarly gap by exploring the changes in how the Zulu were represented in British books, periodicals, sketches, paintings, shows, and exhibitions. The case of the Zulu was and is unique – their staying power in our histories is proof of this – and I seek to illuminate the ways in which British dealings with the Zulu consistently brought out both imperial and other insecurities in the metropole that demanded official and unofficial rectification. In undertaking this study, my research brought me to vastly different areas of historical research that I had previously little exposure to, such as ethnology and anthropology. However, solely looking at British writings and other depictions of the Zulu means little without properly securing their place within larger historiographies of Britain's colonial and imperial past. This is a story about British understandings of a frontier *neighbor-turned-enemy-turned-subject*, as well as an analysis of race, empire, media, scientific racism, and more that helped to fashion lasting legacies from the era of imperialism.

To undertake this task, my first chapter explores the history of British depictions of the Zulu in the metropole from the first writings to reach the metropole in the 1830s up through the 1870s, just prior to the start of hostilities. I start with the first British traders and travelers who encountered the Zulu beyond the borders of British South Africa in the 1820s and their

subsequent travelogues that describe the Zulu as possessing a uniquely violent and militant society, primarily based in the reign of Shaka Zulu, alongside racist generalizations regarding their supposed savagery and primitivism.[2] I follow this initial and important representation of the Zulu through missionary writings, the rise of scientific racism and overtaking of ethnology by British anthropology, a striking but failed defense of the Zulu by a British Bishop in South Africa, and a rise in support for imperial action in "civilizing" the Zulu. In my second chapter, I analyze how the Anglo-Zulu War, specifically the dual battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, introduce new and expose preexisting tensions in imperial thought, both generally and specific to the Zulu, such as an unofficial contestation and imperial reclamation of the Zulu as a "noble savage." Through writings, artwork, photography, and the also evolving writings of the famous writer and imperialist Henry Rider Haggard, I follow how the metropole was able to, with official help, overcome the trauma of defeat at Isandlwana, elevate Rorke's Drift in imperial mythology, and cement Zulu representations as a tool for the glorification of imperial ideology. Finally, my thesis ends with an analysis of how these events in the nineteenth century fostered a false identity of who the Zulu were, not just in Britain, but in the United States as well through much of the twentieth century, concluding with the implications of historical revisionism, for better and for worse.

To truly understand the British metropole as a whole, my research includes cross-cultural representations that showcase how British society, from in-person visuals to high level religious and anthropological debates, interacted with a people and kingdom thousands of miles away. While much of the socio-cultural scholarship surrounding the British and Zulus' intertwined history is grounded in sound research and methodology, the vast digital collections of the *British*

[2] Nathaniel Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in East Africa, Vol II* (London: Edward Churton, 1836).

Newspaper Archive offer an incredibly rich source of understudied primary materials. These articles, usually from unnamed writers and editors, come from London and Leeds, Nottingham and Norfolk, and even Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. The periodical articles included, also from unnamed writers and editors, are some of Britain's most popular, like the *Illustrated London News*, while others exemplify the widespread geographic support for changing depictions of the Zulu across the British Isles, such as the *Inverness Courier* from northern Scotland. The newspaper was the most accessible form of Zulu-related discussions for the British public, and these articles were published during a half-century of unprecedented growth in British literacy rates that paralleled increasing periodical circulation and decreasing periodical costs. If there was an "every-man's" representation of the Zulu, it comes from these papers that, over time, more actively attempted to shape public opinion.

Beyond articles accessed from the *British Newspaper Archive*, I have brought in a large number of monographs to demonstrate that the Zulu were the central topic of discussions in different circles across Britain. Travelogues, like those of Nathan Isaacs, and missionary ethnologies, such as those from Rev. Allen Gardiner and Rev. John Shooter, provide a segue from the first writings on the Zulu, the travelogues of Nathan Isaacs, to the more inquisitive and scientifically focused analysis of the Zulu that would cement them as members of the "primitive." My thesis also includes numerous works by the most consistent British defenders of the Zulu, Bishop John Colenso and his daughters Frances and Harriette, as well as from famous British author Henry Rider Haggard. Haggard's writings are a great example on their own of how partial defenses of the Zulu in the short-term aftermath of the war quickly gave way to distorted visions of how the subjugated Zulu could serve the Empire, both metaphorically on pieces of paper and literally as subjects of the Crown. The *Internet Archive: Digital Library* has

been crucial to the proper utilization and documentation of these old primary sources, especially as the Covid-19 Pandemic made it impossible to travel to the British Isles for in-person archival research. Finally, in an attempt to be both thorough and offer visual examples to readers, my thesis discusses the relevance and importance of colonial shows and exhibitions, imperial paintings, British photography of Zulus, and even films in further distorting the Zulus' status of "noble savage" and affirming British imperial glory in victory and defeat decades after the war.

Much of the current scholarship surrounding how British society and culture dealt with the Zulu is either briefly mentioned in military histories, examined narrowly in many different academic journals, or focuses on the brief six-month Anglo-Zulu War and parts of the aftermath. Works from earlier in the twentieth century on Anglo-Zulu histories from Britain tend to be marred by racial and imperial convictions and judgements and are included as primary sources that showcase how imperial representations become memories and, ultimately, our histories. In my arguments, I have deployed numerous frameworks to conceptualize how race, empire, science, and even defeat played into the perversion of Zulu representations and, by extension, their perceived identity in the eyes of Britain and the West. Central to my first chapter is historian Alan Lester's *Imperial Networks*, as it separates official and unofficial colonial discourses in the creation of subaltern identities.[3] My first chapter builds off of Lester's work by demonstrating how unofficial depictions in the British metropole converged with official opinion and action to consistently change aspects of Zulu depiction until an unofficial consensus for imperially led civilizing and, potentially, military intervention was reached. Central to this chapter's narrative is my argument that, contrary to generally accepted histories of anthropology, scientific racism was widespread and, at least in the case of the Zulu, barely pushed back on even

[3] Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks*: *Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001).

in the decades before the 1860s. To achieve this, I rely on social and cultural historian Sadiah Qureshi's *Peoples on Parade*, which looks at how non-white peoples and subjects were displayed, viewed, and understood in Britain during the Victorian Era, within which she includes examples specific to the Zulu and Britain.[4] The debate over British ethnology, anthropology, and scientific racism not only allows this chapter to properly situate the major events and discussions in the metropole relating to the Zulu, but it showcases that insecurities regarding Britain's ability to civilize non-whites and the supposed primitivism of the Zulu were apparent well before Isandlwana.

For the second chapter and more specific to the Zulu, historian James O. Gump's *The Dust Rose Like Smoke* provides solid context and analysis of the treatment of the Zulu after the war by the British, both on the ground and in British culture. Though it is a comparative analysis of Anglo-American imperialism's understanding and treatment of the Sioux and Zulu prior to and in the aftermath of their respective subjugations, Gump's well-researched work greatly helps to forward the argument that the battles of the Anglo-Zulu War became inseparable from metropolitan understandings of the Zulu in the war's aftermath.[5] To better understand the insecurities that arose out of the defeat at Isandlwana, and the subsequent elevation of the victory at Rorke's Drift to alleviate these insecurities, this chapter deploys frameworks from Wolfgang Schivelbusch's famous *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*. While Schivelbusch's study looks at the Confederacy's defeat in the American Civil War, the French loss in the Franco-Prussian War, and Germany's destruction after World War I, his analysis of how Western societies respond to and overcome military defeat can be partially

[4] Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011).
[5] James O. Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux, Second Edition* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

transplanted onto the tensions surrounding Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift.[6] By bringing together all of these separate but important strands of the historiography, my work can better serve to contextualize Anglo-Zulu history, representations of the Zulu, and how the insecurities of empire resulted in shifting metropolitan support for, as my chapters will show, different depictions of the Zulu over time.

Overall, this thesis is both a synthesis of many separate and smaller histories of the Anglo-Zulu relationship and an overarching analysis of how the evolution of portrayals of the Zulu in the British metropole fed into larger imperial discourses. I investigate how a collection of the most notable and read about events from the Black, primarily non-Christian, and supposedly violent Zulu frontier was understood and depicted in a white, Christian, imperial, and generally racist society an entire continent and ocean away. In the second chapter, I seek to answer how the British experience of the defeat at Isandlwana in 1879 deflected the terms of debate about British imperialism in southern Africa, as well as the image of the Zulu in British discourse. Through both official and unofficial representations, I seek to demonstrate that official actors of the Empire played central roles in shaping these portrayals while, at other times, unofficial characters, such as the press or Haggard, drove the changing metropolitan understandings of the Empire's imperial and civilizing mission.

This thesis is neither a history of the Zulu nor a history of Britain. Rather, my work looks to challenge current assumptions regarding Western, and even non-Western, understandings of the past and the perverted identities that imperial ideologies create to solidify their own grandiose beliefs and visions of the past, present, and future. The fluidity with which the British public treated representations of the Zulu is apparent in my work, and it reflects insecurities in

---

[6] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

how the British attempted to explain, promote, and critique their own imperialist and capitalist society, as well as the concept of and desire to spread "Britishness." The British did not, as many histories of Anglo-Zulu interactions portray, merely fight the Zulu Kingdom – they fought over how to treat, define, depict, and best use images of a real group of people with little care for nearly a century.

I. An "Interesting Tribe of Savages": The Zulu in mid-Nineteenth-Century British Culture

While Shaka Zulu founded the Zulu Kingdom through subjugation of various independent Zulu clans in the early 1810s and 1820s, the Zulu people first arrived in modern South Africa in the KwaZulu-Natal region at the beginning of the eighteenth century. For nearly a century, Zulu contact with Europeans primarily revolved around interactions with Portuguese traders operating out of southern Mozambique and Dutch colonists whose migration to the east and north of the Cape, caused by British rule, often encroached upon Zulu territory.[7] Famous, or infamous, for his military exploits, Shaka ruled as the first King of the Zulus until his assassination in the late 1820s.

It was just prior to the reign of Shaka that the British officially came into contact with the Zulu. Having occupied the Cape Colony in 1806 and officially annexing it from the Dutch towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1814, British interest in South Africa stemmed from an economic desire to protect and dominate oceanic trade to India. The Empire would not border the Zulu Kingdom until its annexation of the Boer Republic of Natalia in 1843, though official encounters had already occurred.[8] Still, the remoteness of the Zulu Kingdom in relation to the sparsely populated eastern British Cape Colony meant that interaction between the two was neither frequent nor of large consequence to London. After the first unofficial Anglo-Zulu interactions through individual traveler and explorer accounts, metropole media's main discussions on the Zulu revolved around missionary ethnologies and other pieces detailing the customs and development of Zulu society well into the 1850s. From there, the falling cost and

[7] See: "Snagged in the Tree of Kings," in Ian Knight, *Zulu Rising: The Epic Story of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift* (London: Macmillan, 2010), 32-47.
[8] See: "When I am Gone," in Ian Knight, *Zulu Rising*, 48-65.

rising popularity of daily and weekly periodicals meant that Anglo-Zulu interactions on the Natal frontier were covered, though often to highly varying degrees, by metropolitan papers for metropolitan readers. While mentions and articles on and about the Zulu steadily increase through the 1870s, overall, the British metropole had limited official exposure to the Zulu people or the Zulu Kingdom that would wipe out the main column of a British invasion force in the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War.

Opinions and depictions of the Zulu did not simply evolve on their own in the metropole; they were made, altered, and updated through the depiction of frontier interactions in British South Africa. Historians Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson have previously noted the striking socio-cultural, political, and economic zones of interaction that define the relationship between groups on the frontier, and their work has focused on how indigenous and foreign entities connect during an "open" frontier and how, eventually, the foreign entity changes the official dynamics of this relationship when victory "closes" the frontier.[9] Building off of their work, historian Richard Elphick has demonstrated the importance of the South African frontier in the forming of South African society up to 1840.[10] This chapter is aimed at supplementing the broader implications of these historians' works on South Africa and Britain's role in South African history from the perspective of the imperial metropole. If the frontier was the zone of interaction for how the British Empire formally interacted with the Zulu and southern Africa, then literature and media coverage of the Zulu was the zone of interaction for the metropole.

Imperial British attitudes surrounding race have also been well covered by historians, especially in the past few decades. Alan Lester's *Imperial Networks*, as mentioned in the

---

[9] Howard Roberts Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds, *The Frontier In History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 7-8.
[10] Richard Elphick, *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989).

introduction, is essential in this context. While his work focuses on how colonial and settler actions were conditioned inside a larger imperial network that connected the metropole to its colonies, this chapter focuses on how this imperial network, mainly through unofficial opinions in media and literature, was successful in ushering in new images of the Zulu. Historian Duncan Bell has also previously argued that imperial insecurities regarding race often resulted in imperial fantasies regarding the unity of – not the white race as a whole – but specifically the white Anglo race that was driven by both imperial anxieties and hopes for a racial utopia in the latter nineteenth century and into the twentieth.[11] While Bell writes broadly about the British Empire and race, the insecurities in British thought regarding their own race and identity that he discusses present themselves in the metropole well before the defeat at Isandlwana that fully exposed them.

By following the popular ways in which the Zulu were thought of, depicted, and written about in British metropolitan media, a deeper connection can be made into how the interactions on the frontier that helped formulate South Africa also played a role in affecting how the British metropole understood the indigenous groups with which it interacted. Also in *Imperial Networks*, Lester maps out how colonial British cultures and practices regarding the Xhosa, another indigenous group in South Africa, were in part a result of how "a network of extraneous influences" molded British opinions and depictions of Xhosa identity.[12] Nonetheless, historian Sadiah Qureshi importantly notes that the Zulu were, in European understandings, considered superior among African peoples primarily regarding their organizational and military exploits.[13] Whereas some, like the southern African Xhosa, were denigrated as "bush-fighters" and

[11] Duncan Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race: Empire and the Utopian Destiny of Anglo-America* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2020).
[12] Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks*.
[13] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 73.

incapable of "rational war," a network of unofficial traveler accounts, missionary writings, and, eventually, tabloid, journal, and periodical accounts helped to formulate a consensus on the Zulu as a primitive but organized and militarized people capable of wielding exceptional and ruthless violence at any moment. This consensus was undeniably shaped through opinion and depiction of the Zulu that often converged with scientific, political, economic, cultural, military, and imperial ideals also developing at the same time. Through laying out this evolution, this chapter pushes back on the more cosmopolitan scholarly view of early-to-mid nineteenth-century racial understandings that were often based in humanitarianism. While historian Simon J. Potter presents the emergence of an imperial press system as beginning in 1876, his writings on how earlier news, press, and journalistic writing was inextricably connected to themes of mobility in the British mind and in its Empire already finds support in the story of the British metropole's initial understanding of the Zulu.[14]

Covering roughly a half-century, this chapter explains the British metropole's compartmentalization of Zulu identity in unofficial opinion and depiction in the leadup to 1879. Beginning in the 1820s, this chapter dissects the influence of early writings, developing streams of British racial and anthropological thought, unofficial and official controversy, and a desire to use the portrayal of the Zulu to, in turn, define the British self as major factors in the evolution of images of the Zulu. To demonstrate a national consensus regarding these depictions in the British metropole, a broad range of Britain's most popular periodicals – such as *The Times*, *Morning Post*, and *Illustrated London News* – are included alongside papers that demonstrate a geographic range of readership from the northern reaches of Scotland to locations across England and even Ireland. Additionally, a broad range of political and editorial stances from periodicals examined

[14] Simon J. Potter, "The Roots of an Imperial Press System," in *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System 1876-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

in this chapter are deployed to demonstrate the similarity in portrayals of the Zulu across political and ideological lines in the metropole, with the same exact stories on the Zulu being reprinted in both liberal and conservative papers repeatedly. Specific to periodicals used in this chapter, Ed King, head of the British Newspaper Archives at the British Library, notes that the *Daily News*, *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, and *The Time*s, prior to the 1880s, skewed liberal while the *Morning Post*, *Illustrated London News*, and the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* skewed conservative.[15] Using newspapers and larger works of literature, Zulu depictions are followed through the events and interactions with the Zulu that received the most relative coverage across the metropole to showcase a general consensus in British opinion and understanding of the Zulu as a people, state, and potential threat. In the latter part of this chapter, the thematic analysis of Zulu depictions shifts towards how these depictions were deployed in the leadup to war and why these depictions bolstered a growing unofficial support for direct imperial intervention on the frontier against Zulu independence.

In the decades prior to the Anglo-Zulu War, unofficial depictions of the Zulu in the metropole came from infrequent written accounts of those who came into direct contact with the Zulu on the frontiers of European civilization. Often, these early writings came from individuals who described the Zulu, their leaders, and their customs as dangerous and inferior to European civilization. These "traveler books" had been growing in popularity since the late eighteenth century, according to historian Margaret Hunt, and they appealed primarily to the middle class in that they affirmed a slightly less hierarchical nature of "Englishness" that was demonstrated in contrast to the "exotic" or "un-English."[16] Henry Francis Fynn, a white English ivory trader and

[15] Ed King, "British Newspapers 1860-1900," *British Library Newspapers* (Detroit: Gale, 2007).
[16] Margaret Hunt, "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveler's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of British Studies* 32, no. 4 (1993): 333–57.

traveler, was one of the first to encounter Shaka and the Zulu and, while his diary and writings from this period were not published till 1950, historian Dan Wylie credits Fynn with being considered the contemporary "expert" on the Zulu. Fynn, however, has invited recent historiographical condemnation as a factual source for historians from the 1840s well beyond the 1950s, as some have argued that Fynn's accounts, and that of other English travelers, embellished the violent nature of Shaka and the Zulu for personal gain in publication sales or even to avoid charges of fighting with Shaka and his armies.[17] One of Fynn's contemporaries, Francis Farewell, even called for British authorities to intervene in the region to help traders deal with Shaka and the Zulu, but these calls fell on deaf ears.[18] The first official opinion on the Zulu was that there was no opinion, or at least there, thus far, lacked a strong impetus for imperial intervention.

Of more consequence to the metropole's understanding of the Zulu, Fynn was quite close with and is credited as influencing another English adventurer, Nathaniel Isaacs, who Wylie says, "had easily the profoundest influence on [the British public's] popular conception [of Shaka and the Zulu]."[19] Isaacs' account of the Zulu during and after Shaka comes from his two volume *Travels and Adventures in East Africa,* published in 1836. Beyond frequent sub-human references to the Zulu as "savages" and "creatures," Isaacs outlines brutal massacres and executions of men, women, and children under Shaka, decrying that he lived among those who lived in "a state of savage ferocity."[20] Based on Hunt's analysis, these accounts were likely accessible to the middle and upper echelons of the British metropole, and, since they were the

[17] See: Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 47-48.; Dan Wylie, "'Proprietor of Natal:' Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka" *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 409-437.
[18] Ian Knight, *Zulu Rising*, 52.
[19] Wylie, "'Proprietor of Natal:' Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka," 409.
[20] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in East Africa, Vol II*.

first of their kind in relation to the Zulu, these traveler accounts would go on to influence the metropole's understandings of the Zulu for well over a century.

Thus, the earliest opinions and depictions of the Zulu presented in the British metropole were corruptibly linked to two key markers of Isaacs and Fynn's interactions: an inherent hyper-violence in Zulu culture and a constant championing of their need to be civilized by white Europeans. In looking for an answer as to why the Zulu were portrayed this way, it is helpful to note Hunt's general observation that:

> In travel narratives racist and xenophobic "truths" work to confirm group values and knit individuals to their preferred community. They titillate authors and readers alike with people and customs just different enough to pleasurably decenter the "normal." Yet the travel narrative also contains the means to reestablish order in an instant.[21]

While Hunt goes on to mention that this order is reestablished when the traveler returns to "England and 'civilization,'" the travel writings of those who came into contact with the Zulu attempt to reestablish this order through proactively civilizing them, rather than returning to civilization. While musing on the precarious nature of bringing the Zulu to a "state of society," Isaacs writes:

> I can take upon myself to say, that my European friends at Natal made great efforts to effect an improvement in the natives, so as to lead them by degrees towards civilization, and that so far as my humble aid could contribute, I sought to impress not only the king, but his chiefs, with a due sense of those feelings of regard for their fellow-men, which might advance them, in the progress of time, to that condition [which is] beneficial to themselves and agreeable to the world.[22]

His writings embellished the violence of the Zulu and, as Hunt also points out in regarded to racism in traveler writing, uses broad derogatory terminology to dissociate the Zulu from both humanity and European civilization. From the 1820s through the 1840s, the primary accounts

---

[21] Hunt, "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveler's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England," 340.
[22] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in East Africa, Vol II*, 51.

available in the metropole on the Zulu offered a stream of racial and civilizational superiority that was part of a deeper history of racism in English traveler writings. Unfortunately, in the case of the British metropole's understanding of the Zulu, these traveler accounts were utilized as the source basis for contemporary histories on the Zulu and the local region.[23]

By openly calling for the Zulu to be civilized and embellishing their violence for personal gain, Fynn's and Isaacs' depictions of the Zulu succinctly flow into the next two decades of British literature in the metropole through historical and religious texts. While Richard Elphick has argued that race was a defining marker of South African society long before 1840 and contributed to the expansion of South Africa into the interior,[24] this episode demonstrates that race was also depicted as a defining marker for how the metropole viewed the Zulu on the Empire's frontier. South African scholars have widely noted that the case of Zulu depictions in the British metropole in comparison to other indigenous peoples is distinct in its focus on warfare and violence, starting with accounts regarding Shaka's reign and heavily confirmed in the metropole after Isandlwana and the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879.[25] This distinctive understanding and reception of the Zulu in the metropole, in turn, meant that Zulu depictions would distinctively evolve in the context of more generally developing British understanding of race and British identity in the metropole parallels the crystallization of these racially charged depictions.

---

[23] Historian Dan Wylie points to the following historical texts on Natal: C. Barter, *The Dorp and the Veld* (London: William S. Orr, 1852),190; W.C. Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal* (Cape Town: Struik, 1963, first publ. London, 1855), 60; R.J. Mann, *The Colony of Natal* (London: National Geographic Society, 1859), 15.

[24] See "European Dominance at the Cape, 1652-c.1840" in Richard Elphick, *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*.

[25] See: Stephen Leech, "'Aggressive by Nature, Depraved, and like Nazis': Images of Zulu Violence" *African Historical Review*, 30, no. 1 (1998), 89-108; and Gary M. Mersham, "Mass Media Discourse and the Semiotics of Zulu Nationalism" *Critical Arts* 7, no. 1-2 (1993), 78-119.

