

HENRY FRANCIS F'YNN:
AN ASSESSMENT OF HIS CAREER AND
AN ANALYSIS OF THE WRITTEN AND
VISUAL PORTRAYALS OF HIS ROLE IN
THE HISTORY OF THE NATAL REGION

J. PRIDMORE

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Historical Studies, University
of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.**

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that, unless otherwise indicated and acknowledged, this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Historical Studies, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Julie Pridmore

ABSTRACT

Henry Francis Fynn (1803-1861) has been the subject of a complex literary tradition, commencing in the 1820s and still developing in the 1990s. Literary descriptions of his activities as a trader at Port Natal from 1824 to 1834 have provided a crucial starting-point for the historiography of the Natal region. Although several biographical accounts of Fynn exist, there is to date no full-length study which addresses these issues. This thesis aims firstly, to provide a critical biographical reassessment of Fynn against the background of the development of Cape and Natal historiography during the period from the 1820s to the 1860s. Secondly, this research seeks to identify and explain the mythologising of Fynn which has taken place since the early nineteenth century, through a careful unpacking of the iconography which has been constructed at different times.

The earliest literary images of Fynn were evident by the 1830s and were closely linked to the ideas present in Cape travel literature. Fynn was presented as an isolated, Crusoe-like figure in an alien environment and as a lone European amongst African savages. This motif remained dominant in early Natal historiography as it was adapted for the needs of writers with commercial interests in the Natal region. In colonial Natal, this image was developed further and Fynn was perceived as the representative of a European civilising influence against the setting of an anarchical indigeneous society.

From the 1880s, images of Fynn were constructed by official historiographers in Natal, and the publication of parts of Fynn's manuscripts in Bird's Annals of Natal established a new dominant image of Fynn as the first literate recorder of events in Natal. Fynn's role as the initiator of written history in the region was linked to his supposed abilities as a doctor. Late Victorian Natal authors used both these images to bolster their ideas of white supremacy and depicted Fynn as an individual example of the manner in which European progress had been brought to Natal. These late nineteenth-century images remained the dominant portrayals of Fynn in the first half of the twentieth-century, and the first generation of professional historians in Natal had adopted these ideas. Fynn's role as a

crucial source on the Natal past was adopted by both historians who concerned themselves with the white history of the region, and anthropologists who researched the black past.

Fynn's dual role as a valuable source for historians and anthropologists continued in the decades after 1930. During this period, the academic dichotomy between the white and 'Zulu' past became more apparent. Fynn's image as a forerunner to European settlement remained unchanged in the narratives of historians. However, his material on pre-colonial societies became vital source material for anthropologists. By the 1940s, Fynn's writing was viewed as a suitable research field for anthropologists and 'Bantu' experts. Hence a Zulu linguist and ex-native affairs official, Douglas Malcolm, inherited James Stuart's editorial task in preparing Fynn's manuscripts for publication. The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, published in 1950, gave Fynn new status as a source on the Natal past.

Fynn's narratives from the Diary provided both popular and academic historians with material which they viewed as a primary source. In the political climate of the 1950s and 1960s, English-speaking liberal historians reconstructed the earlier images of Fynn and depicted him as the first English settler in Natal in opposition to the Voortrekkers. Popular history developed rapidly during these decades and while E.A. Ritter's Shaka Zulu reiterated the nineteenth-century ideas about Fynn, including his supposed medical abilities, Donald Morris' Washing of the Spears set a new trend in describing Fynn as a pragmatic 'freebooter'. From the 1970s, Fynn's role was reassessed by academic historians from a variety of perspectives. Most Natal historians since the 1970s have attempted to place both Fynn and Shaka within a wider historical context, and have examined the physical, economic and social environment in which these individuals operated. The 'mfecane' debate since the late 1980s has resulted in various alternative views of Fynn's role in Natal, including Julian Cobbing's idea of the traders as slavers and John Wright's assessment of their roles as allies to the Zulu polity. Finally, an examination of popular media since the 1970s has illustrated the retention of the earliest images of Fynn, including his position as Shaka's binary opposite, either as hero or villain.