Other early unofficial mentions and depictions of the Zulu in metropolitan media come from the missionaries and religious figures who lived and worked among the Zulu to learn their language and convert them to Christianity. The first missionary writings on the Zulu to enter the metropole came in 1836 from Allen Gardiner's *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country*. Frequently referring to the Zulu and their customs as "savage" and "barbarous," Gardiner confidently mentions that the "whole Zoolu army" could be dealt with by "a few veteran soldiers" while still stressing the necessity of securing the "existing frontier from aggression or predatory attacks." While a scientific-backed or codified notion of the primitive and of British superiority was yet to exist, this veil of racialized confidence in the might of the Empire existed back into the 1830s. Even with this overconfidence, however, Gardiner puts forward a slight sense of insecurity regarding the Empire's frontier. Still, since imperial action was unlikely at this stage, Gardiner calls on humanitarian aid from British Christians to further the cause of civilizing the Zulu:

> Let it not be said that teachers are reluctant to go when nations are willing to be taught – that injured, benighted Africa, groping through the thick darkness, calls unheeded for your aid, and stretches out her hands to you in vain…Although we cannot of ourselves go forth, we will plead the poor African's cause at the throne of grace…[26]

Humanitarianism comingling with ideas of civilizing and imperial led military action as a means to an end will arise repeatedly in the lead up to the Anglo-Zulu War, especially as anthropological developments laid out the definitive ways in which intervention was needed.

The Zulu case is not too dissimilar from another historic British trend of utilizing humanitarian concerns to support and confirm military interventions in diverse circumstances. Historian Davide Rodogno's *Against Massacre* argues that humanitarianism – the concept of

[26] Allen Francis Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country* (London: W. Crofts, 1836), 407-410.

"saving strangers" – was used by European great powers to justify intervening in Ottoman politics beginning in the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s. While Rodogno's work focuses on the politics of these British and French interventions, he notes that they were aimed at protecting white Christians from the Turkish and Islamic rule of the Ottomans.[27] Humanitarian concerns regarding the Zulu, however, demonstrate that Rodogno's thesis can be expanded to cases of humanitarianism regarding Black peoples interacting with the Empire. Travelers, missionaries, and even anthropologists tended to believe their work in the near-term would benefit the Zulu in the long-term, with extreme examples defending the use of imperial violence. As a result, military intervention would often be postulated as a way of saving Black Zulus from their own supposedly uncivilized and violent history, and this could be accomplished not through their independence, like with the Greeks, but through subjugating them to the foreign rule of white Christian Europeans. Additionally, the case of the Zulu helps expand the timeline of racialized nationalist, imperialist, and triumphalist frameworks into an earlier section of the nineteenth century that historians often consider to be more cosmopolitan given the rise of abolitionism, free trade, and, ironically, humanitarianism. The combination of these movements has been labeled by many academics as "liberal imperialism," a claim that recent scholarship, such as Karuna Mantena's 2016 work *Alibis of Empires* and my own thesis, challenges. Mantena contests those more progressive ideas in Britain failed to disconnect themselves from the political realities of empire-building and imperial governance on the ground.[28] As this chapter will demonstrate, the civilizing and humanitarian work of missionaries either failed to escape the reality of these power dynamics or, unfortunately, played into "saving the strangers."

---

[27] Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
[28] Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empires: Henry Maine and the End of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 185.

Over time, neutral missionary writings on the Zulu did reach the metropole and tended to be presented as natural scientific accounts and ethnologies of Zulu custom and society rather than purely recollections of Zulu history and personal travels. Accounts like Rev. John Shooter's 1857 ethnography *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* give off a neutral and informative tone throughout. However, much of Shooter's historical information and cultural understandings about the Zulu, as well as that of other missionaries, largely rely on using Fynn and Isaacs as their source base in combination with their own observations. Shooter writes glowingly of Isaacs and Fynn, admitting that he made "great use" of the formers work and "freely quotes" the latter.[29] Some missionaries did question the accounts of Fynn and Isaacs, though this was primarily in relation to minute details of Zulu custom that missionaries realized were incompatible with their own first-hand experiences. Even for Shooter's topically neutral stance on the Zulu, he still labels them as "savages," the Zulu Kingdom as a "savage nation," and repeatedly quotes Fynn and Isaacs' accounts on the brutality that Shaka seemed to instill in the Zulu people for children, women, and for "innocent peoples."[30] What these types of long form ethnographical writings did, according to anthropologist Robert Thornton, was combine a neutral and natural scientific approach to informative writing with a reliance on unreliable and biased travelogues. This allowed anthropologists and social scientists to step in and formulate a scientific narrative to why such ethnographical descriptions existed.[31] The first accounts from Fynn and Isaacs had devasting affects by the 1850s but, worse than the depictions of the Zulu, their accounts influenced missionary writings that, in turn, invited the intervention of racialized

[29] John Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (London: E. Stanford, 1857), 20.
[30] Ibid, 296.
[31] Robert Thornton, "Narrative Ethnography in Africa, 1850-1920: The Creation and Capture of an Appropriate Domain for Anthropology," *Man* 18, no. 3 (1983): 502–20.

British anthropology into southern Africa, into the lands of the Zulu, and into metropolitan discussions on how to best undertake civilizing.

Other missionaries, however, did continue to write their opinions on themselves and the Zulu into works that they portrayed as informative ethnologies. For example, Rev. George Mason's 1862 work about his mission tour in Zululand opens with his beliefs that the missionary, rather than physically convert the wilderness into a "fruitful field," arrives in South Africa as a "pioneer and soldier of a nobler cause" whose aim is to reclaim the "spiritual wilderness of heathenism" into "the service of God."[32] Similar to Isaacs' personal yearning to enlighten the Zulu in his travels, Mason states the widely held beliefs of religious missionaries who thought of themselves as civilizers of a spiritually lost people. Readers of Mason's and similar work would find it difficult to avoid the descriptions of life on the frontier of European civilization, as the written forms of these interactions are themselves the primary form of metropole interaction with the Zulu. Contemporary British explorer, missionary, and Victorian Era "hero" David Livingstone is famously and generally associated with saying that British civilizers were duty-bound to bring three Cs to the African continent: Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization.[33] While Isaacs quite strongly relates to the latter and Mason the former, a general intersection of these three points, especially as missionaries saw themselves as civilizers and explorers like Fynn were also regional traders, dominated early depictions of the Zulu. The stories and writings of explorers and missionaries, according to historian Catherine E. Anderson, tended to confirm the supposed inferiority of Blacks and the ideology of civilizing back in the

[32] George Holditch Mason, *Zululand: A Mission Tour in South Africa* (London: J. Nisbet, 1862), 1-2.
[33] Brian Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860" *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 1 (1983): 71–94.

metropole in this way.[34] While some missionaries, like Gardiner, emphasized a common humanity regarding Christian Humanitarianism, this was undertaken in the context of civilizing the Zulu to the point of common humanity rather than acknowledging any semblance of equality in the moment.

While writings of travels and religious issues pushed and reinforced an image of the Zulu as merciless and corrupted (as well as capable of corrupting), it is important to mention that this vision coincided with a developing stream of scientific racism in British society, specifically within British anthropology. According to historian Seymour Drescher, British racial concepts and the beginning of the evolution of scientific racism can trace its roots back to the 1770s and the start of the movement to end the slave trade, with anti-abolitionists introducing Black racial inferiority arguments as early as 1788. While British abolitionism potentially curtailed an early scientific racism that advanced in France in the early 1800s, British abolitionists did generally "concede the inferiority of African culture" and British humanitarians "entrapped themselves in a theory of inferiority by their own rhetorical distaste for African slavery, customs, and culture…"[35] With a vast increase in British writings on the distinctiveness and superiority of white Europeans evident beginning earlier than the 1860s, Hunt's work on racism in British travel writings and Drescher's work on the era of abolitionism help to expand the timeline and evolution of racism in Britain surrounding the first decades of Anglo-Zulu interaction.

Similarly, the metropole's introduction to the Zulu occurred within a larger era in which the metropole organized their anthropological notions of a racial hierarchy. James Moore and

---

[34] Catherine E. Anderson, "Red Coats and Black Shields: Race and Masculinity in British Representations of the Anglo-Zulu War," *Critical Survey* 20, no. 3 (2008): 7-8.
[35] Seymour Drescher, "The Ending of the Slave Trade and the Evolution of European Scientific Racism" *Social Science History* 14, no. 3 (1990): 424, 430-431

Adrian Desmond, in their book *Darwin's Sacred Cause*: *Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins*, put forth a challenge to conventional anthropological historical theory:

> Although 'scientific racism' is said to start about 1860 – taking over from an earlier xenophobia – we believe that such a hard-and-fast line is problematic. If 'racism' is taken to mean categorizing difference in order to denigrate, control or even enslave, then its scientific components and rationale can be traced much earlier. It is generally unknown that American slavery-justifying race-agitators were actually booming their hatreds as early as 1841 at the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Even before that they were linking subjugation to the anatomical 'inferiority' of blacks.[36]

Desmond and Moore's concrete starting point of 1860 is too abrupt, leaving little room to study the fluidity in British ethnology and anthropology that saw the former ground racism in scientific understanding and the latter overtake and institutionalize the concept. However, with the help of existing literature from Drescher and others, this chapter – and thesis – posits that representations of the Zulu and subsequent understandings in the metropole demonstrate that scientific racism was widespread in the metropole by the 1840s and even evident in the years prior. While lively anti-slavery debates and humanitarian efforts did equate to a generally more popular and vocal rejection of scientific racism prior to the 1860s, these debates largely focused on areas of Africa more involved in the slave trade, leaving the Zulu with few defenders in Britain outside of John Colenso, the first Bishop of Natal. George Stocking, a historian of anthropology and author of *Victorian Anthropology*, argues that the Anglo-American ethnological tradition cannot be institutionally or ideologically separated from any later anthropological discussion, since both study the other – "savage" – in relation to the self – "civilized."[37] Such thinking connects earlier ethnological discussions and writings on the Zulu, ones molded around racist notions of

---

[36] Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins* (London ; New York : Allen Lane, 2009), 15.
[37] George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York : Free Press, 1987 and London : Collier Macmillan, 1987), 47.

civilizing as humanitarianism, with the anthropological stances that readily defined metropolitan depictions of the Zulu in the 1860s and 1870s.

While, prior to the 1860s, anti-slavery activists and movements often argued for a monogenetic notion of the human race in relation to their Biblical understandings, these advocates, such as the famous physician J.C. Prichard, instead studied an evolution of varieties within a single species and attempted to explain these post-common origin differences. While Prichardian writings focused on cultural and linguistic differences more-so than racial differences, Prichard, in 1843, posited that the ideal form of man, supported by the Bible, was white and, thus, other races of man were inferior to and degraded from whites. Prichard also noted that it was humanitarian and missionary efforts that provided ethnologists with their source material – material that, in the case of the Zulu, relied on a few British travelogues for much of their own historical source base. By the late 1840s and through the 1850s, racialized discourse concerning hierarchy, the treatment of Blacks, and the inherent distinctiveness and superiority of white Europeans was widespread among British writers and ethnologists.[38] It is impossible to separate Zulu depictions in the British metropole, even before the 1860s, from this discourse.

Desmond, Moore, Stocking, and others have noted the societal shift from ethnology to anthropology that erupted with more formalized notions of scientific racism and a greater acceptance of polygenism in the 1860s. Echoing Stocking's statement, modern South African anthropologist Adam Kuper credits contemporary British anthropologists, such as E. B. Tylor and James George Frazer, with structuring a more cohesive model of primitive society in Britain starting in the 1860s that better supported racial hierarchy. He describes this pseudo-scientific model as arguing that non-whites lived in a "primitive society" that lacked private property, a

[38] Robert Burroughs, "Race and Anthropology," *19th Century UK Periodicals* (Detroit: Gale, 2008), 2-3.

family unit, and a territorial state, all of which could be prominently found in British society. What Africans lacked was a marker of evolutionary process that, while grasped by whites, had eluded Blacks and kept them in a primitive state.[39] Thus, it comes as no surprise that the key figures in British anthropology supported the idea of Europeans aiding in the civilization of Blacks – not too unlike Southern slaveholder arguments that promoted slavery as a necessary paternalistic path for whites to take care of their Black inferiors.[40] This scientific backing for what came to be known as Social Darwinism – the idea that the different races of humans compete for resources and survival according to the laws of nature – was the necessary prerequisite for the imperial justification of British conquest of and governance over those deemed inferior, according to former professor of English and Victorian Studies Patrick Brantlinger.[41] By the early 1870s, the widespread acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution among ethnologists and anthropologists, especially given Darwin's 1871 *The Descent of Man*'s connecting of his evolutionary theories directly to the evolution of humans, resulted in the uniting of the two groups into the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.[42] To many, Darwin's quote, "'When civilized nations come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short, except where a deadly climate gives its aid to the native race," summarily presented British, and more generally white, overconfidence in their supposed superiority, with only greater forces of nature capable of disallowing the progress of the civilized. The Zulu at Isandlwana would demonstrate otherwise.

---

[39] Adam Kuper, *The Reinvention of Primitive Society: Transformations of a Myth* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York : Routledge, 2005), 5.
[40] See: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).
[41] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 187.
[42] Burroughs, "Race and Anthropology," 4.

In the 1850s, the Zulu could be positively depicted and fashioned as a people naturally superior to their African contemporaries while still remaining "savage," "primitive," and "violent." The Zulu had a kingdom and organized military, they were cattle herders, and they had a capital – their neighbors, like the Xhosa mentioned earlier, were not regarded in the same light. Nonetheless, the Zulu's position in the stadial model of society and depiction as operating above a presumed baseline of "savagery" meant that the threat posed by their independent kingdom could be greater than that of small clans or less organized and more peripatetic groups. As Kuper argues, 1860s and 1870s British anthropology developed out of the ancient Greek notion of the "barbarian" as "incapable of independence and devoid of civil values" and synonymous with "tyranny" by juxtaposing the foreign with the Greek. This was renewed in the term "savage" and Hobbesian understanding of a lack of government as synonymous with a natural and brutish lifestyle that found much support in the idea of the primitive as lacking modern aspects of society and governance.[43] Within anthropological circles ran a version of popular Western historical and philosophical understanding that provided a modern template for depictions of indigenous Africans like the Zulu, as well as a template for the British to understand their own complex society. The collapse of the Zulu as in between "savage" and "civilized" during this period contributed to both an overconfidence in official interaction with the Zulu and an unofficial desire to bring the Zulu to civilization through imperial action. As Britain slowly approached 1879, Zulu independence was to become the crux of written metropolitan opinions and depictions of the Zulu and Anglo-Zulu interactions, be they unofficial racial and cultural discussions or official opinions and actions regarding contemporary events, going forward. The

[43] Kuper, *The Reinvention of Primitive Society*, 20-22, 26-30.

Zulu would not be placed back into their position between "savage" and "civilized" until the invention of the "noble savage" after their victory over the British at Isandlwana.

Even still, some missionaries, like the first Bishop of Natal John Colenso, argued extensively in defense of Zulu converts and Zulu customs, creating cultural tensions between Livingstone's ideas of bringing "Christianity" and "Civilization" to Africa that would decouple Christianity from metropolitan understandings of how to best civilize the Zulu. In an 1865 essay, Colenso battles against British traveler and historian William Winwood Reade's depictions of Zulu converts as prostitutes and thieves, based on his own experiences.[44] Often remembered as one of the most famous British defenders of the Zulu and labeled an "outstanding figure" by Elphick,[45] Colenso still fell victim to promulgating notions of unnatural violence among the Zulu in his writings. In an 1855 work on his first travels in South Africa, Colenso, like Shooter, directly mentions and cites Nathaniel Isaacs in his overview of what was known about the Zulu, such as his reference to Isaacs' descriptions of an ordered massacre of a Zulu regiment and execution of 170 children under Shaka Zulu, whom Colenso refers to as "the monster."[46] The taking of Isaacs' writings as fact set up a trap for even those friendly to the Zulu to, unknowingly, misinform the metropole through embellishment, even if Colenso's blame was primarily aimed at Shaka rather than the Zulu people as a whole.

Further straining the image of the Zulu in the metropole was Colenso's tolerance of polygamy that was prevalent in Zulu society. Another work from 1855, *Remarks on the Proper Treatment of Cases of Polygamy*, was the start of Colenso's controversial status back in London,

---

[44] J.W. Colenso, "On the Efforts of Missionaries among Savages" *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 3 (1865): ccxlviii–cclxxxix.
[45] Richard Elphick, "Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa," in Lamar and Thompson, eds, *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared*, 284.
[46] J.W. Colenso, *Ten weeks in Natal. A journal of a first tour of visitation among the colonists and Zulu Kafirs of Natal* (Cambridge [Eng.]: Macmillan & co., 1855), viii.

and his toleration of the Zulu extended to arguments that the ancestors of Zulu converts were not necessarily punished with eternal damnation for not having converted. These arguments resulted in a large literary response from the Anglican community lambasting Colenso's beliefs as heresy and forced Colenso to attempt to defend himself throughout the 1860s from theologians across the Empire.[47] The idea that an Anglican Bishop could be theologically led astray by those whom he was tasked with converting was prevalent in the metropole and launched the Zulu into more mainstream conversation. One example, the conservative *Reynolds's Newspaper*, a Sunday periodical in London, quotes attacks on Colenso from the then liberal *Times*. Colenso was accused of being converted by the Zulu from Christianity together with charges that he was unqualified, as a bishop and colonist, to teach the Zulu and described a recent work of his on the Zulu and religion as "contemptible."[48] While books and journal publications were likely only accessible to wealthier classes, publications in affordable and widely read daily and weekly newspapers brought opinions and depictions of the Zulu to the literate members of the middle class in Britain. Such writings not only demonstrate a general mistrust of interactions on the frontier in the metropole, but they showcase the ferocity of British society's response to Colenso's limited but vocal support for the Zulu. One Natal saying reprinted in the British press summarized the events in brief:

> A bishop there was of Natal,
> Who had a Zulu for a pal;
> Said the native, 'Look here,
> Ain't the Pentateuch[49] queer?'

---

[47] See: Rev. John Cumming, *Moses Right and Bishop Colenso Wrong, Popular Lectures in Reply to "Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch"* (London: John F. Shaw and Co., 1863); Rev. James R. Page, *The Pretensions of Bishop Colenso to Impeach the Wisdom and Veracity of the Compilers of the Holy Scriptures* (London: Rivingtons, Waterloo Palace, 1863); Ezekiel S. Wiggins, *The Architecture of the Heavens: Containing a New Theory of the Universe and the Extent of the Deluge, and the Testimony of the Bible and Geology in Opposition to the Views of Dr. Colenso* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864).

[48] "The 'Times,' the Zulu, and Colenso," *Reynold's Newspaper* (London, ENG.), Feb. 23, 1863.

[49] The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Which converted the Lord of Natal.[50]

As unofficial opinion became cloaked in vitriol, an 1864 official investigation of heresy and excommunication into Colenso's beliefs and actions all but destroyed the credibility of the most prominent Zulu ally in British writing. Colenso was still a product of his time. Historian Norman Etherington warns that Colenso believed in the Empire's civilizing mission with reservations only in regards to individual actions and failures, specifically pointing to his friendship with South African statesman and secretary of native affairs Theophilus Shepstone, through the 1870s.[51] Nonetheless, as historians Jeff Guy and Alan Lester have noted, Colenso exposed British insecurities regarding British superiority and civilizing in that their "laughter" at the Bishop revealed an anxiety over "a disturbing reversal of the idea of coloniser and colonised which switched dominated for dominant, unlearned for learned, heathen for christian, savage for civilized, the self and the other."[52] John Colenso's comparative compassion and humanitarianism, and the vitriol that it caused in the metropole, would eventually find a revival in the instrumental allyship of his daughters Frances and Harriette after the Anglo-Zulu War.

Historian Catherine E. Anderson and others have noted that a rise in scientific and anthropological racism in the metropole followed the final freeing of the last British slaves in 1838,[53] and Colenso himself wrote and argued in anthropological journals in defense of the Zulu and Africans in general from those like Mr. Winwood Reade. In an essay published in *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, Colenso writes, "but for the missionaries, there would have been no Anthropological Society. It was their efforts that had furnished the base of their

[50] Reprinted in the *Westmorland Gazette* (Westmoreland, ENG.), February 7, 1863.
[51] Norman Etherington, "Bishop Colenso and Theophilus Shepstone: Partners in Christian Imperialism" *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 33, no. 1 (2019): 1-22.
[52] Jeff Guy, "Class, Imperialism and Literary Criticism: William Ngidi, John Colenso and Matthew Arnold," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, no. 2 (1997): 221; Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 174.
[53] Anderson, "Red Coats and Black Shields: Race and Masculinity in British Representations of the Anglo-Zulu War," 8.

science."[54] Here, Colenso is referencing the larger literature of missionaries like himself, Rev. Shooter, and Rev. Mason that aimed to provide readers with comprehensive outlines of all aspects of Zulu society. As Colenso goes on to mention, the broad and general categorizations of Africans as inferior and primitive were "present more or less distinctly in the minds of many laymen in connection with the subject of missions."[55] Colenso was not only fighting a religious battle in the metropole that was resulting in further negative portrayals of the Zulu, but he realized he was arguing against a racial and anthropological belief that was the broad consensus of British society, even among atheists and the non-religious.[56]

Missionaries like Colenso operated in a historical gray-space between evidence-based science and religion that continued to exist, and even flourish, in the nineteenth century. This space invited controversy and, while Colenso's initial support in the *Norfolk Chronicle* in 1855 beckons him forward through "horrid cruelty" to bring Christianity and God's mercy to the "miserable people" that were the Zulu, periodicals, like *The Times* and *Reynold's Newspaper* mentioned previously, had changed their tone in the 1860s.[57] One letter to the editor published in the *London Evening Standard* charges Colenso with making up words to translate the Bible for the Zulu, essentially creating a "myth."[58] On top of this, the ridicule attached to Colenso as Bishop of Natal and friend of the Zulu, as Colenso also details, had done much to hurt the reputation of missionary activities on the Empire's frontier, especially among the Zulu.

Bishop Colenso's life also showcases the fluidity in depiction that flowed from explorer to missionary to anthropologist accounts in the metropole. While Rev. George Mason imagined

---

[54] Colenso, "On the Efforts of Missionaries among Savages," cclxxxvi.
[55] Ibid, ccl.
[56] Nathan G. Alexander, "Brute Men: Race and Society in Evolution" and "A London Zulu: Savagery and Civilization," in *Race in a Godless World: Atheism, Race, and Civilization, 1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).
[57] "The Natal Mission," *Norfolk Chronicle* (London, ENG.), Jan. 13, 1855.
[58] "Dr. Colenso's Theology for the Simple Zulus," *London Evening Standard* (London, ENG.), May 25, 1865.

him and his fellow missionaries as the top of the civilizer hierarchy, the British metropole had, by now, been inundated with pro-imperial methods of civilizing the Zulu, rather than by religious means, beginning in the late 1850s. Colenso's fight for a fairer depiction and understanding of the Zulu had fallen on deaf ears across multiple sectors in the metropole, so, even if anthropologists in London were basing their pseudo-scientific models in part off of the writings of missionaries, perhaps it is partially because of how many of them loudly, supported by the general public, argued publicly against Colenso's work. Historian Harry Liebersohn's *Traveler's World* credits missionaries in the Pacific with succeeding in "bringing their own ethnographic vision of the island peoples they wished to convert."[59] However, as with Thornton's arguments and the Zulu case, the narrative of such ethnographic visions in the metropole was controlled by social scientists and anthropologists rather than the missionaries. When Colenso wrote to the metropole, he often did so through the Anthropological Society. When he defended the Zulu's religious questioning and own customs and morals, he was indirectly attacking racialized anthropology's narrative of the indigenous as primitive and imperialist notions of innate British superiority. With both the missionaries that worked in the Pacific and those in the Zulu Kingdom, Liebersohn's analysis that "the authority of the missionaries could never go as far as they wished; [many actors] contested it" is correct.[60] While Shooter's more neutral account and Colenso's defense of the Zulu are rooted in first-hand experiences, they write from the frontier to the metropole, and the zone of anthropological discussion and scientific development was, unfortunately for them, in London and not Natal. Not only were such depictions going against quickly codifying scientific racism in anthropology, but they were contested by travelers (Fynn and Isaacs), by other missionaries (Mason and Gardiner), and by historians (Winwood Reade

[59] Harry Liebersohn, *The Traveler's World: Europe to the Pacific* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2006), 230.
[60] Liebersohn, *The Traveler's World*, 271.

and, later, Froude) who had equal access in writing for the metropole while benefiting from a larger and more receptive audience.

Through the Colenso controversy, the collapse of the missionary as civilizer in the Anglo-Zulu relationship is revealed. His "defeat" also coincided with a larger scientific and anthropological consensus that argued for separating morality and religion in the evolutionary debate in Britain.[61] Zulu custom and religion did not preclude them from having an independent kingdom, and, if morality and religion were decoupled, then metropolitan fears of Zulu violence could not be assuaged by missionary efforts. In Liebersohn's analysis of the Pacific, he contends that missionary-scientific confrontations destabilized knowledge by producing numerous "interpreters of cultures," leading to intra-cultural tensions and insecurities regarding the civilizational state of both whites and non-whites.[62] Here, in the case of the Zulu, Liebersohn's argument finds further backing, as the fury with which anthropologists in Britain pushed back against Colenso's defense of the Zulu showcases the extent to which notions of Zulu, and by extension African, scientific and intellectual equality were unacceptable in the metropole. The strong response is possible evidence of a desire by anthropologists to assert greater control over ethnographic discourse, and widespread support for these understandings in British literature helps to show that much of the metropolitan public was not concerned with or even backed this "science."

The backlash is also telling of wider insecurities regarding the desire of imperial civilizers to educate the Zulu and other Africans, as the Colenso controversy revealed an intellectual curiosity within the Zulu that was unforeseen and demonstrably dangerous to both

---

[61] See: Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 193-194 and E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* (London : John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1871).
[62] Liebersohn, *The Traveler's World*, 230, 262-272.

religious doctrine and a scientific belief in the Zulu as "primitive." The missionary could no longer be trusted; a time had come for a new, actionable, and dominant actor to step in where religion and missionaries failed. Moving forward, the British Empire and imperial action would become the conduit of the civilizing mission rather than the independent missionaries and mission stations that dotted Zulu territory. This allowed for British racial thought in the metropole to permeate into broader unofficial pro-imperial opinion in the Empire of the Zulu.

Religious writings and explorer accounts had for decades pushed the need to civilize the Zulu onto the metropole, and the idea of having a strong and distinctively British hand in the advancement of colonial peoples goes back, according to historian Simon J. Potter, to the early nineteenth century. The desire to spread "Britishness" was not strictly defined by race or ethnicity, but instead revolved around a broadly imperial "shared higher culture."[63] This made the concept of civilizing Black colonial subjects appealing to both pro-imperialists and anthropologists, as British anthropology sought to redeem the supposed inferiority of Blacks and African society while the British Empire, rather than missionaries, was viewed as having the capability to civilize more quickly through territorial expansion. Supporters of spreading "Britishness" in the Empire believed a stronger sense of this identity could result in a general "pan-imperial unity."[64] While Potter does not argue for the makings of a formal system of imperial press prior to 1876, contemporary writings demonstrate that this connection was made regardless. One such example is an 1865 review of American Rev. Lewis Grout's *Zulu Land, or Life among the Zulu-Kafirs of Natal and Zulu Land* that distinctly notes the progress made by the

[63] Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922*, 2-3.
[64] Ibid, 5.

British Empire in making advancements into a continent previously "regarded as sealed against the progress of civilization."[65]

Undoubtedly, the audience for early and unique adventures of English travelers, the relatively short history of the Natal, or for the intricacies of Anglican doctrinal issues and missionary activities was relegated to the upper class and literate middle class. High costs for printed books and scarcity of material on the Zulu meant that knowledge of the Zulu people and Zulu Kingdom was likely limited in the metropole. Beyond literature, unofficial depictions of the Zulu in the metropole came through drawings and illustrations. One London daily newspaper, the conservative *Morning Post*, ran an advertisement in 1853 asking readers to attend the "public exhibition" of a group of eleven Zulu, described as a "wild and interesting tribe of savages."[66] With the cost of attendance ranged from 1s to 4s for such an event and 1s being a third of a mid-century Victorian worker's daily wage, according to historian Dale Porter, this event would have been available to a larger population.[67] The affordability of periodicals and newspapers among the middle and working class rose greatly as the industrial revolution and colonial exploits brought wealth to London, so the cost of one shilling for a visual exhibition pushes forward the slowly increasing interest of the Zulu among the general British public in the 1850s.

The gallery's popularity was picked up on by the *Illustrated London News* just weeks later, echoing the *Morning Post*'s fascination of the Zulu by describing their rituals and customs as "comic" and "extremely amusing."[68] The eleven Zulu were confined and restricted to set-ups and scenes through which they were to demonstrate their society, and Qureshi notes that

---

[65] "Reviewed Work: *Zulu Land, or Life among the Zulu-Kafirs of Natal and Zulu Land* by Lewis Grout" *The North American Review* Vol. 101, no. 208 (1865): 274–76.
[66] "Zulu Kafirs – St. George's Gallery," *Morning Post* (Longdon, ENG.), May 9. 1853.
[67] Dale H. Porter, *The Thames Embankment: Environment, Technology, and Society in Victorian London* (Akron, Ohio: University of Akron Press, 1998).
[68] "Zulu Kaffirs," *Illustrated London News* (London, ENG.), May 21, 1853.

playbills for this exhibition, as well as others, "vied to establish the ethnic singularity of their subjects" by using "a range of typographic innovations to ensure that the public paid notice." Depending on the context, the Zulu could be presented as distinct or as a stand-in for other African peoples, like the Xhosa, who were actually in armed conflict with the Empire.[69] Even in the early 1850s, years prior to Darwin's work on evolutionary biology, purposeful monolithic depictions of the Zulu reduced them into caricatures that were presented as accurate representations of the Zulu on the Natal frontier or, given Qureshi's point, as connected representations of a generally dangerous continent. One such instance, covered across Britain from 1859 and through 1860, mentions a chance for readers to see an "extraordinary attraction" of Zulu, who the paper also more generally describes as "wild men of Africa," for their "war signal, modes of warfare, war dances, club dances and exercises, songs of war, peace, etc."[70] In this advertisement, the Zulu are ethnically equated with all Africans and, again, are to be presented in military and warlike manner that could only further their previous depictions, though the mentioning of songs of peace is a glaring inclusion amid the general descriptions of war and militarism. This time, however, the Zulu were not on the frontier, but in the British metropole, so Shepstone's idea of imperial power bringing order to the Zulu was essentially reversed in that the Zulu had been tamed by being brought to imperial power from their frontier independence. The fact that these Zulu "actors" were untrained only confirmed to some in British public that exhibitions offered accurate representations of "savage life."[71]

---

[69] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade,* 61, 73.
[70] "The Zulu Kaffirs or Wild Men of Africa," *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* (Newcastle, ENG.), December 15, 1859; Continued coverage of this Zulu exhibition can be seen in the *Scottish Banner* (Lanarkshire, SCT.), July 7, 1860; *Leicester Guardian* (Leicestershire, ENG.), October 6, 1860; *Rugby Advertiser* (Warwickshire, ENG.), October 13, 1860; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (Yorkshire, ENG.), November 28, 1860; *Liverpool Mail* (Lancashire, ENG.), December 22, 1860.
[71] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 166.

Part of a sad and longer history of "human zoos," visual depictions of the Zulu and other indigenous peoples popularized the idea of the indigenous as sub-human by placing them in an "intermediary position between nature and culture, as *quasi-humans*" and fusing their distinct racial, ethnic, and national identities together into easily digestible and stereotype confirming environments.[72] Additionally, according to Qureshi, Zulu exhibitions and their accompanying guidebooks often heavily relied on and quoted Isaacs' *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* to entertain and allow audiences to more deeply engage with the supposedly accurate presentations of Zulu society.[73] Backed by Isaacs popular travelogue, the exhibitions garnered a high level of legitimacy in their depictions of the Zulu to the British public, especially in terms of their martial prowess. Responses to these visual depictions of the Zulu could often be positive, as many British writers and reviewers praised the Zulu as exceptional warriors and highlighted the attractiveness of their skull and facial features in relation to other African peoples.[74] While later positive depictions of the Zulu were deployed to critique or confirm British identity, the 1850s allowed for anthropological discussions on the Zulu to position them in a scientifically superior light among indigenous groups – a theme that would later be exploited post-Isandlwana to position the Zulu as "noble savages." While the metropole may have found this faux frontier entertaining, the coming introduction of official depictions of the Zulu on the frontier and from the frontier would elicit different reactions than the manufactured exhibition habitat in London.

When internal fighting resulted in the Second Zulu Civil War in 1856, interaction on the Empire's frontier once again resulted in a stir in British media in the metropole. Through short articles and quotations of invested official actors in subsequent 1857 periodicals, the violent

---

[72] Cinthya Oliveira, "Human Rights & Exhibitions, 1789-1989," *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 29 (2016): 71–72.
[73] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 81-82.
[74] Ibid, 170.

nature of the Zulu was no longer presented as dangerous only to individual travelers and missionaries, but to an entire imperial British colony. Mantena and Lester both contest that 1857 was an important year that marked a broad shift away from support for an imperial rule defined by reforms, ethics, and moral justifications towards one of stability and order, primarily as a result of the Indian Rebellion, and the case of the Zulu supports this further.[75] One letter from South Africa, published in numerous papers from the smaller *Kentish Mercury* to the *Illustrated Times, Daily News*, and the *Illustrated London News*, discusses the ruthless killings of 600 women and girls that made the river "literally dyed with blood." While the unknown writer makes an early mention of the potential danger posed by Cetshwayo, the future Zulu King during the Anglo-Zulu War, he most strikingly quotes the official opinion of Theophilus Shepstone:

> "It would save a deal of bloodshed and ultimate expense if the British government would send a military expedition at once, take possession of the country, setting up a chief under their protection, and limit his powers. It would save much in every way, and must come in the end. A tower on the healthy high grounds on the borders of the Delagoa Bay would form a military depot, and keep the Zulus in order."[76]

The letter states that the Zulu Civil War did not pose a direct threat to the integrity of the British colony or settlements on the frontier, but the secretary of native affairs strongly advocates for civilizing through a more direct imperial project of invasion and subjugation. If the British metropole could not be in South Africa, then newspapers publishing Shepstone's words brought an official, rather than unofficial, understanding of the situation to the public. This official opinion confirmed the fear of Zulu violence that the traveler accounts initiated alongside a clear

---

[75] Alan Lester, Kate Boehme, and Peter Mitchell, *Ruling the World: Freedom, Civilisation and Liberalism in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), and Mantena, *Alibis of Empires*, 11.

[76] See: "War Among the Zulu Kaffirs," *Illustrated Times* (London, ENG.), April 4, 1857; "The Zulu Kaffirs," *Kentish Mercury* (London, ENG.), April 4, 1857; "The Zulu Kaffirs," *Illustrated London News* (London, ENG.), April 4, 1857; and "The Zulu Kaffirs," *Daily News* (London, ENG.), March 31, 1857; and

demand for imperial military might to remove the Zulu from their independence for the sanctity of, specifically, stability and order on the frontier.

Beckoned on by this introduction of the Zulu as a potential military threat to British Natal, periodicals and unofficial opinion slowly followed in Shepstone's footsteps. Even a remote and sparsely populated region of Britain, like in Moray, Scotland, reprinted a letter from South Africa describing the Zulu Civil War as so violent that even "Exeter Hall," a contemporary synonym for British anti-slavery advocates, "would justify our putting down by force such horrid barbarities as they are practicing."[77] Qureshi argues that these types of writings in the British press, long before Potter's argument of a formal imperial press system organizing in the 1870s, were "…instrumental in creating and promoting the notions that the Cape was an unsafe region and that the Zulus were a formidable military power that had to be defeated in order to achieve regional stability."[78] However, the British metropole previously understood Zulu military capabilities through the depictions of Shaka's reign, and Shaka had been gone for three decades. Shepstone's statement offered a new and official confirmation from the frontier that the depicted violence of the Zulu that Shaka's reign instilled in the 1820s did not die with him and was, in fact, a current threat three decades later if left without imperial supervision.

This type of unofficial depiction also expresses itself in a mild fascination in the metropole with how the Zulu understood London in a story widely covered across the metropole throughout 1859. In a reprinting of an oral story given by a young Zulu male to his elders upon his return from being exhibited in London, the young Zulu explains his awe at the size and power of London and the white man, mentioning the hot air balloons and plentifulness of beer given the

[77] "Natal – The Zulus," *Forres Elgin and Nairn Gazette, Northern Review and Advertiser* (Moray, SCT.), April 22, 1857.
[78] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 70.

lack of cattle in the city.[79] Similar to penning in Zulu for viewing by the British public, these new depictions, outside of religious frameworks, show the importance of the first juxtaposition of the Zulu with British culture and society. The young Zulu was also quoted as saying, "I heard that the English never allowed any fighting on their own land; whenever they fight they go and meet the enemy in his country...they know they will [win]." Beyond an unknowing foreshadowing of the Zulu Kingdom's own demise, this implicitly pro-imperial story juxtaposes "Britishness" with that of the primitive by having a seemingly uncivilized Zulu descriptively dissect British society, as if he were telling the British all that they wished to hear regarding their cultural and societal evolution. This may be especially true in the young Zulu's comparing of his travels to Berlin and Paris with that of London, saying that London was the "mother" and had the "greatest riches." The article does not explicitly paint the Zulu in a negative light, but it does much to portray him as an insightful observer for the benefit of portraying the strength, riches, and power demonstrated by imperial Britain. Through the young Zulu's published oral story, the frontier had been brought, again, to the metropole, and the metropole brought to this version of the frontier a semblance of order through which the public could more easily digest Zulu depictions, especially as a Zulu himself seemed to confirm these depictions for them.

Outside of Zulu depictions used to reconfigure the portrayal of the British metropole, the deeper historical trend that the Zulu were predisposed to violence and a merciless militarism was also furthered in periodicals through exhibitions, stories, advertisements, and even converging with official opinion from Shepstone in the late 1850s. While Shepstone's comments equate to an early sense of imperialist civilizing through direct military action and conquest, this theme

[79] See: "A South African Native's Picture of England," *Glasgow Herald* (Lanarkshire, SCT.), March 11, 1859; "England from the Caffre Point of View," *Chamber's Journal* (London: ENG.), July 16, 1859; "England from the Caffre Point of View," *Leeds Times* (Yorkshire, ENG.), July 16, 1859.

would not be more fully fleshed out till the end of the following decade, especially as the end of the 1850s was the start of a converging of British anthropology's Social Darwinist beliefs with mainstream opinion on the Zulu in the metropole. In one 1859 article, the *Inverness Courier* attacks the Zulu for not having "adopted the manners and customs of their civilized masters" because of their inability to comprehend the Saxon concept of wife and a female's position in society.[80] These unofficial depictions of the Zulu not only bring together the Zulu as uncivilized and the British as civilized, but it justifies it using the British anthropological model's premise of a defining trait of primitive people as lacking a proper family unit.

While metropolitan discussion of the Zulu in the 1860s more often dealt with the Colenso controversy, the late 1860s again showed a convergence in the idea of imperial led civilizing in official and unofficial opinion. While Mantena's work mainly focuses on India, she notes that, after the 1850s, imperial justifications routinely relied on the idea that native societies were in crisis as a result of contact with the West – an idea that the case of the Zulu supports as the psychological frontier between Britain and the Zulu Kingdom collapsed. According to Mantena and as the narrative will come to show, more empire was routinely considered the solution to such problems.[81] Robert James Mann, a British science writer originally invited by John Colenso to Natal, demonstrates the paternalistic nature of the British civilizing mission in an article published in *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, the original and rival group of the Anthropological Society of London. Here, he says that "each and all the children of Queen Victoria," referring to native South Africans under British rule, were safe from the Shaka-like violence of their chiefs and kings due to British intervention. Those who fled from the Zulu did so "because they have learned to estimate rightly the advantage and blessing of a civilized

[80] "Natal," *Inverness Courier* (Inverness, SCT.), September 8, 1859.
[81] Mantena, *Alibis of Empires*, 174-178.

government." On the other hand, Zulu who contemplated "leaving Zululand for the British territory," Mann says, was "enough to bring the arm of vengeance at once upon his head."[82] Again, the implication of the need to civilize the Zulu is done through juxtaposition to what was considered to be British. The Zulu were independent and violent, while Africans who accepted the rule of the civilized British were now controlled and tame. As Richard Elphick explains, a defeated indigenous enemy was seen as moldable, as their defeat signaled the need for a cultural shift that was often exploited by missionaries or, as imperial action dictated, pushed forward by subjugation to the Crown.[83] The Zulu's independence is depicted as dangerous to other Africans, and Mann's line regarding a resentment of the British does enough to imply, again, that there was a potential for the Zulu to become a larger threat to the Empire. Based on Elphick's analysis, the metropole's depictions of the Zulu put forth an underlying fear of an inability to control the Zulu. Indigenous independence prevented a stronger hand of direct civilizing that was popular in the metropole and contributed to the Zulus' depiction as an unofficial a threat to others, through their violence, and themselves, through their primitive independence. Given Mann's audience of the Ethnological Society, his latter descriptions of their religion as "witchcraft" and their customs and superstitions as "weird" and "dark" do much to support the thought that Zulu independence precluded any means through which they could evolve from their primitive state.

This connection between British ethnological and anthropological studies and, specifically, the Zulu was also evident in other periodicals around this time, with one article, titled "Heads Wanted," asking for Zulu skulls to be donated to the Anthropological Society for

---

[82] Robert James Mann, "The Kaffir Race of Natal," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 5 (1867): 285-287, 291.
[83] Elphick, "Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa," in Lamar and Thompson, eds, *The Frontier In History*, 282-284.

studying.[84] The Anthropological Society of London, more involved in the "scientific" side of racism through craniometry and physical anthropology, studied skulls and other features of indigenous peoples to prove evolutionary differences between the races just as Darwin had done in *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, though the Ethnological Society was also involved in distorting physical science for similar purposes.[85] Across an ocean, the British metropole was inculcated with depictions scrutinizing the Zulu alongside a steady cultural and scientific fascination into who the Zulu were and who the British were not. Such ideas were promulgated often through wider metropole coverage of individual altercations on the Zulu frontier. "The Fate of Dr. Livingstone," a heavily reprinted story regarding the previously mentioned explorer-missionary David Livingstone, exacerbates this portrayal of the Zulu. While the report acknowledges that it cannot corroborate exactly if the attackers were Zulu, it nonetheless blames the Zulu as "implacable savages" for their "sudden and unprovoked attack" on Dr. Livingstone's party.[86] In this example, the Zulu are presented as inherently violent through this "unprovoked attack" on a British party, and the inability to protect individuals, especially contemporaneously famous ones like David Livingstone, from falling victim to such violence normally reserved for other Africans required a solution. Livingstone's "three Cs" could make little progress among the Zulu without imperial support.

While official opinion did not necessarily explicitly promote such opinions and depictions of the Zulu, a reprint of a *Westminster Review* piece in the *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald* reveals that official actions of the Empire, such as an 1869 Act of Parliament

---

[84] "Heads Wanted," *Cheltenham Chronicle* (Gloucestershire, ENG.), January 1, 1867.
[85] See: George Busk, "Observations on a Systematic Mode of Craniometry" *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, vol. 1 (1861), 341-348.
[86] See: "The Supposed Murder of Dr. Livingstone," *Nottinghamshire Guardian* (Nottinghamshire, ENG.), March 29, 1867; "The Fate of Dr. Livingstone," *Illustrated Times* (London, ENG.), March 30, 1867; "Dr Livingstone," *Cork Examiner* (Cork, IE), March 29 1867; "The Fate of Dr. Livingstone," *Fireshire Journal* (Fife, SCT.), March 28, 1867.

that regulated the price at which the Zulu could procure wives, found support in bringing order to the Zulu frontier. The article credits the act with helping to end what the British saw as "woman-slavery" further described as being "incompatible with the freedom of British subjects."[87] As shown before, the Zulu treatment of women (e.g., through polygamy) was synonymous with definitions of the primitive, so an imperial effort to overturn this was, essentially, an official act of civilizing. Beyond the ironic belief that freedom was equally had by all British subjects, such writing demonstrates an unofficial support in British media for imperially led actions, or in this case laws, to directly influence the Zulu towards "Britishness" and civilization. To the metropole, the imperial center was instrumental in controlling the interaction zone that was the imperial frontier and, by extension, the future depiction of the Zulu. British and Anglo-Zulu War historian Ian Knight notes that, entering the 1870s, the failures of missionaries to convert more of the Zulu further uncoupled civilizing from missionaries in the Zulu Kingdom:

> Frustrated, many missionaries allowed themselves to become embroiled in politics, accepting the hospitality of their Zulu hosts while at the same time urging their sponsors in Natal to intervene to reduce the power and influence of the Zulu kings, to weaken the Zulu sense of pride and self-reliance and so make them more receptive to alien teachings of salvation.[88]

No longer were missionaries beholden to their religious ideals or the opinions and support of the metropole. Instead, they, like the British public in the 1860s, began to accept the benefits of imperially linked civilizing and unofficial opinion metropole media began to shift.