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PREFACE

Henry Francis Fynn (1803-1861) has been the subject of many literary and historiographical traditions, starting in the 1820s and still developing in the 1990s. In this thesis I am to investigate how Fynn has been given such a rich iconography in the historiography of Natal and why he has retained a prominent position in constructions of the Natal past. Several biographies of Fynn have been written to date. These include Davies' 1974 history of the Fynn and Southey families, Todd Ellison's 1977 thesis on Fynn's career in Natal in the 1850s and Shirron Bramdeow's 1988 thesis on Fynn and his mixed-race descendants.¹ None of these studies have tackled the issue of Fynn's extraordinary iconography. This thesis aims to provide a brief reassessment of Fynn's career, to identify the main images of him which have emerged since the 1820s and to explain why he continues to catch the imagination of writers.

This research was prompted by work undertaken by a number of scholars since the 1980s. Russell Martin's 1982 doctoral thesis which examined images of the Zulu² provided a starting-point and led me to re-examine the arguments about cultural imperialism put forward by Edward Said in his influential book, Orientalism.³ At the same time, a reading of Michel Foucault's works suggested an investigation into the articular processes of the discourse of nineteenth century historical narrative,⁴ further highlighted by an examination of Hayden White's work on the historical

¹M. Davies, Twin Trails: The Story of the Fynn and Southey Families, Durban, K. Davis, 1974; J. Todd Ellison, "In Remembrance of Your Kindnesses to Us": Henry F. Fynn's Other Decade in Natal, South Africa', unpubl. Hons thesis, Middlebury College, 1977; S. Bramdeow, 'Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community in Natal, 1824-1988', unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1988.

²R. Martin, 'British Images of the Zulu, c. 1820-1879', Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1982.

³E.W. Said, Orientalism, London, Vintage Books, 1978.

⁴M. Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, New York, 1973, p. 219; A. Sheridan, Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth, London, Macmillan, 1980, p. 75; J.G. Merquior, Foucault, London, Routledge, 1985, p. 35.

metanarrative.⁵ The work of scholars like Patrick Brantlinger on imperial literature provided me with valuable insight into the construction of white and black colonial images.⁶ The research presented by Mary Louise Pratt's in Imperial Eyes and Robert Ross in Beyond the Pale enabled me to examine the literary tradition of Cape writing in English, which provided an important foundation for an investigation of the early writing on the Natal region.⁷

Recent research by two South African scholars, Carolyn Hamilton and Dan Wylie, provided me with a detailed and specific historiographical framework for further research on Fynn. Although both writers have focused on the images and ideas of Shaka, they have, in the course of this work, illuminated the strong theme of Manichean opposition between Shaka and Fynn, which has been present in both literary and historical accounts since the 1820s.⁸ This thesis is an attempt to examine the way in which Fynn was constructed in different historiographical contexts. This investigation was suggested by Hamilton's 1990 review article on Shaka in which she examined the way in which history was 'produced'.⁹ This was based on the anthropologist D.W. Cohen's notion that scholars should examine 'the contests that

⁵H. White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973; Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

⁶P. Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 10-11.

⁷M.L. Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, London, Routledge, 1992; R. Ross, Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1993.

⁸C. Hamilton, 'Authoring Shaka: Models, Metaphors and Historiography', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1993; D. Wylie, "'Proprietor of Natal": Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka', History in Africa, vol. 22 (1995), pp. 409-437.

⁹C. Hamilton, "'An Appetite for the Past": The Re-Creation of Shaka and the Crisis in Popular Historical Consciousness', South African Historical Journal, vol. 22 (1990), p. 156.

produce, reproduce and change historical knowledge'.¹⁰ Recent trends in the examination of specific historiographies have stressed the socio-political framework for particular writing, in line with the argument put forward by Walter Benjamin that historical writing is determined by 'the presence of the now'.¹¹ These ideas have been followed by Daphna Golan and Carolyn Hamilton in their attempts to place images of Shaka in a particular political context.¹² This thesis aims to follow the work of these scholars in examining the political backgrounds which served to shape different images of Fynn over time.

Recent deconstructions of the concept of an 'mfecane' have also led to a re-examination of historical sources, including the influential 1950 publication The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn.¹³ This move towards a detailed scrutiny of historical texts is largely a result of work done by literary scholars under the broad category of 'cultural

¹⁰D.W. Cohen, The Combing of History, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. xvii.

¹¹W. Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in S.E. Bronner and D.M. Kellner, eds., Critical Theory and Society: A Reader, London, Routledge, 1989, p. 255.