As the 1870s approached, a broad culmination of societal advancement meant that, unlike in previous decades, the events and conflicts of the Empire were more readily available to larger

---

[87] "The Price of Zulu Wives Fixed by Act of Parliament," *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald* (Derbyshire, ENG.), April 14, 1869; Widely reprinted, see the same or similar articles in the *Morning Advertiser* (London, ENG), *Fireshire Journal* (Fife, SCT.), *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (Yorkshire, ENG.), *Edinburgh Evening Courant* (Midlothian, SCT.), and the *Weekly Dispatch* (London, ENG.).
[88] Knight, *Zulu Rising*, 88.

sections of the population than ever before. Now, roughly 80% of men and 75% of women in the British metropole were literate, and the expansion of literacy in the working class furthered an already growing literary sector for journals and newspapers.[89] Additionally, Parliament passed the Second Reform Act in 1867, expanding suffrage to some of the urban male working class in England and Wales (Scotland and Ireland would see expanded representation acts passed the following year). According to British historian Robert Saunders, this immediately doubled the size of the voting population and began a new age of political and imperial consciousness in the metropole.[90] Specifically, in regard to the Zulu, the nineteenth-century rise in British literacy rates and imperial consciousness correlates with the rise in mentions of the Zulu in the metropole. The British Newspaper Archive list 3,571 uses of "Zulu" in British periodicals in the 1850s, 8,204 in the 1860s, and up to 144,587 mentions in the 1870s.[91] The Zulu depictions that first grew out of Isaacs' writings and Fynn's firsthand accounts now had a larger and more engaged audience than ever before.

While the 1867 discovery of diamonds deep in the interior of South Africa in Boer territory sparked a deep official economic interest by the Empire in the interior of southern Africa, another event in the early 1870s brought the Zulu Kingdom closer to the British Empire both in official relations and in unofficial coverage. Prince Cetshwayo's accession to the Zulu kingship in September 1873 amid new internal power struggles pushed the young ruler to invite Theophilus Shepstone, still secretary of native affairs, to his coronation. By this time, Knight says, Shepstone had already designated both the Zulu Kingdom and independent Boer republics

---

[89] Amy J. Lloyd, "Education, Literacy and the Reading Public," *British Library Newspapers* (Detroit: Gale, 2007).
[90] Robert Saunders. "The Politics of Reform and the Making of the Second Reform Act, 1848-1867." *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 3 (2007): 571–91.
[91] "Results for 'Zulu'," *British Newspaper Archive,* Findmypast Newspaper Archive Limited, https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results?basicsearch=zulu&somesearch=zulu&exactsearch=false&retrievecountrycounts=false.

as obstacles to the Empire's full expansion into southern Africa. Now, the Empire had a formal invitation to expand its lack of influence once more in Zululand, and Shepstone's support for Cetshwayo resulted in a faux coronation by the former of the latter, which Knight claims Shepstone believed made Cetshwayo indebted to the British.[92]

By December, the metropole began its coverage of Shepstone's trip into the Zulu Kingdom. While Cetshwayo was king with the official blessing of the British Empire, this did little to assuage an inherent fear of the Zulu Kingdom in the metropole. If anything, this official interaction had the opposite effect. One paper, the *North Wilts Herald*, included in their description a caveat to the succession by mentioning, "If a savage despot imagines, no matter with what reason, that there are amongst his subjects those who are conspiring against his life, then there usually ensues a reign of terror and bloodshed … this is true…of all barbarous races."[93] Another paper promoted a similar and ironic view of Zulu society without any recollection on British imperialism, saying, "The Zulu…gained their power by an utter disregard for human life and a love of war." Here, a break in unofficial depiction with official interaction is evident. Even as the public warmed to imperially led civilizing, diplomatic influence and procedures were not seen as real interaction. While this succession was peaceful, how could the British assure the next succession would be? Zulu power, as depicted, was inseparable from violence. Crushing and absorbing this power through British might superseded Shepstone's ceremonial crowning of Cetshwayo. Imperial symbolism, unlike imperial action in Parliament's regulating and limiting of polygamy in 1869, was, in the metropole, akin to the limited successes and failures of religious civilizing efforts.

---

[92] Knight, *Zulu Rising,* 91.
[93] *North Wilts Herald* (Wiltshire, ENG.), December 13, 1873.

Interestingly, as Guy and Lester pointed out in the Colenso controversy, these types of articles further expose how, as the British public's cognitive dissonance regarding the Zulu shrank, opinions and depictions of the Zulu exposed insecurities in contemporary "Britishness." This anxiety expressed within the metropole only grew as the British came closer and more frequently interacted with the Zulu on the frontier. Similar to juxtapositions that postulated that the Zulu converted Colenso, the converter, other articles contrast the benefits of Zulu society in the hills and wilderness with the "debauchery and drunkenness" that occurs near British factories.[94] While juxtapositions often posited that the British were innately superior to the Zulu, they could also be used, as in this case, by pro-imperial media to paint the Zulu in a contextually superior light as a way to the British to criticize the development of the homeland.

In this vein, fascinations with the Zulu were not relegated to the religious, scientific, or even imperial lens. Now, "Britishness," the cultural export of British civilizing, could be altered and tweaked through a contemporary reappraisal of the ill-effects that capitalism and the industrial revolution had brought to the British metropole. British and Zulu historians have discussed similar lines of thought regarding metropolitan reactions to the defeat at Isandlwana and victory at Rorke's Drift. However, this chapter's expanding of the narrative regarding the Anglo-Zulu relationship reveals that Zulu depictions and understandings in Britain had a longer history of being deployed to define what imperial Britain stood for or, for some, what it now failed to represent. To many, however, like the liberal, radical, and imperialist Sir Charles Dilke, author of the best-selling 1868 book *Greater Britain*, one defining element of "Britishness" connected the colonies to the metropole: their shared white Anglo-Saxon heritage.[95]

---

[94] "Natal and Ashantee," *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, SCT.), January 6, 1874.
[95] See "Imperial Britons" in John C. Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Another article from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* opens with "The Zulu lives a happy life – from the Mormon point of view" and then quotes contemporary British historian James Anthony Froude as saying that the Zulu is the "Irishman of Natal." Rather than juxtaposing the Zulu against the British in this critique, Froude, who espoused the same white Anglo-Saxon superiority as Dilke in his 1886 book *Oceana*, is trusted by the paper in his views on the Zulu to compare them to the Mormons and Irish. Both white, these non-Anglo-Saxon "out-groups" were considered to be sub-English imperial subjects. Mormons were specifically, like the Zulu, considered religious deviants for polygamy among other concerns, while the Irish Home Rule movement, an issue of freedom and independence, was increasingly a problem for the British in the 1870s. In a place like Natal that Froude considered "a naturally glorious country," it is the Black Zulu that keeps it from its true potential by their unwillingness to conform to British working norms, just as stubbornly independent white Mormon and Irish identities pushed back on the naturally superiority of Anglo-Saxon and British identity that the colonies, like Natal, seemed to readily accept.[96] "Britishness" could not be fully realized in these circumstances, just as the non-conformist religious beliefs of Mormons and the fierce independence of the Irish stymied the ability of "Britishness" to dominate the cultures of both white and Black subjugated peoples. While historian Amanda Behm's *Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion* lays out the exclusionary politics of white Anglo pro-imperial rhetoric beginning in the 1880s, the desire of imperialists to put forth a vision of the world that excluded non-whites and, depending on their relations to Britain, non-Anglo-Saxon whites was evident by the 1870s.[97] While skin color certainly played a greater part in British depictions of the Zulu, the non-

[96] "The Zulu lives a happy life," *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (Yorkshire, ENG.), March 23, 1875.
[97] Amanda Behm, *Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion*: *Britain, 1880–1940* (London, United Kingdom; Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

conforming nature of each of these groups to the concepts that defined "Britishness" is what marked them for pro-imperial ridicule.

Even in the few years before the war, seldom and severely limited defenses of the Zulu did continue to occur in the British metropole, though, like Colenso in the 1860s, they failed to find much unofficial or official support and, incidentally, reveal a larger consensus regarding insecurities in "Britishness" as well. One incident, when the Natal government forcibly moved and entered into apprenticeship hundreds of Zulu women and children, sparked concern from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in the *Cosmopolitan* that the atrocities, while not only harmful and illegal, would "fill the natives with utter disgust for the white people…"[98] The relevant British authorities responded that the matter would be referred for further investigation in British South Africa, though little information exists on whether this was carried out. Still, the Anti-Slavery Society's defense and compassion for a humanitarian approach to the Zulu comes in the context of their concern for Zulu opinions of the British. As with the 1869 Act of Parliament, humanitarianism for the Zulu had become coupled to the concept of what was British to the British and the inevitability of further imperial encounters. If the British could not demonstrate "Britishness" in their interactions with the Zulu, and other Africans by extension, how could the British expect natives to respect imperial rule and civilizing efforts? And, if the Zulu did not respect and accept what was civilized and white, then the supposed innate superiority of "Britishness" could be readily challenged – the very imperial insecurity that Isandlwana would fully expose on a widespread cultural scale.

Just prior to the quick series of events that would lead to the beginning of the Anglo-Zulu War, the Zulu in the British metropole had been deployed and depicted in a myriad of ways that

[98] "Outrage of Justice on Zulu Women and Children in Natal," *Cosmopolitan* (London, ENG.), March 12, 1874.

almost never benefited them or defended their unique customs and way of life. Beginning with the accounts of English travelers, the metropole was introduced to the Zulu as a people that, starting under Shaka, exhibited an abnormal and merciless brand of violence onto not only males of warrior age and status, but women and children as well without thought. These traveler accounts became the source base for less popular historical writings on Natal and the region, as well as for the frequent missionary accounts and ethnologies of the Zulu people. Through the 1850s, these longer works were the primary way by which the metropole learned of and about the Zulu, though rising literacy rates and the popularity of periodicals across Britain contributed to a growing Zulu presence in British thought from the religious, to the politico-imperial, to the pseudo-scientific.

The story of the Zulu in Britain prior to the Anglo-Zulu War often mixed into other contemporary debates and themes in British society. The methodological codification of primitivism in anthropological circles beginning in the 1840s presented a model of general native society that was synonymous with how unofficial opinion depicted the Zulu in metropole media. The inability of missionaries to effectively civilize and tame the Zulu through religious conversion and introduction of British customs was widely presented through the lens of the controversy caused by Colenso's religious beliefs and understanding of the Zulu. Elphick notes that most contemporary scholarship, and even missionaries themselves, recognized that their missions to convert and civilize had largely failed. However, while he continues by saying that success versus failure for such revolutionary visions of change was not contingent on power and ruthlessness, these missionary failures did contribute to a growing unofficial support for the perceived power and ruthless efficiency of imperial action beginning officially in the 1850s

under Shepstone.[99] The convergence of these opinions in the 1870s points to an underlying unofficial consensus in favor of imperial action to civilize the Zulu.

This action, however, was still primarily relegated to legal measures and diplomatic influence. To turn imperial action into imperial warfare, Duncan Bell, in *Reordering the World*, points to the different justifications for empire that occupied British thought, some of which are evident in the laid-out narrative of metropolitan Zulu depictions, opinions, and understandings. While a "liberal civilizing imperialism" that deployed humanitarian ideals and exploitative arguments promoting capitalism against the underdeveloped lands of indigenous peoples are evidently present in the case of the Zulu, it is his last justification, the "martialist" approach, that arises as the timeline moved closer to 1879.[100] This final justification, regarding violence from the individual and collective as vital to shaping power and territory through war, ironically fuses unofficial and official opinion as the Anglo-Zulu war approached. In the metropole's advocating for British enacted imperial action against the Zulu as an individual (in his supposedly corrupted morality and character) and the collective (through the Zulus' supposed propensity for state-driven violence), Shepstone's case for conflict to eliminate the Zulu threat permanently meant that "action" only had to be fully turned into "violence."

Boiled down, the supposed primitivism of the Zulu, while revealing a fascination of the successes, limitations and sometimes the drawbacks of "Britishness" in the metropole, was seen an affront to white and civilized British society. Left alone on the frontier, the Zulu were an ever-present threat to the metropole's depiction of hierarchical white sovereignty and "Britishness." By forcibly ending Zulu independence, the other two understandings in British metropole of the

---

[99] Elphick, "Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa," in Lamar and Thompson, eds, *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared*, 285-286.
[100] See: "Ideologies of Empire" in Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 91-118.

Zulu as primitive – their violence and their customs - could be resolved under the watchful eye and guard of the British Empire. Overall, the constant British juxtaposition of the Zulu with the whiteness, structure, civilization, and inherent superiority of the metropole's "Britishness" compartmentalized the Zulu in metropole media depictions. In the next chapter, this general self-assurance in the metropole of the depiction of the Zulu, the right and might of civilizing those deemed racially inferior, and the concept of "Britishness" will be shattered by the disastrous defeat at the Battle of Isandlwana. An atmosphere of unofficial and official overconfidence would give way to a culture of defeat in the metropole regarding the military defeat and force unofficial opinion in the metropole to reevaluate their depictions and understanding of the Zulu given the triumph of the "primitive" over "civilization."

II. "Noble Savages…Not Inclined to come to Terms": The Anglo-Zulu War, Imperial Insecurities, and the Fluidity of Images of the Zulu

The Anglo-Zulu War was fought on the battlefields of South Africa, but unofficial British opinion battled to place the war in contemporary imperial understanding, specifically in the annals of the British Empire's mission and legacy. As a result, the pro-imperial focus of the conflict was not the formal annexation in 1887 of the Zulu protectorate that Zulu surrender produced, nor was it the major victory at the Zulu capital of Ulundi in July of 1879 that brought an end to the war. Rather, the defeat at Isandlwana and subsequent victory at Rorke's Drift ultimately became the focal point of the conflict in the metropole that turned Zulu depictions into tools for the glorification of an updated imperial mission.

No state, kingdom, republic, or empire has had the luxury of being immune to defeat, and the British Empire is no exception. From the Empire's failed invasion of Afghanistan between 1839-1842 to the victory of the white Protestant Boer republics over imperial British aggression in the first South African War of 1880-1881, the Union Jack technically failed to lose any of the wars in which it took part, including the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. However, that does not mean the Empire did not struggle in its quest for hegemonic power during the middle of the century, with the Crimean War against Russia (1853-1856), Second Opium War against China (1856-1860), and Indian Rebellion of 1857 all posing diverse and significant threats to imperial economic, territorial, and supranational sovereignty. The British public was not wholly unaccustomed to successful backlash from those it deemed natural subjects to or in violation of the rule of the Crown and its civilizing authority, but none of these larger conflicts produced as grave a single military disaster for the Empire's psyche as the Zulu did at Isandlwana. The less than six-month war in Zululand is often credited as a pivotal moment in British imperial

consciousness, pitting brave and heroic British soldiers against the Zulu, increasingly depicted as Africa's most noble warriors.[101] In the contemporary imperial imagination and extending well into the twentieth and even the twenty-first century, one major defeat in battle and a subsequent victory captured the attention of the British metropole.

What makes the Anglo-Zulu War and these battles unique is the disconnect between the historical and contemporary focus on the war and its battles as solely a military conflict rather than as a catalyst for immense change in the Anglo-Zulu relationship and depictions of the Zulu in the British metropole. Nonetheless, even more interesting is the extent to which a six-month conflict between one sovereign native entity and the world's largest empire remained a prominent part of British memory and a defining factor of the world's perception of the Zulu. This chapter dissects how the monumental and humiliating defeat at Isandlwana further exposed and made apparent the metropole's insecurities in both its depiction of the Zulu and in the general concept of the imperial power and civilizing in losing to a "primitive people. This would lead to unofficial contestations that depicted the Zulu as more "noble" when it came to the "noble savage" to show that a Britain was not defeated by any ordinary group. Nevertheless, though a small contingent of Britons staked their reputation on defending the Zulu, primarily Bishop Colenso's daughters Frances and Harriett, this chapter demonstrates how the minor tactical victory at Rorke's Drift was successfully elevated, both officially and unofficially, to alleviate imperial self-doubts and warp the concept of the Zulu as "noble." In time, Isandlwana too would find a place as a part of popular imperial British memory and consciousness, helping to cement Zulu representations as a tool for the glorification and mythologizing of the Empire's civilizing ideals.

---

[101] See: Adrian Greaves, *Isandlwana: How the Zulus Humbled the British Empire* (Barnsley, U.K.: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 12-14 and Ian Knight, *Zulu Rising*, 13-14.

Modern scholars have noted and analyzed aspects of the dichotomy that these battles represented in imperial imagination, though many of these, again, revolve around the military history of the battles and war or do not make the battles' socio-cultural impact the primary focus of their works. As mentioned earlier, in his 2016 book *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, historian James O. Gump looks at some cultural ramifications that resulted from the battle's relationship.[102] Historian Michael Lieven has dissected the written responses of British soldiers and officers to each battle and the war in general and how they affirmed a growing ideology of empire in Britain.[103] Catherine E. Anderson's work illustrates how representations of the war deployed, misconstrued, and influenced themes of race and masculinity that changed British understandings of Africans and celebrated and redefined imperial "Britishness" alongside a growing belief in the white man's burden.[104] Finally, historian Joye Bowman's reconstructing of the war and its aftermath through official documents like the Parliament Papers allows for a deeper study into the extent to which official opinion broke from, converged with, and sought to influence unofficial depictions and understandings of the Zulu in the metropole.[105] By working with these and other underappreciated analyses of the Anglo-Zulu War, this chapter is able to more fully capture and demonstrate how the metropole's evolved understanding and subsequent depictions of the Zulu and their own imperial mission was inextricably affected by these battles and was a societal-wide phenomenon.

The British, unlike the other nations mentioned, were the ultimate victors of the war under discussion, and their triumph only meant that calls for vengeance against both the Zulu and

---

[102] Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*.
[103] See: Michael Lieven, "The British Soldier and the Ideology of Empire: Letters from Zululand" *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 80, no. 322 (2002): 128–43 and Michael Lieven, "Heroism, Heroics and the Making of Heroes: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879" *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30, no. 3 (1998): 419–38.
[104] Catherine E. Anderson, "Red Coats and Black Shields," 6-28.
[105] Joye Bowman, "Reconstructing the past Using the British Parliamentary Papers: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879" *History in Africa* 31 (2004): 117–32.

those Britons deemed to be at fault found immediate support and action. This chapter's analysis of the war, deploying the framework of Wolfgang Shivelbusch, posits Isandlwana as trauma, imperial action as working through mourning, and Rorke's Drift as recovery by being an official and unofficial outlet for the angst realized at Isandlwana. Alan Lester notes that 1879, including the Anglo-Zulu War, constituted the start of "an ever-widening gap between most Britons' perception of their empire and most imperial subjects' experiences of it," which is evident in the digestive process of the war's aftermath.[106] With little agency over their "identity" in the Britain, the Zulu emerged as the preeminent opponent of imperial civilizing, were championed in the metropole as a hierarchical evolution of the primitive into the "noble savage" in their increasingly celebrated status of subjugation, and were encased in an Anglo-imperial manufactured identity that has since had calamitous consequences.

Whereas other imperial wars began at the behest of London, the Anglo-Zulu War marked a preemptive strike by British forces into the heart of the Zulu Kingdom. The outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu War was preceded by a break between the demands of London and those of the imperial periphery, as the Conservative Disraeli government preferred to focus on the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, Sir Bartle Frere, made High Commissioner of the Cape in 1877, desired to create a confederation in South Africa similar to the one formed in Canada in 1867, and the two remaining independent factions in the region were the Zulu Kingdom and the Boer Republics. It is widely accepted that Frere's actions and Sir Theophilus Shepstone's, the British Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, push to successfully annex the Boer republic of the Transvaal in 1877 were the driving causes for the war. Even while Britain was technically allied with Cetshwayo, Shepstone hoped to unite the Boers with the British by creating a common

[106] Lester, *Ruling the World*, 25.

enemy in the Zulu whom he had previously worked hard to ingratiate; Frere believed that the Zulu Kingdom would fall rather easily under the weight of British imperial might.[107]

Back in Britain, papers, like the *Leicester Daily Post*, described the situation as a "crisis" of "murder and man-slaughter," juxtaposing Cetshwayo's 30,000-man army to the 2,000 troops in Natal. Ending the summary of events and openly pushing for imperial action to mitigate yet another frontier crisis, the correspondent explained, "The transfer of the Transvaal is but a prologue. The [Orange] Free State follows, and so likewise Zululand."[108] Even if Frere and Shepstone often acted independent of London's official wishes, they were, perhaps knowingly, maneuvering for war with the unofficial support of their homeland. The Boer-Zulu struggle had now become an Anglo-Zulu struggle, as the Boers were now technically British subjects. Anglo-Zulu tensions continued to rise for the remainder of 1878, as Frere's own Boundary Commission sided with the Zulu over the Boers and a border incident involving Zulu wives prompted the more neutral Lieutenant Governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer, to accede that the Zulu Kingdom was beyond any imperial aid and that deposing Cetshwayo would be justified. According to military historian Adrian Greaves, Frere's imperial reasoning was multi-faceted:

> A Zulu defeat would facilitate British progress to the north, and Confederation could then proceed. It would also placate the Boers, and such a display of British military force would certainly impress any African leader who might have contemplated making a stand against British expansion. Invasion would also overturn the Zulu king by eradicating his military potential and unshackle a valuable source of labour for British and Boer commercial activities.[109]

The leadup to conflict in the metropole tended to shy away from economic and diplomatic concerns, but, officially, the Empire was ready to secure its frontier and its future in southern

---

[107] Knight, *Zulu Rising*, 81.
[108] "Natal and the Zulus," *Leicester Daily Post* (Leicestershire, ENG.), August 10, 1877; Similar reports and articles can be found in other periodicals like the *York Herald*, *Evening Mail* (London), *Jersey Independent*, and *Brecon County Times* (Wales).
[109] Greaves, *Isandlwana,* 27-29.

Africa. Throughout 1878, Frere and other British officials greatly exaggerated the danger posed by Cetshwayo and his Zulu soldiers by deploying the now cemented tropes of inherent Zulu militaristic aggression, their "barbarian," "childlike," and "ignorant" ways to sway Parliament towards supporting the seemingly inevitable frontier conflict. Bowman points out that Frere specifically emphasized the humanity and civilizing effort that annexation could unlock while decrying that taking no action left the Zulu to "multiply in their original savagery."[110] While an ultimatum sent to Cetshwayo demanding the Zulu army disband entirely to avoid war was, as expected, rejected, an invasion force under the command of Lord Chelmsford was already preparing to civilize the Kingdom by force.[111]

As the geopolitical situation in Natal rapidly deteriorated in the second half of the 1870s, it is generally accepted that this decade began the immense rise in popularity of and belief in the British soldier and military in the metropole.[112] Thus, it is not too surprising that a wave of overconfidence converged in both unofficial and official understandings of the impending Anglo-Zulu War, especially given the Empire's superior military technology. Bowman emphasizes the need for historians of the Anglo-Zulu War to further analyze contemporary British periodicals since, while the Parliament Papers were available to the public, these would be the best source for how the public understood the conflict.[113] Additionally, according to Potter, growing commercial interests and a shrinking gap between news and journalism in the colonies and the metropole, beginning in the 1870s, contributed to the promotion of "Britishness" and imperial action as ways in which to engage with broader audiences.[114] Thus,

---

[110] Blue Book, 1878-79 Vol. LIV [C-2374], 144, IUP 13:438, quoted in Bowman, "Reconstructing the past Using the British Parliamentary Papers," 125-126.
[111] Greaves, *Isandlwana*, 31-36.
[112] Lieven, "The British Soldier and the Ideology of Empire," 128.
[113] Bowman, "Reconstructing the past Using the British Parliamentary Papers," 130.
[114] Potter, *News and the British World*, 9.

by examining contemporary newspaper articles, it is increasingly evident that imperial overconfidence combined with unofficial advocacy accurately represents a somewhat unified metropolitan feeling entering the war. The popular *Pall Mall Gazette* posited that the "Zulu question" would summarily be answered with war and the inevitable ruin of Zululand and its annexation into the Empire.[115] By the end of December of 1878, countless British papers wrote on the impending war and the ultimatum, with some questioning the "common sense" of Cetshwayo and the Zulu to consider a "conflict with the whites" that would lead to the "effacement of Zululand as an independent state."[116] One *London Evening Standard* editorial cited Cetshwayo as a "vainglorious" leader whose expected defiance "must be promptly vindicated under penalty of a native insurrection throughout the whole dominion of England in South Africa."[117] Beyond the irony of describing the Zulu as overtly proud, the Zulu Kingdom was summarily positioned as the final roadblock to total British hegemony over southern Africa. The *Pall Mall Gazette* with racist arrogance similarly chastised Cetshwayo and the Zulu for attempting to combat the "supremacy of white men," explaining that the "final establishment of our power and the beginning of a prosperous era for all of South Africa" hinged upon annexation.[118] Insubordination was, while not surprising, viewed as an affront to anthropological notions of the Black as primitive, white as master, and "Britishness" as civilization. Increasingly evident in these articles is the way that the writers more openly express their own viewpoints and advocate for an imperial response against the Zulu – the unofficial pressuring the official. According to Schivelbusch, Western national psyches, starting in the mid-nineteenth century, were more excited by the onset of war through more consistent media posturing and propaganda,

[115] "The Zulu Question," *Pall Mall Gazette* (London, ENG.), February 25, 1878.
[116] "The Zulu Menace," *Globe* (London, ENG.), December 28, 1878.
[117] "London, Thursday, December 19," *London Evening Standard* (London, ENG.), December 19, 1878.
[118] "Affairs in South Africa," *Pall Mall Gazette* (London, ENG.), December 19, 1878.

turning the quest for victory into a hunt to humiliate as well as defeat the enemy.[119] In the case of the Zulu, imperial British victory - victory over non-Europeans, primarily non-Christians, and non-whites - was not just demanded, it was expected.

The war officially began on January 11th, 1879, as General Lord Chelmsford's three-column army marched north from Natal with the objective of capturing the Zulu capital of Ulundi after Cetshwayo failed to accept Britain's ultimatum. Just as with unofficial opinions, Chelmsford and his fellow officials on the frontier felt assured of victory and essentially entered Zululand "blindly" relying on limited local intelligence and failing to reinforce their camped positions.[120] Unbeknownst to those in the metropole for some time, the first engagement of the conflict was foreshadowed to end poorly. On January 22, 1879, part of the main column of the British invasion force was crushed by the technologically inferior but numerically superior Zulu army at the Battle of Isandlwana. Widely considered to be the most compelling British imperial defeat to an enemy of inferior technological means, the loss of roughly 800 British regulars and 500 African auxiliaries shook unofficial and official opinion of the Zulu and Anglo-Zulu War back in the British metropole.[121] A humiliating stain on British domestic and international honor, the Empire and public's convergence of assured victory would transform into a tense short-term intersection of unofficial and official vengeance against both Black Zulu and white Briton.

However, later that same day and onto the 23rd, a contingent of the victorious Zulu army at Isandlwana marched westward to attack the mission station turned military supply depot and hospital of Rorke's Drift. Till the early hours of the morning, between three and four thousand Zulu warriors repeatedly threw themselves unsuccessfully against 150 members of the British

[119] Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 7.
[120] Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 5-7.
[121] Ibid, 24.

24th, with the British ultimately sustaining just seventeen deaths to over 600 Zulu deaths and roughly 1,000 casualties.[122] The unlikely triumph of determined British soldiers surrounded by a numerically superior Zulu force was the exact opposite outcome of Isandlwana the day prior. While a column was slaughtered and looted at Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift would eventually both save and immortalize the war in popular imperial memory by assuring that the superiority of "Britishness" and its imperial mission were safe.

In the immediate aftermath of the battles, the desire to discuss and rectify Isandlwana overshadowed talk of Rorke's Drift. Originally, only one London correspondent was covering the war from Natal, but metropolitan press interest in the war and defeat escalated when the *Standard* ran an article on the loss at Isandlwana.[123] Imperial and metropolitan humiliation was apparent and is not surprising; the first major British imperial defeat since the Afghan War ended in 1842 produced overwhelming calls for revenge for the sanctity of imperial honor. This was unofficially carried out in two ways: calling for further imperial action against the Zulu and glossing over the defeat. To the former point, some papers openly pressured for a decisive end to the war, while others specifically wished to enact revenge against the triumphant Zulu. In a widely reprinted article, "The Disaster as Isandula," one correspondent wrote, "I have seen many battlefields in Europe…I do not think I ever saw such a sickening sight in all my life," while another said, "without reinforcements it would be impossible to re-establish the prestige of the British."[124] Whether the first statement is true or not, the battlefields in Europe saw white fighting white, white killing white, and white European "rules" of warfare. Such quotes

[122] Knight, *Zulu Rising*, 277-278.
[123] Greaves, *Isandlwana*, 103.
[124] See: "The Disaster at Isandula," *Morning Post* (London, ENG.), March 1, 1879; "The Cape War," *Sheffield Independent* (Yorkshire, ENG.), March 1, 1879; "The Zulu War," *Derby Mercury* (Derbyshire, ENG.), March 5, 1879.

regarding war in Zululand are impossible to separate from the fact that Black fought white, Black defeated white, and the Zulu Kingdom remained an untamable independent entity on the Empire's frontier. If the Zulu could surprise and overwhelm the British, surely Britain's European rivals could do the same and, even more likely on the minds of British imperialists, it could inspire other colonial revolts and rebellions for independence across the Empire. This was sure to strike fear into the hearts of readers who, now, saw fifty years of Zulu violence and unbridled militarism confirmed in British death and imperial defeat. Unsurprisingly, this led to more Zulu-specific backlash, with authors, like in *The Daily Telegraph*, demanding that the Zulus must now "pay dearly for their triumph of a day."[125]

To the latter strategy, representations and descriptions of the encounter chalked the defeat up to a "one-off." Shivelbusch claims, "The outcome of each confrontation—down to a single hand-to-hand skirmish—exerts a subtle cumulative influence on the course of the battle as a whole," so, by dancing around the battle or focusing on aspects of Isandlwana that diminished the Zulu triumph, the might of the Empire could avoid further denigration beyond the battlefield.[126] One correspondent, foreshadowing the eventually popular romanticization of the annihilation, posited, "…the slaughter for a few agonizing moments must have been terrific, for brave men, especially when desperate, do not resign life without a supreme effort at self-defense." The same writer, looking for a primary reason for the column's collapse, deviated from metropolitan understandings of Zulu militarism by attributing their victory to numerical superiority rather than any strategy or tactics.[127] Other popular portrayals can be seen in widely covered individual accounts from survivors of the battle, such as in an account from Natal that

[125] *The Daily Telegraph* (London, ENG.), March 11, 1879, quoted in Gump, T*he Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 138.
[126] Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 8.
[127] "The Disaster at Isandula," *Morning Post* (London, ENG.), March 1, 1879.

labeled the event a "terrible disaster" brought on by happenstance and British folly that permitted Zulu military success, saying those in Natal did not believe Isandlwana could be "attributable to [Zulu] generalship."[128] While metropolitan and governmental questioning of British military decisions would undoubtedly follow, doubling down on the war and blaming the loss on factors outside British control allowed for the defeat to subscribe to Darwin's quote regarding the "short struggle" between the civilized and the primitive. Such musings could also help the British public overcome any worries regarding the loss of Britain's aura of invincibility that it was deemed to have exhibited in both Europe and around the world since the Napoleonic Wars. While the military defeat was surely painful and worrisome in itself, one cannot help but think that the victory of Black Zulus – now a literal rather than hypothetical threat to the Colony of Natal – over the supposedly scientifically superior British civilization heavily contributed to such depictions. As Schivelbusch writes, "…nations are as incapable of imagining their own defeat as individuals are of conceiving their own death."[129]

The victory at Rorke's Drift did little to stop Lord Chelmsford's first invasion from being forced to fallback and regroup in March for an ultimately successful second invasion that captured Ulundi, burned it, and ended the war in early July. While the British suffered other defeats during the first half of the conflict, such as at Intombe and Hlobane in March, it is clear that the large number of casualties sustained and eventual collapse of the first invasion force was a direct result of Isandlwana. Stories in British papers of Rorke's Drift from the war tended to focus on individual stories of survival, such as Swedish missionary Rev. Otto Witt's account of

[128] Reprinted from *Daily News* (London, ENG.), "The Zulu War: Detailed Account of the Disaster at Insandula, Narrative of a Survivor," *Hemel Hempstead Gazette and West Herts Advertiser* (Hertfordshire, ENG.), March 1, 1879.
[129] Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 7.

the battle, or narrative descriptions of the battle sequence.[130] However, this does not explain why the victory at Rorke's Drift eventually achieved such celebrity status when other victories, such as the capturing of the Zulu capital of Ulundi that ended the war, held much greater strategic importance. One possible explanation is that, during the war, official representations of Rorke's Drift first broke from the general public's Isandlwana infatuation. In May, the government awarded "eleven Victoria Crosses[131] and five Distinguished Conduct Medals" to the soldiers who defended Rorke's Drift, making the group the most decorated contingent of soldiers from a single military engagement in British history.[132] While it is hard to objectively distinguish the Empire's reasoning for such lavish awards, the psychological impact of recognizing the bravery of Rorke's Drift as a preeminent military and imperial battle began at this moment and clearly outlined official opinion on the event. Some modern historians, however, disregard this discussion, such as V.D. Hanson:

> Modern critics suggest such lavishness in commendation was designed to assuage the disaster at Isandhlwana [sic] and to reassure a skeptical Victorian public that the fighting ability of the British soldier remained unquestioned. Maybe, maybe not. But in the long annals of military history, it is difficult to find anything quite like Rorke's Drift…But then it is also rare to find warriors as well trained as European soldiers, and rarer still to find any Europeans as disciplined as the British redcoats of the late nineteenth century.[133]

Academic like Hanson may claim the greatness of British redcoats and the West's military prowess, but they clearly ignore the bravery, heroism, and national self-determination that the Zulu fought for in the face of overwhelming technological odds. Additionally, by glossing over

---

[130] Reprinted in Devon, Hertfordshire, Yorkshire, and London, "The Battle at Rorke's Drift," *Leek Times* (Staffordshire, ENG.), March 8, 1879; Also reprinted heavily across the British Isles, "The Zulu War: An Eye-Witness Account of the Rorke's Drift Defence," *Market Rasen Weekly Mail, and Lincolnshire Advertiser* (Lincolnshire, ENG.), May 17, 1879.
[131] The Victorian Cross was and continues to be the highest and most prestigious decoration that can be awarded in the British honors system.
[132] Greaves, *Isandlwana*, 75.
[133] V.D. Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 333.

the reasoning behind and impact of official opinion, the treatment of the Zulu in British imperial consciousness and in South Africa after the war can, as British papers did with Isandlwana in March of 1879, be easily ignored. Just as unofficial opinion and representation of the Zulu and the war was aimed at pressuring the Empire to act, official imperial action could do the same to unofficial opinion by implying that the citizenry should continue to take pride – and by the number of medals a good deal of pride – in victory over the Zulu.

At the same, while official understandings of Rorke's Drift began to form, those on Isandlwana continued to intersect with the British public's views. Try as Britain might, the defeat at Isandlwana could not be forgotten or erased, especially as Rorke's Drift did not yet hold a lofty status among the public and the government launched a formal investigation into the disaster. Officers, and even common soldiers, understood the heroism associated with their imperial roles and exploits so, unsurprisingly, any association with being at fault for Isandlwana would mean to be dissociated from "Britishness."[134] Colonel Durnford, killed in battle, was quickly scapegoated, with Chelmsford himself, in a speech before the House of Lords, proclaiming, "In the final analysis, it was Durnford's disregard of orders that had brought about its destruction."[135] Once more, official opinion led the way in the aftermath of the conflict. The Empire put forth both a vision of Rorke's Drift and someone to blame to which the metropole could subscribe.

They, however, had yet to put forward an official explanation for how the supposedly primitive Zulu, other than through a single dead colonel's concocted mishaps, had won. The public was, thus far, unsatisfied with the response to Isandlwana regardless of Rorke's Drift or winning the war at Ulundi. More than a crisis of identity, the British metropole wholeheartedly

[134] Lieven, *The British Soldiery and the Ideology of Empire*, 132.
[135] Greaves, *Isandlwana*, 77.

rejected anything affiliated with the battle – a topic officially shared by the military between Chelmsford's blaming of Durnford and Sir Garnet Wolseley, commander of the entire British military, who said, "I am sorry that [surviving officers] were not killed with their men at Isandlwana instead of where they were. I don't like the idea of officers escaping on horseback when their men on foot are killed."[136] Just as the military officially turned on Durnford, unofficial opinion turned on Parliament. In the spring of 1880, a main contributing factor to the Conservative government of Benjamin Disraeli being swept out of office by Liberals, who were critical of his reckless foreign policy, was the fallout from Isandlwana.[137] Both officially and unofficially, Isandlwana and those deemed at fault were cast out of contemporary consciousness. Now, the reclamation of Isandlwana as part of the imperial project could begin, as, according to Shivelbusch, "A state of unreality—or dreamland—is invariably the first of these… The source of this transformation is usually an…overthrow of the old regime..." and, as the narrative will come to show, this would be the case in more ways than one.[138]

This transformation parallels the metropole's contested depictions of the Zulu as well, the majority of which were unofficial. While an exact source is difficult to find, Disraeli, PM during the war, was said to have generally responded to news of the defeat by saying, "A very remarkable people the Zulus: they defeat our generals, they convert our bishops, they have settled the fate of a great European dynasty." In general, the public did view the Zulu with a sense of awe at their achievement, exemplified in Disraeli's quote, even if they still voted out Disraeli and cared little for the Empire's poor treatment of the Zulu. Gump argues that cultural understandings of the Zulu would take a noticeable shift while actual treatment of the Zulu

[136] Greaves, *Isandlwana*, 70.
[137] Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 151.
[138] Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 9.

would not, saying, ""...by scoring such unlikely victories, the Zulu...passed quickly into popular culture as the quintessential 'noble savages.' Stripped of this romantic imagery, however, the aftermath of victory was anything but glamorous…"[139] Between the primitive and the master, British racial thought had little room for a middle-ground in its representations of colonial foes and subjects. However, in the first few years after Isandlwana, Zulu depictions entered a gray space in the metropole. The Zulu could be "noble" in his historical and contemporary military prowess, as proven by the exploits of Shaka and now Isandlwana, meaning that defeat at Isandlwana was not surprising. Over time, however, the increasingly popular status of Rorke's Drift would destroy this type of "noble," deploying the Zulu's "noble savage" status instead to confirm British glory in victory and in its civilizing of the subjugated Zulu.

Early unofficial representations of this phenomenon come quite soon after the war. One of these, an 1879 print sketch titled *Zulu Method of Advancing to the Attack* (fig. 1), "depicts athletic Zulu warriors in phalanx formation, equipped with traditional assegais, cowhide shields, and guns, advancing suicidally against British rifles."[140]

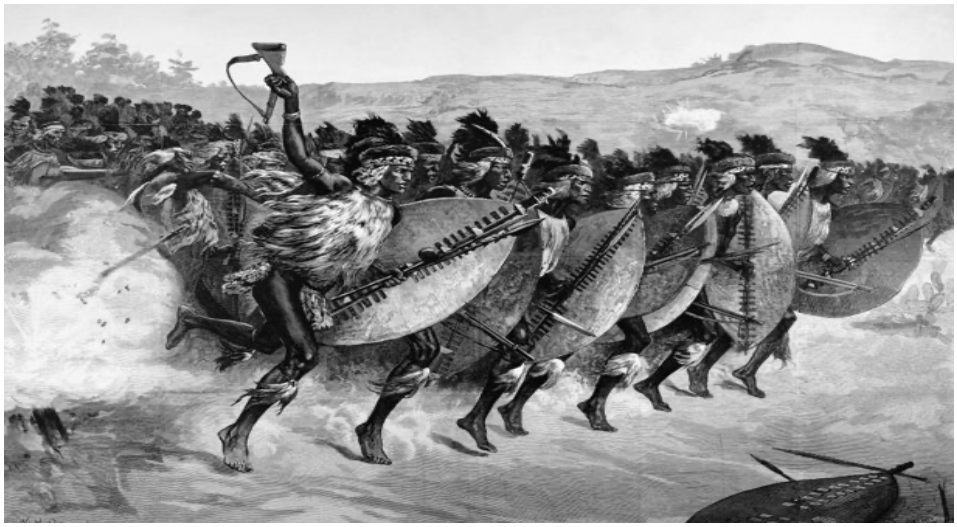

Figure 1. *Zulu Method of Advancing to the Attack, by Melton Prior (Published in the Illustrated London News, 1879)*

[139] Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 28.
[140] Ibid, 151.

Such artwork, through combing the classical phalanx formation with the concept of a suicidal charge, conjures up images of the quintessential masculine sacrifice of the Greeks at Thermopylae, as if the brave Zulu did not realize that they marched toward their own demise. A popular heroic theme in Britain, especially since the immortalized failed Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854 during the Crimean War, concepts of racial supremacy were rebuffed by the Zulus seemingly shared understanding of noble sacrifice. Whereas Darwin argued that the civilized could not lose to the primitive, he and other anthropologists did not say anything about "savages" who were neither primitive nor civilized.

However, while the gray space of the "noble savage" was deployed as an outlet for understanding the physical strength and successful militarism of Zulu males, it was not extended to Zulu women. This is more clearly exhibited in differing Victorian conceptions of femininity and masculinity that changed opinions of Zulu representations in female versus male bodies. Contemporary British historian Philippa Levine notes that one 1879 story, a lawsuit brought against London bookseller Mr. Phillpott, caused quite the stir in the metropole. Sued for displaying "semi-clad Zulus" in his shop, this controversy regarding depiction of the primitive body, and here more specifically multiple female bodies, made its way to *The Times* and other papers. Ultimately, arguments that what the British considered to be "indecent" was a normal part of Zulu culture aided in Mr. Phillpott's successful defense. The Zulu women were not noble, white, or considered a part of "Britishness," so attacks on the indecency of the photographs fell flat and nudity was permitted and, as future examples will show, flourished.[141] While male Zulu bodies were deployed to showcase the physical strength of Zulu militarism, Qureshi writes that to distinguish "between the civilized and the savage" often meant providing "cross-cultural

[141] Philippa Levine, "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 37, no. 5 (2015): 473-490.

comparative assessments of the status of women."[142] While these types of visualizations were largely considered of importance to anthropology by showcasing the Zulu in their natural "primitive" habitat and culture for scientific inquiry and British interpretation, depictions of Zulu women, in this manner specifically, helped to assure the metropole that Zulu culture was seemingly "savage" even as Zulu men could occupy a higher status.

The case of Mr. Phillpott and the controversy and excitement it elicited helps to quantify the extent to which the "noble savage" was used in evolving Zulu depictions, demonstrating that female Zulu continued to be objects of anthropological, and even erotic, fascination with the "primitive." One *Globe* article discussing the pictures wrote, "They were sent over with the purpose of showing the English people the nature of the Zulus, in the same way as specimens of the Afghans, the Japanese, and the Chinese had been photographed."[143] Such visual representations showcase the tensions exhibited at the contested cultural limits of Zulu depictions and the ways in which Zulu stories continued to offer British self-reflection on their own society, allowing the metropolitan conscience to turn an eye from Isandlwana and the brutal imperial subjugation of the Zulu Kingdom towards smaller debates.