¹²D. Golan, Inventing Shaka: Using History in the Construction of Zulu Nationalism, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994; C. Hamilton, "'Zoolacratism" and "Cannibalism": A Discussion of Historical Disposition Towards the "Shakan" Model of Social Order and Political Rights', Social Dynamics, vol. 21, no. 2 (1995), pp. 1-22.

¹³J. Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi: Some thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo', Journal of African History, vol. 29 (1988), p. 219; J.B. Gewald, "'A Faithful and Circumstantial and Unvarnished Detail of Incidents": A Critical Reassessment of the Accounts Relating to the Shaka in The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn', unpubl. paper, University of Leiden, 1989; E. Eldredge, 'Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa, c. 1800-1830: The "Mfecane" Reconsidered'; in C. Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History, Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg, University of the Witwatersrand Press and University of Natal Press, 1995, pp. 136-137; C. Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka": A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as Mfecane Motor' in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 187-8; D. Wylie, 'Language and Assassination: Cultural Negotiations in White Writers' Portrayal of Shaka and the Zulu', in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 88-90.

studies'¹⁴, and this has also led to an examination of texts within specific cultural contexts.¹⁵ Scholars of literature have also suggested that the silences or absent voices in particular texts are equally as important as what is actually stated,¹⁶ and the notion of 'constructed or broken silences' is relatively new to historical studies.¹⁷ In this thesis I have attempted to examine the ways in which Fynn has been omitted in specific written texts, particularly those written by African writers.

The development of 'cultural studies' has generated new approaches to images presented in a variety of media.¹⁸ The final section of this analysis examines the ways in which Fynn has been represented in non-literary texts, including pictures, visual displays and the hugely popular S.A.B.C. television series Shaka Zulu which was released in 1986. Both Carolyn Hamilton and a communications researcher, Gary Mersham have provided valuable starting-points for an examination of the images which appeared in the medium of the television series.¹⁹ These assessments of Shaka Zulu, set within the social and ideological framework of political conflict in the Natal region from the 1980s, have overlapped with new approaches to the study of ethnicity and ethnic identity as existing or constructed phenomena.

¹⁴ P. Brantlinger, Crusoe's Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America, New York, Routledge, 1990, pp. 24-31.

¹⁵ K. Tomaselli and J. Muller, 'Literary Encounter and Cultural Studies: From Text to Context' in M. Chapman, et.al., eds., Perspectives on South African English Literature, Parklands, A.D. Donker, 1992, p. 476.

¹⁶ D. Attwell and J.M. Coetzee, Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews, Cambridge, Havard University Press, 1992, p. 247.

¹⁷ D.Cohen, The Combing of History, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1994, p. 6.

¹⁸ B.Klinger, 'Digressions at the Cinema: Commodification and Reception in Mass Culture' in J. Naremore and P. Brantlinger, eds., Modernity and Mass Culture, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 117-134.

¹⁹ C. Hamilton, 'A Positional Gambit: Shaka Zulu and the Conflict in South Africa', in Radical History Review, vol. 44 (1989), pp. 4-31; G. Mersham, 'Political Discourse and Historical Television Drama: A Case Study of Shaka Zulu', unpubl. D. Litt et Phil. thesis, Unisa, 1989.

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I would like also to thank colleagues and friends in the history departments at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg), the University of Durban-Westville and at the University of South Africa for their patience and kindness during the course of this research. My supervisor, John Wright has been supportive and empathetic, and smoothed my start with this thesis at a time when he was heavily involved in his own doctoral work. I am particularly grateful for his shared expertise on Natal

historiography, and his empirical knowledge of James Stuart .

This completion of this thesis would not have been possible without my husband Brian Womack, who has shown great forbearance in the transformation of a 'computer illiterate', and in addition orchestrated our move to Pretoria at a time when I was writing up the bulk of this thesis.