Artwork in the 1870s and 1880s saw a rise in grandiose imperial military paintings of victory but also defeat, providing a visual basis through which the cultural metamorphosis of, first, Rorke's Drift and, later on, Isandlwana took place. In these visual representations, the British soldier takes center stage in the taming of the southern African frontier while Zulu representations are directed towards supplementing imperial stature and glory. Unlike more immediate representations in the aftermath of the conflict that promote the Zulu specifically, these imperialist works emphasize the darkness of the Zulu in a monolithic fashion. One of a

[142] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 24.
[143] "The Zulu Photographs Case: Extraordinary Scene," *Globe* (London, ENG.), October 30, 1879.

number of famous paintings regarding the battle, *The Defence of Rorke's Drift* (Fig. 2) portrayed the imperial victory in all of its officially granted glory. Modern scholar of Victorian art and literature Joseph A. Kestner, discussing the importance of one of these paintings, explains:

> The other famous image of Rorke's Drift was painted by Elizabeth Thompson, Lady Butler, and entitled *The Defence of Rorke's Drift*, exhibited in 1881. It was commissioned by Queen Victoria to commemorate the eleven Victoria Cross winners, all of whom are portrayed in the canvas.[144]

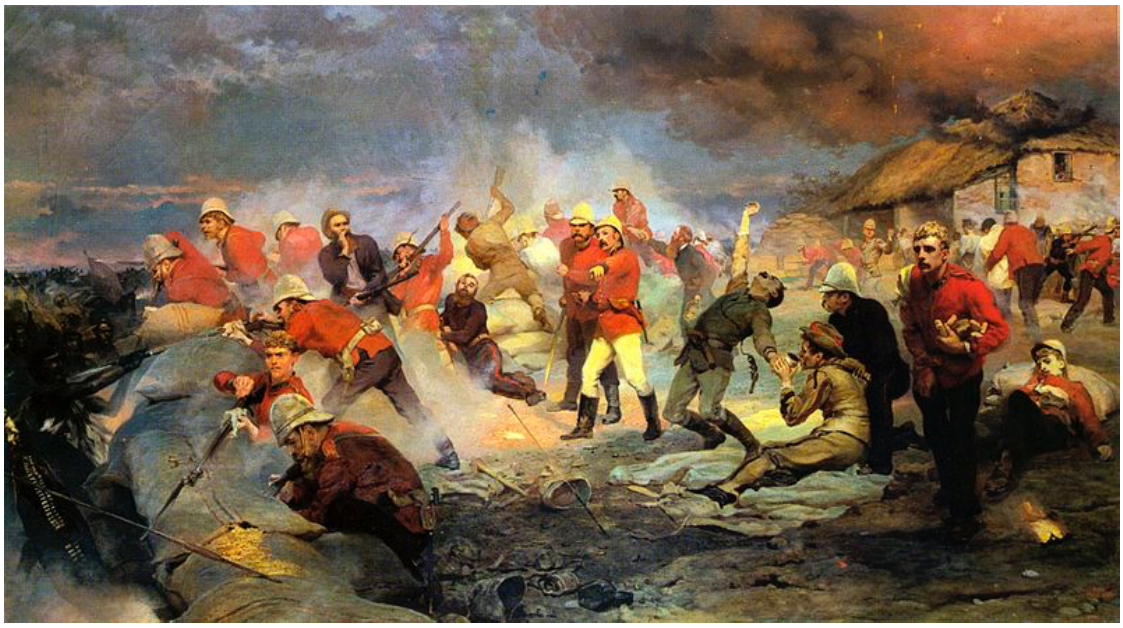

Figure 2. *The Defence of Rorke's Drift, by Lady Butler (Exhibited in 1881)*

Thompson, known as Lady Butler, was a famous female British painter who tended to focus on the glory of the Empire and its historic exploits. Here, she brightly paints the British in red and places them at the center of the piece, with each soldier's face showcasing the glory, pain, anguish, and struggle of the moment. The British are juxtaposed against an overly dark, monolithic, and expressionless horde of Zulu that encapsulated the "savage" without the "noble" that defined the sketch from the *Illustrated London News*. Truly, by commissioning someone as famous as Thompson to put forward this image of Rorke's Drift and, by extension, the Zulu,

[144] Joseph A. Kestner, "'Ulysses' and Victorian Battle Art." *James Joyce Quarterly* 41, no. 1/2 (2003): 90.

official actions regarding unofficial representations again worked to refashion how the public understood the war. Her other works include paintings of brave and surrounded British infantry squares at the Napoleonic Battle of Quatre Bras, a lone soldier retreating from defeat in Kabul, and the charge of the Royal Scots Greys at the Battle of Waterloo. Whereas the awarding of the medals for Rorke's Drift occurred in 1879, 1881 saw the Queen herself, the epitome of both the British Isles as Queen of the United Kingdom and the Empire as Empress of India, officially sanction a popular narrative for the battle. Just as Thompson did in her paintings, this narrative positioned imperial valor at the center of the war's narrative through Rorke's Drift and placed the Zulu in a perfunctory "savage" role to the "selfless" British heroism and civilizing in their willingness to combat what was deemed might, white, and right.

Paintings of Isandlwana, however, took more time to come to fruition. One of the earliest, and eventually most famous, of these paintings was from Charles Edwin Fripp and exhibited in 1885. Titled *The Battle of Isandlwana* (Fig. 3), the artwork portrays the remnants of the British column hopelessly surrounded by the Zulu army. Succinctly describing the painting and its potential implications, Lieven writes:

> ...Fripp's painting of the last stand at Isandlwana shows a small group of ordinary soldiers fighting to the end. They are stalwart, comradely and indefatigable, defending to the last the honour of their regiment and country against a seething black horde; and it is these qualities which are emphasised rather than daring, initiative or individualistic heroism. The assumption that the soldiery shared, in their own degree, a belief in the imperial project is clear in these representations, where the moral in turn encouraged their allegiance. [145]

[145] Michael Lieven, "The British Soldiery and the Ideology of Empire," 129.

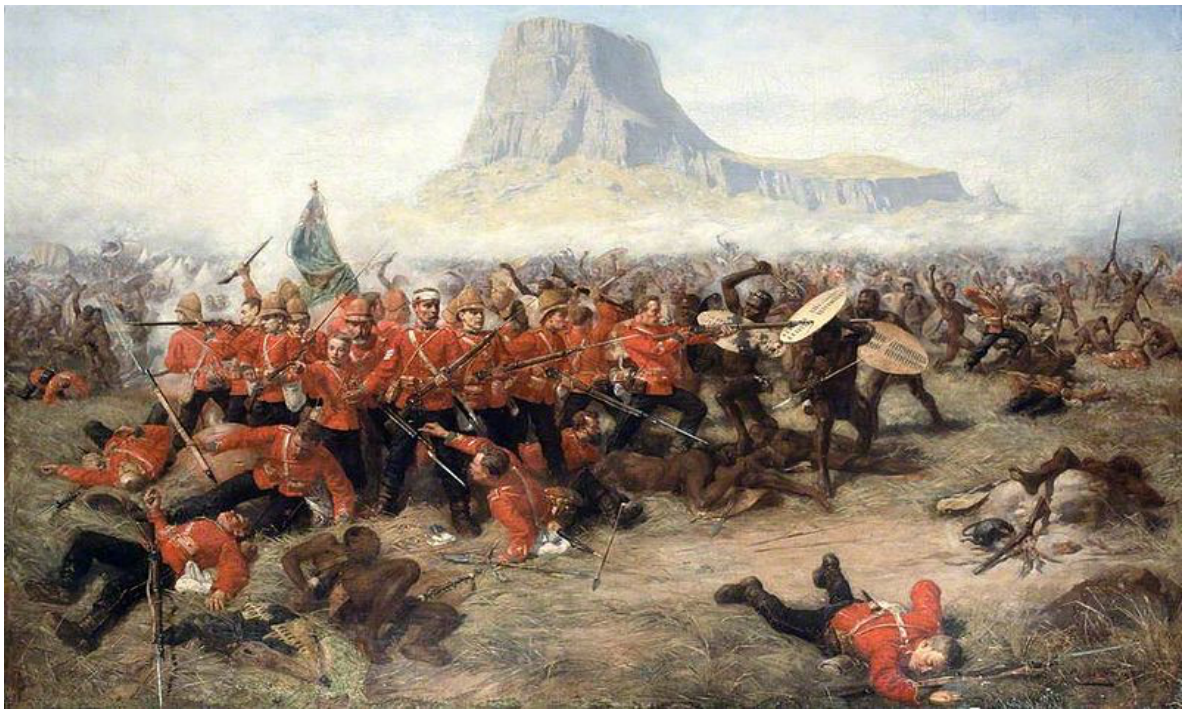

Figure 3. *The Battle of Isandlwana, by Charles Edwin Fripp (Exhibited in 1885)*

Fripp portrays the Zulu as the aggressors, but it was the British who instigated the war with an ultimatum and invaded. According to Catherine Anderson, contemporary reviews promoted the excitement and prominence of the battle but, nonetheless, still questioned whether the public was ready to revisit such a humiliating defeat. Fripp was partially motivated by the success of Lady Butler's imperial paintings, choosing the last stand scene to commemorate British bravery and Victorian masculine stoicism in the face of certain death while the Zulu are unable to contain their more "wild" and reckless masculinity in their triumph.[146] In these types of paintings, the British public could imagine their sons, brothers, and husbands being struck down by the seemingly unorganized but victorious Zulu.

While the painting would, over time, increase in popularity, it is important to note that it was exhibited in the same year as the Scramble for Africa and clearly put forth the tragedy that was the epitome of the "white man's burden." The British had to pay with their own blood to

[146] Anderson, "Red Coats and Black Shields," 17-20.

bring the fruits of the Empire to those they deemed inferior and worthy of subjugation, but the successes of Rorke's Drift and eventual triumph at Ulundi were only made possible through those who fell in the process. Endorsements of British imperial heroics and superiority at Rorke's Drift confirmed and comforted the metropole – visualizations of defeats could endorse the former while confirming the necessity of the latter. When depicted alone, the Zulu were cast as noble and composed fighters but, when in visualizations of battle with the British, they were more often deployed as figures contributing to the Empire's military glory regardless of a battle's outcome.

Metropolitan media and literature after the war and election found moderate success through a few lenses. According to historian A.T. Cope, roughly a dozen books were published in the 1880s on the Anglo-Zulu War. Returning to the travelogue roots of Isaacs, the accounts revolved around "personal and mainly military" exploits that depicted the war as an "adventure with strong ingredients of glamour and glory."[147] The majority of these expressed little to no concern for the Zulu or for how the war was conducted. By mixing exoticism with the factual, the first long form writings introduced the short war as an adventure in imperialism, one that glossed over defeat and focused on the individual glory that Empire offered without offering specific representations of the Zulu. One popular reprinted article revisits British fascination with the Zulu perspective, quoting a son of Cetshwayo's minister of war. The younger Zulu was claimed to have said that the war was because of Cetshwayo's non-compliance, that the Zulu had a meticulous plan prior to Isandlwana, and that British bravery was evident in defeat and victory was only unattainable due to Zulu superiority of numbers.[148] The son of the Zulu war minister is

[147] A.T. Cope, "The Zulu War in Zulu Perspective" *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 56 (1981): 41.
[148] "A Zulu Account of the Zulu War," *Naval & Military Gazette and Weekly Chronicle of the United Service* (London, ENG.), December 24, 1879.

cast in a relatively positive and trustworthy light, and another Zulu account deployed similar tactics regarding the infamous death of the Prince Imperial Louis-Napoléon of France, who, while serving in South Africa as a British staff member, was killed during a skirmish with Zulu warriors.[149] By utilizing characterizations of Isandlwana from Zulu individuals that tended toward the "noble" side of "noble savage," such writings surely helped to alleviate pain and allow reflection on the British metropole's nausea at the thought of the Isandlwana and the war as a whole. A piece titled "The 'Friendly Zulus,'" discussing the small Zulu population living in London, explains how "friendly Zulus" contracted to perform in the city were now "discontented Zulus" and "noble savages [that were] not inclined to come to terms" due to their "loafing" around and refusal to work.[150] Quite literally in real time, this article demonstrates the ease with which the Zulu could be a positive, a negative, and a caricature in metropolitan media.

The collapse of the Zulu as a true noble "savage" and the evolution from avoiding Isandlwana to incorporating it as a wholesale part of imperial splendor is most evident in the writings of famous British adventure author and imperialist Henry Rider Haggard, who lived in South Africa from 1875-1882. His early non-fiction, and not too popular, account of the Zulu from 1882, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*, was published at the same time that Cetshwayo visited London to advocate for a return of his kingship over the now Zulu protectorate, an event that briefly garnered metropolitan interest and even sympathy for the Zulu cause.[151] Throughout this quite neutral work, Haggard often commends the Zulu, saying, "The king is now coming to England, where he will doubtless make a very good impression, since his appearance is dignified, and his manners, as is common among Zulus of high rank, are those of a

[149] "Zulu Account of the Death of Prince Louis Napoleon," *Alcester Chronicle* (Warwickshire, ENG.), August 7, 1880.
[150] "The 'Friendly Zulus,'" *Eastern Daily Press* (Norfolk, ENG.), December 22, 1879.
[151] Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 121.

gentlemen."[152] Calling Cetshwayo a "black paragon," Haggard even expresses dismay at the British misunderstandings of Zulu culture that, according to him, made it "difficult to follow the argument that because [Britain was unable to stop intra-Zulu violence through diplomacy]…England was justified in making war on the Zulus."[153] In discussing the aftermath of the conflict, Haggard oscillates between putting down the Zulu as in need of direct British control and governance while advocating for the fair treatment of a people "quicker-witted, more honest, and braver, than the ordinary run of white men," even quoting Shakespeare's Shylock in pleading "'Hath not a Jew eyes'…Has a native not feelings or affections."[154] At the time of publication in 1882, Haggard's writings exemplify how the Zulu, even by those who supported some of the Empire's actions, was depicted as the "noble savage." Haggard's ultimate status as an imperialist is undeniable, but these earlier reflections by Haggard have invited some recent scholarly contestations regarding his standing as an ardent imperialist in the early 1880s, such as from Marie-Claude Barbier, a Senior Lecturer on South African and Canadian history at ENS Paris-Saclay, and others.[155]

However, in later editions of the book, a new introduction from Haggard displays the war besides new personal arguments supporting the conduct of Frere and Shepstone while attacking white Europeans, such as Scottish writer-feminist Lady Florence Dixie who wrote *A Defence of Zululand and Its King from the Blue Book* in 1882 advocating for the restoration of the Zulu king Cetshwayo. He argues that any improper imperial agitation for war was justified through the actions of the King as an "offender" to both British sovereignty and his own people. Haggard,

---

[152] Henry Rider Haggard, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours* (London: Trübner, 1882), 1-2.
[153] Ibid, 10.
[154] Ibid, 221.
[155] See: Marie-Claude Barbier, "Henry Rider Haggard in Zululand: A Reluctant Imperialist?" and other chapters in *Another Vision of Empire: Henry Rider Haggard's Modernity and Legacy*, eds Patricia Crouan-Véron and Gilles Teulié (Marseille, France: E-rea webjournal, Aix-Marseille University, 2020).

quoting the once neutral Bulwer, now Governor of the Colony of Natal and Special Commissioner for Zulu Affairs, continues:

> 'The Zulu people, there is little doubt, would have gladly come under the direct rule of the British Government [instead of a return by Cetshwayo]. They would have accepted that rule without question and without misgiving. They would have accepted it for all reasons, not only because it was the rule of the Government that had conquered them, but because they knew it to be a just and merciful rule…Great numbers of the Zulu people have no wish to return under [Cetshwayo's] rule, and would regard any obligation to do so as one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall them.'[156]

Without saying it, Haggard deploys a distorted idea of the "noble savage" in his attacks on Zulu supporters and Cetshwayo to try and mold unofficial narratives regarding the post-war treatment of the Zulu. He depicts the average Zulu as intelligent enough to understand the consequences of subjugation and the benefits of imperial rule but not intelligent enough to remain independent. This line of reasoning pushes Britons to not question imperial governance of the Zulu, as the coming alternative, Cetshwayo, had been depicted as untrustworthy and prone to violence since Shepstone's quotes on possibly annexing the Zulu Kingdom in 1857. Haggard's own changes and addition of statements more critical of Zulu supporters showcases the extent to which Haggard participated in and helped push metropolitan depictions of the Zulu that deemphasized and warped the "noble" in "noble savage."

Regarding the war itself, Haggard continues the avoidance of Isandlwana, writing, "With the exception of the affair at Rorke's Drift, there is nothing to be proud of in connection with it, and a great deal to be ashamed of…" calling it a "disaster" that could have been avoided by letting the Zulu and Boers fight and clear the "political atmosphere wonderfully."[157] Further evolutions, like in his added introduction to *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*, can be seen in

---

[156] Henry Rider Haggard, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*, rev. ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1896), xiv-xv.
[157] Haggard, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*, rev. ed., 30-31, 34.

Haggard's later writings, such as in his shift to fictional adventure works with the immensely popular *King Solomon's Mines*. Published in 1885 as Fripp offered a new visual representation of Isandlwana, his fictional African people and kingdom, the Kukuanas, are quite similar to the Zulu in their organized military, fierce independence, and "witchcraft." In the novel, Haggard's Englishmen fight for glory and treasure while using their superior intelligence to navigate and, ultimately, escape the realm.[158] A sort of middle ground, Haggard centers the story around British adventurers and their quest for the mythical King Solomon's mines as Fripp centered the British soldiers in their esteemed defense of that which was tactically unimportant. Haggard's fictional pieces promulgated the ideal of the "noble savage" in that the Kukuanas were more advanced than their African contemporaries but still easily tricked and bested by white Europeans.

By the 1890s, Africa was increasingly mythologized through Haggard's and others fictional portrayals that held a supposed truthful basis in the African backgrounds of authors like Haggard. Haggard returned to the Anglo-Zulu war, and specifically the stories of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, but this time from a perspective that highly mixed fiction and non-fiction to create an imperial tale fit for a metropolitan audience in his 1893 "The Tale of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift," published in *The True Story Book*. He lambasted Colonel Durnford's "role" in the disastrous defeat – an attempt to further confirm a British scapegoat in defeat - and glorified the "noble" defense at Rorke's Drift. Positively representing the Zulu at times, Haggard called the Zulu forces a "wave of steel" that was "so swift and sudden... that many of the soldiers had no time to fix bayonets."[159] His story was meant to excite with truth, but in reality, also meant to

[158] Henry Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (London: Cassell and Company, 1885).
[159] Henry Rider Haggard, "The Tale of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift," in Andrew Lang, *The True Story Book* (London ; New York : Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), 140.

sell, and these seemingly "firsthand accounts of Zulu bravery… offered a model for Victorian militarism and manliness" that allowed Haggard to build his story around the popular vision Britons were coming to accept.[160] One clearly exaggerated account building on tropes of Zulu post-battle brutality read, "...the Zulu on the war-path [have] no mercy and the dead [British were] mutilated and cut open to satisfy [their] horrible native superstition."[161] The Zulu were fierce fighters and staunchly independent, but, to Haggard and the British public, still savages even after years of British rule. Haggard's writings detail the British resentment towards their own imperial duty; British soldiers often died and were sometimes defeated in the quest to bring "civilization" to groups deemed inferior, such as the Zulu. In a convoluted sense, the British believed their imperial mission was for the benefit of the very people who actively resisted it, and their resentment arose from having to face resistance.

Perhaps the most apparent mythologizing undertaken by Haggard regarding Isandlwana is his inclusion of, by then, the popular narrative that British Lieutenants Melvill and Coghill exhibited the highest form of "Britishness" in sacrificing their own lives to save the British Union Jack from the insatiable Zulu army. In his story of the battle, Haggard writes, "…two heroes named Melvill and Coghill died together whilst striving to save the colours of their regiment from the grasp of the victorious ' Children of Heaven.'"[162] According to Ian Knight, this story is greatly exaggerated:

> …all wrapped up with an obvious symbolic glamour… Characterized usually as 'the dash with the Colours', the scene was imagined on the front cover and centre pages in half a dozen forms, more often than not entirely inaccurately. Melvill and Coghill were shown escaping the camp together, often cutting their way through the hordes of Zulus surrounding them, sometimes with the Colours wrapped

[160] Anderson, "Red Coats and Black Shields," 25.
[161] Haggard, "The Tale of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift," 141.
[162] Ibid, 152

> around Melvill's body – never cased – and in at least one example riding through an exotic jungle.[163]

The inaccurate exoticism, pointed out by Knight, being attached to Isandlwana turned the defeat into, like with Haggard's tales and general British literature on the war as mentioned by Cope, an adventure. Adventure and violence had defined metropolitan understandings of the Zulu, and the slow reclamation of Isandlwana alongside the glorification of Rorke's Drift through the end of the nineteenth century had devasting effects, as even the 1979 Anglo-American adventure war film, *Zulu Dawn*, depicts Melvill and Coghill's mythologized "dash with the colours" as saving the Union Jack from the overwhelming Zulu force.

Haggard's tale ends by launching Rorke's Drift, the only "proud" moment of the war, into mythological status. The British soldiers were gallant, the leadership courageous, and they were able to overcome the Zulu army's numerical superiority "…for this was beyond the power of mortal bravery and devotion."[164] Devotion to this "burden" pushed the British ever forward, as if they were noble for using modern technology on those less blessed with modern weapons who dared protect their homelands. Their victories were beyond "mortal" powers, for the British imperial mission and white man's burden was implied to be sanctioned by a higher power that could not be comprehended nor fully defeated, even if the British lost the single battle of Isandlwana. The victory at Rorke's Drift was a culmination of the victory of the white man's burden, that those who resisted were finally overcome and now able to be helped by their subjugator's imposition of British civilization and God's will. Haggard's own memory of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift was a product of personal British feeling bleeding into what became a popular vision of history: a blundering tragedy followed by a heroic stand where, it

---

[163] Knight, *Zulu Rising*, 294-295.
[164] Haggard, "The Tale of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift," 148.

seems, a few men saved the entirety of British pride, imperialism, and ideology against overwhelming odds. Schivelbusch's model of overcoming military defeat considered the euphoric "dreamland" state as temporary. However, Britain's ultimate victory in the war and early avoidance of Isandlwana greatly contributed to the continuation of this mythological dreamland throughout the nineteenth century and, as the epilogue will demonstrate, well into the twentieth, taking harmful Zulu representations with it.

This "dreamland" can be seen, literally, in grand colonial shows and exhibits that included the Zulu, as well as in popular late nineteenth-century British photographs of Zulu men and women. In the first few years after the Anglo-Zulu War and similar to early unofficial contestations over the Zulu as the "noble savage," exhibitions of Zulu in the metropole often revolved around showing off their unique military equipment, such as in the Isle of Wight in 1880 and Sussex in 1882, with one letter to an editor about an 1883 Zulu exhibition in Brierley-Hill quoting the Zulu as "'peculiar people, and noble savages, the real Zulu.'"[165] However, by the mid to late 1880s, as with Haggard's writings, these exhibitions had changed. The Colonial and India Exhibition of 1886 in London, according to museum professional Catherine Weinberg, treated Africans as a "modern subject," with the South African exhibits depicting Zulus as mine workers and contributors to the Empire's commercial network.[166] For the British public, the once feared and militant people on the frontier had now been "civilized" into a larger imperial system. As the century ended, British demand for photography brought the Zulu to the metropole once more. While exhibits of the Zulu deployed them as economic and military contributors to British

[165] "Exhibition," *Isle of Wight Observer* (Isle of Wight, ENG.), February 21, 1880; "Horsham Total Abstinence Society," *West Sussex County Times* (Sussex, ENG.), February 4, 1882; "The Exhibition of Zulus in High Street," *County Advertiser & Herald for Staffordshire and Worcestershire* (Staffordshire, ENG.), February 24, 1883.
[166] Catherine Weinberg, "Presences in the archive: Amagugu (treasures) from the Zulu kingdom at the British Museum" in *The Pasts and Prescence of Art in South Africa*, ed. Chris Wingfield, John Giblin & Rachel King (Cambridge, UK: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2020), 148.

glory, such as at the 1899 Savage South Africa Show in London, the public's fascination with Black masculinity and femininity brought more visual representations to the metropole. These "studio" photographs, according to art historian Virginia-Lee Webb, were distorted to conform to the demands, and even sexual fantasies, of consumers back in Britain. Common themes included grand natural backdrops for depictions of Zulu men as warriors and Zulu women as partially covered, even though nude photography of Africans, as discussed earlier in the Phillpott case, was previously contested.[167] Sometimes, Zulu women were shown enjoying domestic activities of leisure associated with British femininity, possibly furthering British fantasies of the Black female body by connecting it to the British female but also connecting to imperial civilizing efforts by, as Qureshi notes, deploying the "status of women."[168] The photographers aimed to give the British public what it desired, creating a vicious cycle that sexualized Zulu women and further typecast Zulu men in private photo collections and in print articles into the 1900s.[169]

As the metropole fell for an increasingly mythical imperial narrative of the Anglo-Zulu War that garnered the attention of the British public well after 1879, the treatment of the Zulu after the war was anything but a transformation of Zululand into a British-like "civilized" entity. The vengeance enacted in the destruction of Ulundi at the end of the war was but a culmination of what some historians consider to be an atmosphere of "masculine aggression and personal violence" exhibited in brutal reprisals against Zulu warriors and citizens alike by the British soldiery.[170] Gump mentions that Cetshwayo's pleas for peace were all ignored by Chelmsford, and his kingdom was broken up into thirteen nominally independent Zulu clans that allowed

[167] Virginia-Lee Webb, "Fact and Fiction: Nineteenth-Century Photographs of the Zulu," *African Arts* 25, no. 1 (1992): 50–59, 98-99.
[168] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 24.
[169] "One of Dinizulu's Young Men," *Illustrated London News* (London, ENG.), May 19, 1906.
[170] Lieven, "The British Soldier and the Ideology of Empire," 136.

Britain to avoid direct annexation in the near-term.[171] Governor and High Commissioner of Natal Wolseley, describing the plan's intentions, stated, "I shall thus secure the civilizing influence of a White man over the district of Zululand nearest to us, and he and his people will be a buffer between us and the barbarous districts of Zululand beyond."[172] Britain's rule over the Zulu clans was a stopgap measure in fixing a subjugated entity on the frontier without further exposing Britain to an African interior that had, at Isandlwana, proven difficult to conquer. The Zulu clans inevitably fought amongst themselves, prompting the return of Cetshwayo as a symbolic figurehead to unify the "independent" Zulu that failed, in part, because of Shepstone's continued subversion of the metropole's authority through his imperial power on the frontier.[173] According to Gump, "A defeated Zululand…transformed itself into a reservoir of cheap labor, a highly desirable outcome for the British and, later, the South African whites."[174] It was this consistent subversion of nominal Zulu independence and imperial yearning for complete control that pushed some Britons to defend and advocate for the Zulu long after Isandlwana and annexation were settled.

While the 1880s and 1890s produced a mass mythologizing of Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift, and the place of the Zulu within imperial stories and, by extension, eventually imperial memory, the legacy of Bishop Colenso's pro-Zulu advocacy was also not without echoes. Bishop Colenso, who would pass away in 1883, even continued to protect the Zulu from British opinion, arguing in one travelogue's preface that the Anglo-Zulu War was an imperial concoction of Frere's undertaking.[175] While one British reviewer commended Colenso's defense and the journal's

---

[171] Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 114-115.
[172] Ed Adrian Preston, *The South African Journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley* (A. A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1971), 53, quoted in Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 119.
[173] Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 121-122.
[174] Ibid, 168.
[175] Cornelius Vijn, *Cetshwayo's Dutchman*, edited by John Colenso (London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1880).

objectivity in exposing the leadup to the war, the work otherwise received little fanfare.[176] In the early 1880s, there was a gradual albeit limited metropolitan understanding of Frere and Shepstone's roll in fashioning causes for the Anglo-Zulu War, though neither faced any official consequences or unofficial consequences beyond the occasional critical article. Some writers directly attacked the British concept of the frontier, with a writer for the American *Advocate for Peace* lambasting that the only attainable "scientific frontier**"** for the Empire to stop its conquests at would be the "ends of the earth."[177] Furthermore, just as the British used Zulu representations to critique or promote their own civilization, other subjugated peoples within the British Empire took inspiration from the Zulu victory at Isandlwana. One example, from Dublin's pro-independence *The Irishman*, lambasts, not the British, but the English "devils" as "assailants" that "invaded the country of the Zulus – who, by all natural rights and divine, were justified in defending their native land." The Irish saw their own struggle for independence reflected in the Zulu's subjugation to the British, arguing for God-given and natural rights to be extended to the Zulu regardless of their Blackness, their status as "primitive" or "noble savage," or any of their customs. In this unique representation, the Zulu are equal to whites, and, if anything, depicted as superior to the English in that they, like the Irish, were helpless in defending against the progress of imperial "civilizing" that this writer exposes as, in reality, a "diabolical work" of those vain enough to "slaughter prisoners" and "massacre the wounded."[178]

Both of Colenso's daughters, the historian Frances Colenso and missionary Harriette Colenso, are primarily famous in South African history for their work advocating for the Zulu cause. Though each caused less of a stir in the metropole than their father's religious stances and

[176] "Review: Cetshwayo's Dutchman," *Daily Review* (Edinburgh, SCT.), January 30, 1880.
[177] "The Zulu War," *Advocate of Peace (*1847-1884) 10, no. 2 (1879): 11.
[178] "Playing the Very Devil," *The Irishman* (Dublin, IRE.), June 21, 1879.

pro-Zulu arguments had, they nonetheless were perceived as reflections of their father. Frances' 1880 *History of the Zulu War and Its Origin* and 1884 *Ruin of Zululand* portrayed the Zulu as victims of aggressive and contradictory imperialism that sought annexation and dismissed failure through scapegoats, like Colonel Durnford.[179] While imperialists pushed back on or dismissed Frances' claims, some reviews, even one from the popular *Illustrated London News*, commended that Frances, while lacking in certain areas, did "well in vindicating her father."[180] When Frances passed away in 1887, obituaries in the metropole meshed the narrative of the Anglo-Zulu War and Zulu representations alongside a surprisingly sympathetic picture of Frances' life, writing:

> …the Zulus have lost one of their staunchest friends…Even at the height of the Zulu war when the public was in a fighting mood after the massacre at Isandula, and when Cetewayo was popularly supposed to be little better than a cannibal, Miss Colenso worked hard to make the justice of the Zulu case against Sir Bartle Frere…Miss Colenso's last moments were doubtless embittered by the reflection that England had refused to undertake the civilizing work which [she] believed to be the duty of this country.[181]

Her sister, Harriette, was less known, but equally described as a tribute to her father. One smaller London periodical profile from 1889 succinctly reads, "Miss Colenso is best known, outside the mission circle, however, for her zealous advocacy of the rights of the people in Zululand who have been the sport of English and colonial misrule."[182] Following in the footsteps of her sister and father, she wrote in the Zulus defense as well, publishing *The Problem of the Races in Africa* as a second war between the Boers and British approached. In it, she strongly states, "I should be no loyal subject of Her whom all of us in Africa…regard as our Mother and the Fountain of Justice, if, on such an occasion, I spoke of peace – where there is no peace."[183] While few may

---

[179] Frances E. Colenso, *History of the Zulu War and Its Origin* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1880), and Frances E. Colenso, *Ruin of Zululand*: *An account of British doings in Zululand since the Invasion of 1879* (London, W. Ridgway, 1884).
[180] "Review of Books," *Illustrated London News* (London, ENG.), June 12, 1880.
[181] *Warminster & Westbury Journal, and Wilts County Advertiser* (Wiltshire, ENG.), May 14, 1887.
[182] "Miss Colenso," *The Graphic* (London, ENG.), August 24, 1889.
[183] Harriette E. Colenso, *The Problem of Races in Africa* (Woking: Oriental University Institute, 1897), 17.

have heard her pleas, Harriette's attempt to speak truth by appealing to the greatest representation of the Empire's power, Queen Victoria, something neither Frances nor her father invoked, was an unmatched show of solidarity with the Zulu. What is most striking in the second generation of Zulu defenders, especially in the aftermath of the highly masculinized metropolitan representations of both the British and Zulu in the Anglo-Zulu War, is that they were primarily British female writers in an era that commonly associated women with the domestic sphere. Even if Frances and Harriette failed to create the same media "buzz" as their father, their advocacy and that of Lady Dixie saw the early buddings of an anti-racist-feminist alliance in British female relationships with and depictions of the Zulu. More broadly, the story of the Colenso daughters connects to historical understandings of the role that women and femininity played in advocating for peace in an age where masculinity increasingly defined conflict. Just a few years after Harriette's work was published, British feminists Emily Hobhouse and Millicent Fawcett would famously lead investigations into and welfare advocacy for Boers subject to brutal imperial treatment in British-run concentration camps during the Second Boer War.

Defenders of the Zulu, and for a time the battles and war itself, were also overshadowed by the Second Boer War of 1899-1902. Considered one of the first highly covered wars by media figures and correspondents alongside the Spanish-American War, the British public, more so than before, was drawn to the battlefields of South Africa as the Boer Republics, like Cetshwayo, declined an ultimatum and fought for their independence against the Empire's desire to control the interior's vast mineral and diamond deposits.[184] Haggard and other imperial and adventure writers shifted their focus to events in the Transvaal that pitted white Christians against each other in a predominately Black region of the Empire. This conflict caused a myriad of imperial

[184] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Great Boer War* (1959; repr., Luton: Andrews UK Ltd, 2012), 6.

and racial insecurities in Britain, some of which, like the "native question," were linked to arguments over how whites best governed and civilized their Black imperial subjects and how a future united South Africa would operate.[185] While the metropole dealt heavily with literary arguments over the pros and cons of fighting fellow white men before a regional audience of Black observers, the Empire, officially, sanctioned what today would be called concentration camps, rounding up Boer women and children to force a quicker end to the war.[186] The Zulu, while officially neutral, tended to support the British against the poor physical treatment Boers had historically enacted on the Zulu and other Black peoples. However, the formation of the independent Union of South African in 1910, Frere's imperial dream, began a chain of events that, eventually, resulted in Boer/Afrikaner government control and the start of Apartheid in 1948.

Overall, the Zulu lost to an Empire hell-bent on annexation supported, officially and unofficially, through arguments promoting the civilizing power of imperial subjugation. While it took some time for the metropole to overcome the shame of Isandlwana, both the visual and written representations of the Zulu attracted a fluidity through which, ultimately, a new vision of the Anglo-Zulu War emerged. Isandlwana was the white man's burden - doubly confirmed by the allowance of posthumous Victoria Crosses to Lieutenants Melvill and Coghill in 1907[187] - Rorke's Drift was the white man's triumph, and unofficial Zulu depictions changed repeatedly, such as in the unofficial imperial distortion of the Zulu as between primitive and civilized, to formulate this imperial duality and, ultimately, imperial mythology. There is, perhaps, no better example of this unique process than the striking changes that take place between the early

[185] A. Werner, "The Native Question in South Africa," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 4, no. 16 (1905): 441–54.
[186] Doyle, *The Great Boer War*, 324.
[187] Greaves, Isandlwana, 64.

writings of Henry Rider Haggard in 1882 that partially defend the Zulu and his fictionalized retellings of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift from 1893. The uniqueness of Zulu representations, such as the "noble savage" and the strongest of Africa's warriors, the inquisitive and willing subject who understood the power of Britain, and the people whose own prowess was used to assuage British self-doubts and promote a new imperial history, is well summed up by Catherine Anderson's quote: "Though Victorians likened African societies to children throughout the century, they found Zulus to compare favourably, in certain ways, with themselves, prompting them to reconsider their notions of race and masculinity as they met such opponents on the imperial battlefield."[188]

[188] Anderson, "Red Coats and Black Shields," 25.

Mythologizing Zulu: The Legacies of Imperial Memories and Identities

The end of direct British rule over South Africa, and by extension the Zulu, did not mean the end of metropolitan fascination with both the Zulu and the Anglo-Zulu War. Cognitive dissonance and new generations meant that the personal feelings of dishonor, revenge, and desire for imperial intervention and civilizing faded and were replaced by imperial popular memory and histories. The repercussions of the metropole's representations of the Zulu could be felt around a world that was either ruled by or had been products of the British Empire (Canada, Australia and New Zealand, India, etc.) or related countries building their own imperial visions on the subjugation of peoples of color, especially in the growing United States. In the former, the twentieth-century peak and subsequent quick collapse of the global British Empire coincided with a heightened romanticization of the Zulu, Isandlwana, and Rorke's Drift, potentially to offset new imperial insecurities. For the latter, reflections of metropolitan depictions from before, during, and after the war are seen in white American visualizations, while Black America, a noticeably more prominent culture with a larger population than that of Blacks in Britain, wrestled with how to best take-in and reject elements of popular Zulu understandings.

For the British metropole, new media and long-form histories highly romanticized the conflict in imperial memory, offering a distinct image of British glory that continued to escalate as the Empire lost the majority of its African and Asian imperial possessions in the aftermath of World War II. There is a noticeable drop in mentions of the Zulu after the end of the nineteenth century, according to the British Newspaper Archive, once more after 1950, and, finally, again

after the start of the twenty-first century, but the staying power of past Zulu depictions is incredibly strong.[189]

During the 1910s and 1920s, many Zulu representations oscillated between news stories regarding Zulu incidents in the Dominion of South Africa and informative articles concerning Zulu customs and culture. Many of these articles were short and informative pieces that detailed almost any instance of aggression, consternation, or violence among Zulu in South Africa, with one *Globe* article contradicting itself by calling the Zulu "powerful" while saying they were not "hard-working" or "industrious."[190] Even without ruling over the Zulu, metropolitan feelings found that "Britishness" was slow to take effect, with another widely reprinted article postulating that the Zulu were happiest in their previous state of natural primitivism as opposed to the ongoing "civilizing" process. Interestingly, this writer's revisionism of metropolitan Zulu representations leads him to conclude, "The Zulu, as a race, were, in the days of Chaka, Dingaan, and Cetewayo, an example to the world – even to the staunchest Christian – in the morality of their living."[191] As the first chapter demonstrated, this had rarely been the case for the British world at least, though it is possible that the author intended another subtle criticism of British society given a general drop in religiousness and morality that would become equated with the post-World War I years in Britain and America.

1929 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Isandlwana, and British papers tended to return to the concept of the Zulu as the "noble savage" once more to give context to a

---

[189] Mentions from 1850-1899 are 359,760. Mentions from 1900-1949 are 110,735. Mentions from 1950-1999 are 25, 321. Mentions from 2000-2022 are 2,062 (https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results?basicsearch=zulu&somesearch=zulu&exactsearch=false&retrievecountrycounts=false).

[190] See: "Zulu Unrest," *Globe* (London, ENG.), December 1, 1913; "Zulu on the Warpath," *Sheffield Independent* (Yorkshire, ENG.), July 1, 1914.

[191] See: "The Happy Zulu," in *Kilburn Times* (London, ENG.), October 21, 1910; *Bedford Record* (Bedfordshire, ENG.) October 18, 1910; *Whitby Gazette* (Yorkshire, ENG.), August 2, 1912.

defeat that much of the metropole likely had little connection to five decades later. One article described the shockwaves of defeat as sending a "thrill through the country," not mentioning the calls for revenge against the humiliation of defeat to the supposedly "primitive." The writer instead credits Haggard with "transforming the Zulu into a popular hero" using "the almost superhuman qualities" that the British public bestowed upon the victors of Isandlwana.[192] While Haggard's popular writing did help cement the glorification of Rorke's Drift and reappraisal of Isandlwana through its Zulu depictions, the second chapter of the thesis helps disprove the concept of the Zulu as a "popular hero" in the metropole.

Unfortunately, from the 1930s through the 1970s, many British historians and authors authenticated unofficial metropolitan narratives by historicizing them in their works, similar to how the natural science approach of missionaries in their writings on the Zulu had offered seemingly objective credence to depictions of a civilizing mission in the nineteenth century. These racially charged representations are fairly evident and not surprising in earlier twentieth-century writings, such as with *Glamour and Tragedy of the Zulu War* (1936) by W.H. Clements, though one 1948 work by ethnomusicologist and writer Hugh Tracey, *Zulu Paradox*, takes things to the extreme by describing the yet to be civilized Zulu as a "fighter," "bully," "aggressive by nature, depraved and greedy," and "like Nazis."[193] Well into the 1960s and 1970s, British and Natal historians failed to reconfigure the historical narrative, with Rupert Furneaux's *The Zulu War: Isandhlawana and Rorke's Drift* (1963) likening the stand at Rorke's Drift to the Alamo and, above all, to Thermopylae.[194] As a work of history, such writing implies that the British

[192] See: "The Zulu," in *Daily News* (London, ENG.), August 6, 1929; *The Scotsman* (Midlothian, SCT.), September 16, 1929.
[193] Hugh Tracey, *Zulu Paradox* (Johannesburg: Silver Leaf Books, 1948), 99-102, quoted in Leech, "'Images of Zulu Violence," 91.
[194] Rupert Furneaux, *Zulu War*, 125 quoted in Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*, 26.

Empire was the true mantle of western civilization, even more so than the ancient Greeks, for they had won in their "last stand." Furneaux's writings reveal British insecurities in its status as a global power as the Empire underwent decolonization. Historians of Natal, such as American Don Morris and his famous *Washing of the Spears* (1965), still relied on the travelogues of Nathaniel Isaacs and the published diary of Francis Fynn as primary source work that, according to historian Dan Wylie, uphold the original British representation of the inherent violence of the Zulu as supposedly being instilled by Shaka.[195] Those twentieth-century Britons curious enough to seek to understand their imperial past and the Anglo-Zulu relationship would have found it difficult to separate historical fact from a promulgation of imperial and racialized visions.

The introduction of film and cinema offered a new artistic outlet through which a popular vision of empire, colonization, and war could be bundled together and distributed to the masses. Pro-imperial and stereotypical depictions that championed conquest, wealth acquisition, and the crushing of Britain's imperial enemies, such as the Indian revolt, were common as early as the first sound movies of the 1930s, such as with *Clive of India* (1935) and *The Drum* (1938). These films helped assure metropolitan audiences of the glory of empire-building, the idea that imperialism was synonymous with wealth (even as many colonies failed to turn a profit), and that "Britishness" on screen meant white men in red coats against a litany of native groups. Specific to the Zulu, the 1964 film *Zulu*, about Rorke's Drift, and its 1979 prequel *Zulu Dawn*, about Isandlwana, are two final key markers of the metropole's representation of the Zulu and the war. Film professor Lindiwe Dovey, noting how *Zulu* inaccurately portrayed the battle to create a false vision of fairness and equality in imperial warfare, writes:

> ...the filmmakers would seem to wish to establish the Zulus and the white men as 'equal parties'...the narrative suggests that the Zulus are 'good sports' - they have

[195] Dan Wylie, "Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth," *History in Africa* 19 (1992): 416–417.

> [after defeat in battle] come to pay their respects [by saluting] the British...The Zulus are not being "saluted" by the filmmakers so much as they are being used to authenticate the valor of the British soldiers.[196]

The Zulu's intrinsic value to imperial popular vision came in their depictions as perpetrators of a naturally responsive violence against the fruits of the Empire – noble, at times, but nonetheless serving the Empire in such representations since 1879. For the latter film, *Zulu Dawn* classically depicted the imperial defeat as a gloriously doomed endeavor, with the British fighting to the end in a hopeless slaughter. One of the film's parting shots is the exaggerated and still mythologized "dash with the colours" by Lieutenants Melvill and Coghill, symbolizing that this was not the end of imperial ambitions in the region while, rather ironically, now capturing the fleeting nature of Britain's imperial glory as its much smaller empire continued to lose its colonial possessions. Racism and imperial values on screen translated into actions in production as well, as Zulu extras were only paid £2.70 per day.[197] *Zulu Dawn*, unlike *Zulu*, was not widely popular, possibly foreshadowing the demise of the narrative and representations on which it was built and that it attempted to promulgate.

However, the end of the century, an increasingly cosmopolitan and racially mixed London and Britain, and the success of racial equality movements in the 1900s contributed to a dying out of Zulu depictions that glorified Britain and belittled and distorted understandings of Zulu identity. In 1997, Queen Elizabeth herself approved of an unprecedented affiliation between British and Zulu soldiers, with the Royal Regiment of Wales and the 121 SA Infantry ('Zulu') Battalion partaking in a ceremony just after the formal end to apartheid and beginning of democratic rule in South Africa. The former was the direct descendant of the original 24th

---

[196] Lindiwe Dovey, *African Film and Literature: Adapting Violence to the Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 37-38.
[197] Roderick Mann, "A High Shine for Olivier's Star," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CAL.), July 20 1978 p. i15.

regiment from Isandlwana and the latter "a regiment recruited in Zululand, amongst whom undoubtedly there would be those whose forefathers had fought at Isandlwana." For Britain, the act represented an official reconciliation with its past deeds, as well as a positive outlook on the future of a free South Africa and Zulu people. According to historian Ron Lock, "It was an iconic event, the only known occasion in the history of the British Army where a British regiment has affiliated with that of a former foe."[198] This brings us back to the 1994 *Daily News* quote from the beginning of this thesis regarding a major byproduct of British imperialism's cultural influence: "Zulus are the most famous of all African peoples and are known all over the world as proud people and brave warriors. Nobody outside of South Africa has ever heard of the Tswanas, Vendas, etc."[199] While it is no consolation prize for over a century of written, visual, and imperial abuse, the Zulu do indeed hold a more prominent place in imperial, colonial, racial, British, and global histories than many of their African counterparts, and, through it all, continue to remain proud of their heritage as a fiercely independent people and, most of all, as warriors. The recent lack of discussion of the Zulu in Britain is emblematic of a non-desire to reflect much further on the Zulus' place in British history, especially as Britain looks to forget and overcome its complicity in the objective horrors that defined, and continue to define, imperialism. Even so, our current century, even as this thesis is being written, shows there is more work to be done.

English-speaking fascinations with the Zulu were not limited to the British Isles, and white American representations often built upon or even confirmed understandings of the Zulu that originated in London. From 1879 to 1881, William Hunt, the "Great Farini," and others, such as the famous American showman P.T. Barnum, exhibited Zulus in the United States at

---

[198] Ron Lock, *The Anglo-Zulu War - Isandlwana: The Revelation of a Disaster* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2017), 211-213.
[199] "Klaaste accused," letter to the *Daily News* (London, ENG.), April 27, 1994, published in Leech, "Images of Zulu Violence," 89.

places as well-known as Madison Square Garden in ways that were synonymous with the British metropole's vision of the Zulu as the "noble savage," paralleling Zulu displays in late nineteenth-century photography and colonial exhibitions in Britain and on the Continent. These early shows showcased the Zulu as a fearsome and warlike people that American reviewers and the public regarded as truthful depictions of what the British military faced and were defeated by during the Anglo-Zulu War.[200] However, at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exhibition, shows that pushed the "noble" side of "noble savage" took a different approach to the Zulu. One De Beers mining exhibit included an enclosed structure featuring Zulu males in "modern industrial garb" at a faux mine site.[201] Rather than depicting the Zulu as noble warriors or in their native villages, these exhibitions put forward a vision of the British imperial mission as a successful assimilator of the Zulu as an African people by "civilizing" them into contributors to a global industrial and capitalist system. A sign of a new modernity, the American public potentially saw the case of the Zulu reflected in their own hopes for organizing and assimilating recently subjugated Indigenous peoples, such as the Sioux and Apache, into their expanding free market economy.

The white American public also saw reflections of its own racial understandings in their portrayals of the Zulu and Anglo-Zulu War. These included fanciful stories of touring Zulus taking over train cars, ignoring their exhibition duties due to laziness, and being quick to physical violence. Reenactments of the Battle of Rorke's Drift often resulted in white American crowds loudly cheering on the outnumbered British as they fought off Black Americans hired to act as Zulu warriors, such as at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exhibition. Even as far removed as 1933, American exhibitors and showmen pushed for Zulu mining exhibits and battle

---

[200] Robert Trent Vinson and Robert Edgar, "Zulus Abroad: Cultural Representations and Educational Experiences of Zulus in America, 1880-1945," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, no. 1 (2007): 46-47.
[201] Loren Kruger, "'White Cities,' 'Diamond Zulus,' and the 'African Contribution to Human Advancement': African Modernities and the World's Fairs." *TDR (1988-)* 51, no. 3 (2007): 19–20.

reenactments to be refashioned for the "Century of Progress Exposition," an affirmation that four decades of distance had only confirmed American understandings of British civilizing and representations of the Zulu as an important marker of these achievements.[202]

Outside of white America, which often excluded African Americans from attending these exhibitions, Black culture in the United States also wrestled with tensions between capitalizing on the successes of white Zulu depictions and the demeaning nature of oscillating between the primitive, the "noble savage," and the civilizable. Prince Bullawa, who claimed to be the son of King Cetshwayo, toured the United States in the 1920s giving lectures, from the Zulu perspective, on American culture. Bullawa spoke on the "moral decline of Americans" in comparison to the Zulu, attacking American norms of Jazz, divorce, cheating, and more in comparison to the "upright behavior" of the "Christianized Zulu." This trope was seen as early as 1904 with another "royal," Prince Hosanna, who took a stance opposite to Bullawa, using his pulpit to lambast African American culture as primitive and deserving of Jim Crow era punishment. While some of these characters were legitimate in their lectures and tours, other individuals "masqueraded" as Zulu royalty to "lighten the wallets and purses of the unsuspecting."[203] To this tune, the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club's annual Zulu parade during Mardi Gras, an organization founded by African American laborers, and the Negro League Zulu Cannibal Giants both capitalized on notions of the Zulu as primitive, using grass skirts, beads, chants, and more to generate fanfare and publicity in the early 1900s and 1930s.[204]

The Zulu perspective in America exemplifies a desire of white Americans, like their British perceived cousins in the nineteenth century, to deploy the Black Zulu to critique elements

[202] Vinson and Edgar, "Zulu Abroad," 49-50.
[203] Ibid, 52-53.
[204] Ibid, 54-55.

of both white and Black American society. Others, white or Black, found financial success in promulgating civilizing, primitive, or "noble savage" memes in the United States from 1879 well into the twentieth century. Nonetheless, African Art Historian Gary Van Wyk, while acknowledging that Zulu influence on Black culture is rather limited when compared to other regions, notes that elements of Zulu culture and history, such as Shaka Zulu, were found to have affirming powers to non-Zulu Blacks in America. He is quoted as saying:

> Since I did my doctoral work on southern African women's murals, I know that the traditional designs that I studied and published have been widely influential and replicated in schools in Harlem, in murals in Harlem, even in designs on telephone booths in Times Square in New York. They've inspired teachers in arts on the West Coast to build mud buildings [adobe] with mud mural designs that are inspired by South African women's art. So I think that art has amazing ways of crossing cultures and crossing situations. And so Zulu art is there, waiting to be viewed and discovered and enjoyed.[205]

While negative representations of the Zulu permeated throughout white America and also found places of acceptance in Black culture, the lack of direct connection between the Zulu and the United States has allowed for Zulu-specific racism to fade, while positive aspects of Zulu culture survive in places that many of us likely fail to recognize every day.

It is generally accepted that we live in an increasingly cosmopolitan society that is more open, progressive, and understanding than the world in which our parents and grandparents grew up. While outdated histories and movies may seem to be of little importance or consequence today, past generations grew up on hearing these narratives and, almost certainly, echoes of this antiquated past make their way into the minds of those sympathetic to a once great British Empire. Additionally, the staying and expansive power of representations, evident in the notable similarities between Zulu representations in imperial Britain and the United States, showcases

---

[205] Cliff Hocker, "U.S. Zulu Connection," *IRAAA+,* The International Review of African American Art, Accessed March 1, 2022, http://iraaa.museum.hamptonu.edu/page/U%3ES%3E-Zulu-Connection.

this thesis' goal of historicizing and de-mystifying images of the Zulu for the sake of current and future depictions and understandings of identity.

Even as recently as 2013, there have been qualms in Britain with how the Zulu and Anglo-Zulu War are depicted, such as in an article by British history teacher Mike Murray. Discussing the proposed "National Curriculum," Murray criticizes an officially set historical outline that favors simple facts and content over historical inquiry, writing, "I fear that England's current draft history curriculum...is bound to promote multiple stereotypes about [Rorke's Drift that] they have heard juicy stories about." If one focuses just on the bare facts, then Rorke's Drift is one of the greatest military engagements based on medals awarded, but Murray posits, "Was it not the Zulus, facing a technologically well-armed invader, who were the most heroic?" [206] To have a more objective historiography, a historically literate population, and future generations that can analyze distorted historical representations on their own, it is imperative that educators continue to fight against and teach about imperial Zulu depictions, especially in the British metropole.

In the United States, we have recently and often been struck with events involving race, race relations, media representations of races in America, and more, many stemming from the vocal Black Lives Matter movement. Especially right now, there is certainly a large contestation in America regarding racial dynamics, how racialized society is, and whether America – and specifically white America, is inherently and systematically racist. Just as this thesis has analyzed the history of Zulu depictions in the British metropole, a similar sort of historical revisionism regarding the need to understand the long-term evolution of this depiction and how it was upheld has been undertaken by journalist and historian Nikole Sheri Hannah-Jones' *1619*

[206] Mike Murray, "Do We Need Another Hero? Year 8 Get to Grips with the Heroic Myth of the Defence of Rorke's Drift in 1879," *Teaching History*, no. 151 (2013): 29-30.

Project (2019). In her work, she attempts to revise how Americans should view the U.S.'s relationship with slavery, strongly claiming that the American Revolution was significantly influenced by the desire to save the institution from the less enthusiastic British.

More recently, we can look to the Russian Federation and President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022 as a culmination of imperialist representations of Ukrainian identity that distort history. Articles from Putin and other Russian officials, published or endorsed by the Kremlin throughout 2021, such as Putin's own "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," laid out both current and historical arguments for Russian dominance over and intervention in Ukraine.[207] These writings were widely and rightly condemned by the international and historical communities as justifications for war through the undermining of Ukraine's sovereignty as an internationally recognized state and the uniqueness of Ukrainian ethnicity and culture.[208] Historical revisionism was and is a sensitive term, and Putin's invasion of Ukraine is a great reminder of how imperialist dreams continue to fashion alternative visions of the past out of lies and propaganda, leaving real victims, as the British did with the Zulu, in their wake. Still, when it comes to historical revisionism undertaken in good faith with proper academic intentions, one need not agree with all attempts to edit the stories of the past to comprehend the importance of such undertakings. Perhaps, now is the time to rework, reimagine, or create two versions of "historical revisionism" to better define and promote the crucial work of historians dissecting our colonial and imperial pasts rather than those imperialists working to distort them once more. It is imperative to the discipline of history, the understandings of nations

---

[207] See: Vladimir Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russian Putin, Vladimir," *President of Russia*, Kremlin, 12 July 2021, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181.

[208] See: Peter Dickinson, "Putin's New Ukraine Essay Reveals Imperial Ambitions," *Atlantic Council*, Atlantic Council, 15 July 2021, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-new-ukraine-essay-reflects-imperial-ambitions/ and Kristaps Andrejsons, "Russia and Ukraine Are Trapped in Medieval Myths," *Foreign Policy*, Foreign Policy, 6 Feb. 2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/06/russia-and-ukraine-are-trapped-in-medieval-myths/.

and their relationships with peoples, cultures, and ideas, and the education of future generations that academics and historians do not just seek to write new histories but continue to analyze our currently believed images of the past.

This thesis has analyzed the depictions and representations of the Zulu in the British metropole beginning in the 1820s and 1830s and ending just after the start of the twentieth century. From the first writings on the Zulu, the British public was presented with a Zulu Kingdom and people that were described as having a general primitive savagery alongside an inherent violence and noteworthy militarism. This characterization was fashioned and confirmed through a combination of missionary writings, a well-covered failed defense of the Zulu, and, as the first chapter presented, an extended timeline of what is often considered to be the later development of scientific racism in British ethnology and anthropology, as demonstrated in depictions of the Zulu. Additionally, growing official calls for intervention from the imperial periphery brought the supposedly threatening and historically interactive southern African frontier to the pages of the metropolitan press, casting the Zulu's supposed violent and militant primitivism as a greater and more important issue for those back in London. These official understandings from the frontier contributed to metropolitan support for imperial policy and action, rather than missionary activities, in raising the Zulu from the "primitive" to the "civilized."

The shocking defeat at the Battle of Isandlwana, even amid the subsequent British conquest of the Zulu Kingdom, brought out underlying imperial insecurities regarding the depiction of the Zulu, defeat at the hands of the "primitive," and the Empire's civilizing mission that were unofficially contested in the first few years after the conflict. While official support for the elevation of Rorke's Drift was exemplified in the awarding of medals and commissioning of

artwork, Isandlwana was unofficially rectified through popular representations of the Zulu, such as in paintings and the writings of Henry Rider Haggard. These later developments in the 1880s and beyond exemplified the striking metropolitan deployment of the Zulu as, primarily though not exclusively, permanent ancillaries to British glory, civilizing, and empire, first with the victory at Rorke's Drift and, in time, even in imperial understandings of Isandlwana. My thesis has explored this process in a wide-ranging analysis of Zulu-specific British media, putting together a complete timeline of how a false idea of who the Zulu were was created and promoted across an empire and the globe for decades before the Anglo-Zulu War and for over a century after Isandlwana. Empire is a dichotomy – its hegemony lives on to this day and yet the worries of its contemporaries reveal the fragility on which its power was built – but, by exposing why the latter helped manufacture the former, we as global citizens can better interact with and understand how today's histories and identities may be fashioned from yesterday's biases.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Articles:

"The Zulu War." *Advocate of Peace* (1847-1884) 10, no. 2 (1879): 11.

Busk, George. "Observations on a Systematic Mode of Craniometry." *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, vol. 1 (1861), 341-348.

Colenso, J.W. "On the Efforts of Missionaries among Savages" *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 3 (1865): ccxlviii–cclxxxix.

Grout, Lewis. "Reviewed Work: *Zulu Land, or Life among the Zulu-Kafirs of Natal and Zulu Land* by Lewis Grout." *The North American Review* Vol. 101, no. 208 (1865): 274–76

Mann, Robert James. "The Kaffir Race of Natal." *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 5 (1867): 277-297.

Werner, A. "The Native Question in South Africa." *Journal of the Royal African Society* 4, no. 16 (1905): 441–54.

Manuscript Collections:

British Newspaper Archive
Internet Archive: Digital Library

Monographs:

Colenso, Frances E. *History of the Zulu War and Its Origin*. London, Chapman and Hall, 1880.

Colenso, Frances E. *Ruin of Zululand*: *An account of British doings in Zululand since the Invasion of 1879*. London, W. Ridgway, 1884.

Colenso, Harriette E. *The Problem of Races in Africa.* Woking: Oriental University Institute, 1897.

Colenso, J.W. *Ten weeks in Natal: A journal of a first tour of visitation among the colonists and Zulu Kafirs of Natal*. Cambridge: Macmillan & co., 1855.

Gardiner, Allen Francis. *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country*. London: W. Crofts, 1836.

Haggard, Henry Rider. *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*. London: Trübner, 1882.

Haggard, Henry Rider. *King Solomon's Mines*. London: Cassell and Company, 1885.

Haggard, Henry Rider. “The Tale of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift.” In *The True Story Book*, ed. Andrew Lang (London; New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), 132-152.

Haggard, Henry Rider. *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*. Rev. ed. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1896.

Isaacs, Nathaniel. *Travels and Adventures in East Africa, Vol* II. London: Edward Churton, 1836.

Mason, George Holditch. *Zululand: A Mission Tour in South Africa*. London: J. Nisbet, 1862.

Shooter, John. *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country.* London: E. Stanford, 1857.

Vijn, Cornelius. *Cetshwayo's Dutchman*. Edited by John Colenso. London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1880.

Select Periodicals:

Alcester Chronicle
Cork Examiner
Cosmopolitan
Daily News
Daily Review
The Daily Telegraph
Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald
Edinburgh Evening Courant
Glasgow Herald
Globe
The Graphic
Illustrated London News
Illustrated Times
The Irishman
Inverness Courier
Kentish Mercury
Leeds Times
Leicester Guardian
Liverpool Mail
London Evening Standard
Los Angeles Times
Morning Advertiser
Morning Post
Naval & Military Gazette and Weekly Chronicle of the United Service
Newcastle Daily Chronicle
Norfolk Chronicle
Nottinghamshire Guardian
Pall Mall Gazette

Reynold's Newspaper
The Scotsman
Sheffield Daily Telegraph
Sheffield Independent
The Times
Weekly Dispatch

Visual Sources:

Figure 1. Prior, Melton. *Zulu Method of Advancing to the Attack*. Print Sketch. 1879. *Illustrated London News*, London. February 23, 2022. https://www.prints-online.com/p/164/zulu-wars-zulu-method-advancing-attack-4375604.jpg.

Figure 2. Thompson, Elizabeth (Lady Butler). *The Defence of Rorke's Drift*. Oil on canvas. Painted in 1880 and exhibited in 1881. Royal Collection, United Kingdom. February 23, 2022. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lady_butler_defense_rorkes_drift.jpg.

Figure 3. Fripp, Charles Edwin. *The Battle of Isandlwana*. Oil on canvas. Exhibited in 1885. National Army Museum, London. February 23, 2022. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isandhlwana.jpg.

Secondary Sources:

Articles:

Anderson, Catherine E. "Red Coats and Black Shields: Race and Masculinity in British Representations of the Anglo-Zulu War." *Critical Survey* 20, no. 3 (2008): 6-28.

Bowman, Joye. "Reconstructing the past Using the British Parliamentary Papers: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879." *History in Africa* 31 (2004): 117–32.

Burroughs, Robert. "Race and Anthropology." *19th Century UK Periodicals*. Detroit: Gale, 2008.

Cope, A.T. "The Zulu War in Zulu Perspective." *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 56 (1981): 41-50.

Drescher, Seymour. "The Ending of the Slave Trade and the Evolution of European Scientific Racism." *Social Science History* 14, no. 3 (1990): 415-450.

Etherington, Norman. "Bishop Colenso and Theophilus Shepstone: Partners in Christian Imperialism." *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 33, no. 1 (2019): 1-22.

Guy, Jeff. "Class, Imperialism and Literary Criticism: William Ngidi, John Colenso and Matthew Arnold." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, no. 2 (1997): 219-241.

Hocker, Cliff. "U.S. Zulu Connection," *IRAAA+.* The International Review of African American Art. Accessed March 1, 2022. http://iraaa.museum.hamptonu.edu/page/U%3ES%3E-Zulu-Connection.

Hunt, Margaret. "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveler's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England." *Journal of British Studies* 32, no. 4 (1993): 333–57.

Kestner, Joseph A. "'Ulysses' and Victorian Battle Art." *James Joyce Quarterly* 41, no. 1/2 (2003): 89-101.

King, Ed. "British Newspapers 1860-1900." *British Library Newspapers* (Detroit: Gale, 2007).

Kruger, Loren. "'White Cities,' 'Diamond Zulus,' and the 'African Contribution to Human Advancement': African Modernities and the World's Fairs." *TDR (1988-)* 51, no. 3 (2007): 19–45.

Leech, Stephen. "'Aggressive by Nature, Depraved, and like Nazis': Images of Zulu Violence." *African Historical Review*, 30, no. 1 (1998), 89-108;

Levine, Philippa. "The Mobile Camera: Bodies, Anthropologists, and the Victorian Optic." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 37, no. 5 (2015): 473-490.

Lieven, Michael. "Heroism, Heroics and the Making of Heroes: The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30, no. 3 (1998): 419–38.

Lieven, Michael. "The British Soldier and the Ideology of Empire: Letters from Zululand." *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 80, no. 322 (2002): 128–143.

Lloyd, Amy J. "Education, Literacy and the Reading Public." *British Library Newspapers*. Detroit: Gale, 2007.

Mersham, Gary M. "Mass Media Discourse and the Semiotics of Zulu Nationalism." *Critical Arts* 7, no. 1-2 (1993), 78-119.

Murray, Mike. "Do We Need Another Hero? Year 8 Get to Grips with the Heroic Myth of the Defence of Rorke's Drift in 1879." *Teaching History*, no. 151 (2013): 27-31.

Mullen, R. D. "The Books of H. Rider Haggard: A Chronological Survey." *Science Fiction Studies* 5, no. 3 (1978): 287–291.

Cinthya Oliveira, "Human Rights & Exhibitions, 1789-1989," *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 29 (2016): 71–72.

Stanley, Brian. "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860." *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 1 (1983): 71–94.

Saunders, Robert. "The Politics of Reform and the Making of the Second Reform Act, 1848-1867." *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 3 (2007): 571–91.

Thornton, Robert. "Narrative Ethnography in Africa, 1850-1920: The Creation and Capture of an Appropriate Domain for Anthropology." *Man* 18, no. 3 (1983): 502–20.

Vinson, Robert Trent and Robert Edgar. "Zulus Abroad: Cultural Representations and Educational Experiences of Zulus in America, 1880-1945." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, no. 1 (2007): 43-62.

Webb, Virginia-Lee. "Fact and Fiction: Nineteenth-Century Photographs of the Zulu." *African Arts* 25, no. 1 (1992): 50–59, 98-99.

Wylie, Dan. "Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth." *History in Africa* 19 (1992): 411-433.

Wylie, Dan. "'Proprietor of Natal:' Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka." *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 409-437.

Monographs:

Alexander, Nathan. *Race in a Godless World: Atheism, Race, and Civilization, 1850–1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019.

Bell, Duncan. *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Bell, Duncan. *Dreamworlds of Race: Empire and the Utopian Destiny of Anglo-America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.

Behm, Amanda. *Imperial History and the Global Politics of Exclusion*: *Britain, 1880–1940*. London, United Kingdom; Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998.

Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Desmond, Adrian and James Moore. *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins*. London; New York: Allen Lane, 2009.

Dovey, Lindiwe. *African Film and Literature: Adapting Violence to the Screen*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Great Boer War*. 1959; repr., Luton: Andrews UK Ltd, 2012.

Elphick, Richard. *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989.

Greaves, Adrian. *Isandlwana: How the Zulus Humbled the British Empire*. Barnsley, U.K.: Pen & Sword Military, 2011.

Gump, James O. *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux, Second Edition*. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2016.

Hamilton, Carolyn. *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Hanson, V.D. *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

Knight, Ian. *Zulu Rising: The Epic Story of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift*. London: Macmillan, 2010.

Kuper, Adam. *The Reinvention of Primitive Society: Transformations of a Myth*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2005.

Lamar, Howard Roberts and Leonard Thompson, eds. *The Frontier In History: North America and Southern Africa Compared*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Lester, Alan. *Imperial Networks*: *Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain*. London; New York: Routledge, 2001.

Lester, Alan, Kate Boehme, and Peter Mitchell. *Ruling the World: Freedom, Civilisation and Liberalism in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Liebersohn, Harry. *The Traveler's World: Europe to the Pacific*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Lock, Ron. *The Anglo-Zulu War - Isandlwana: The Revelation of a Disaster*. Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2017.

Mantena, Karuna. *Alibis of Empires: Henry Maine and the End of Liberal Imperialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Mitcham, John C. *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Porter, Dale H. *The Thames Embankment: Environment, Technology, and Society in Victorian London*. Akron, Ohio: University of Akron Press, 1998.

Potter, Simon J. *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System 1876-1922*. Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Qureshi, Sadiah. *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth Century Britain*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011.

Rodogno, Davide. *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003.

Stocking, George. *Victorian Anthropology*. New York: Free Press, 1987 and London: Collier Macmillan, 1987.

Weinberg, Catherine. "Presences in the archive: Amagugu (treasures) from the Zulu kingdom at the British Museum" in *The Pasts and Prescence of Art in South Africa*. Ed. Chris Wingfield, John Giblin & Rachel King. Cambridge, UK: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2020.