ILLUSTRATIONS



1. Henry Francis Fynn
Portrait by Frederick l'Ons
Painted c. 1835
Local History Museum, Durban



*Henry Francis Fynn, born 29th March 1803.
Portrait by Charles Bell Esq. Deputy Surveyor General
taken on the 11th October 1844 at the age of 41 years.
Sir Benjamin Maitland departed from Durban on this day
towards Maitlandville and (Capt Maitland Aid de Camp)*

2. Henry Francis Fynn
Portrait by Charles Bell, 1844
Local History Museum, Durban



3. Henry Francis Fynn
Photograph c. 1860
Local History Museum, Durban

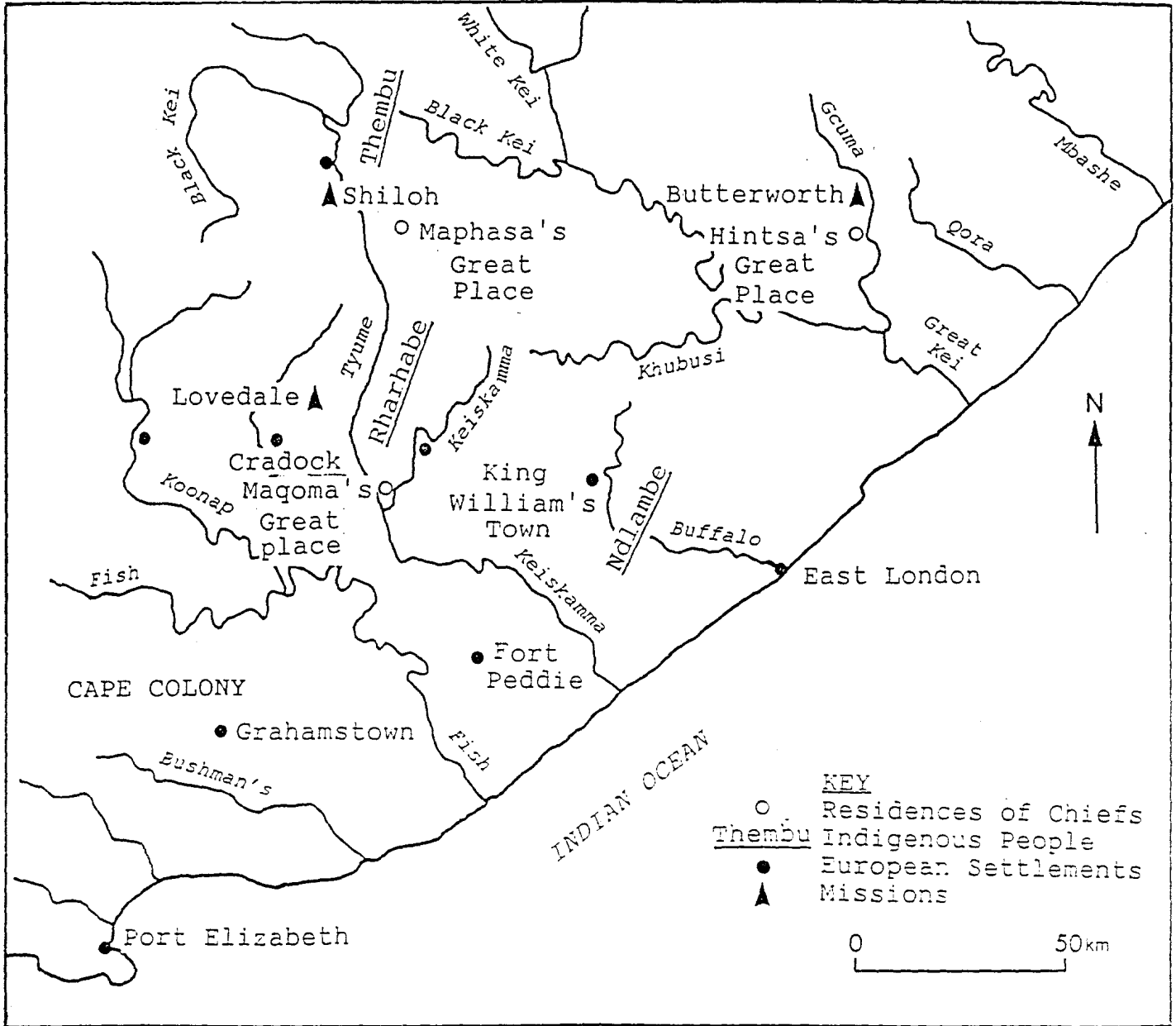


4. 'The Birth of Natal'
Painting by R. Caton Woodville
1902
Local History Museum, Durban

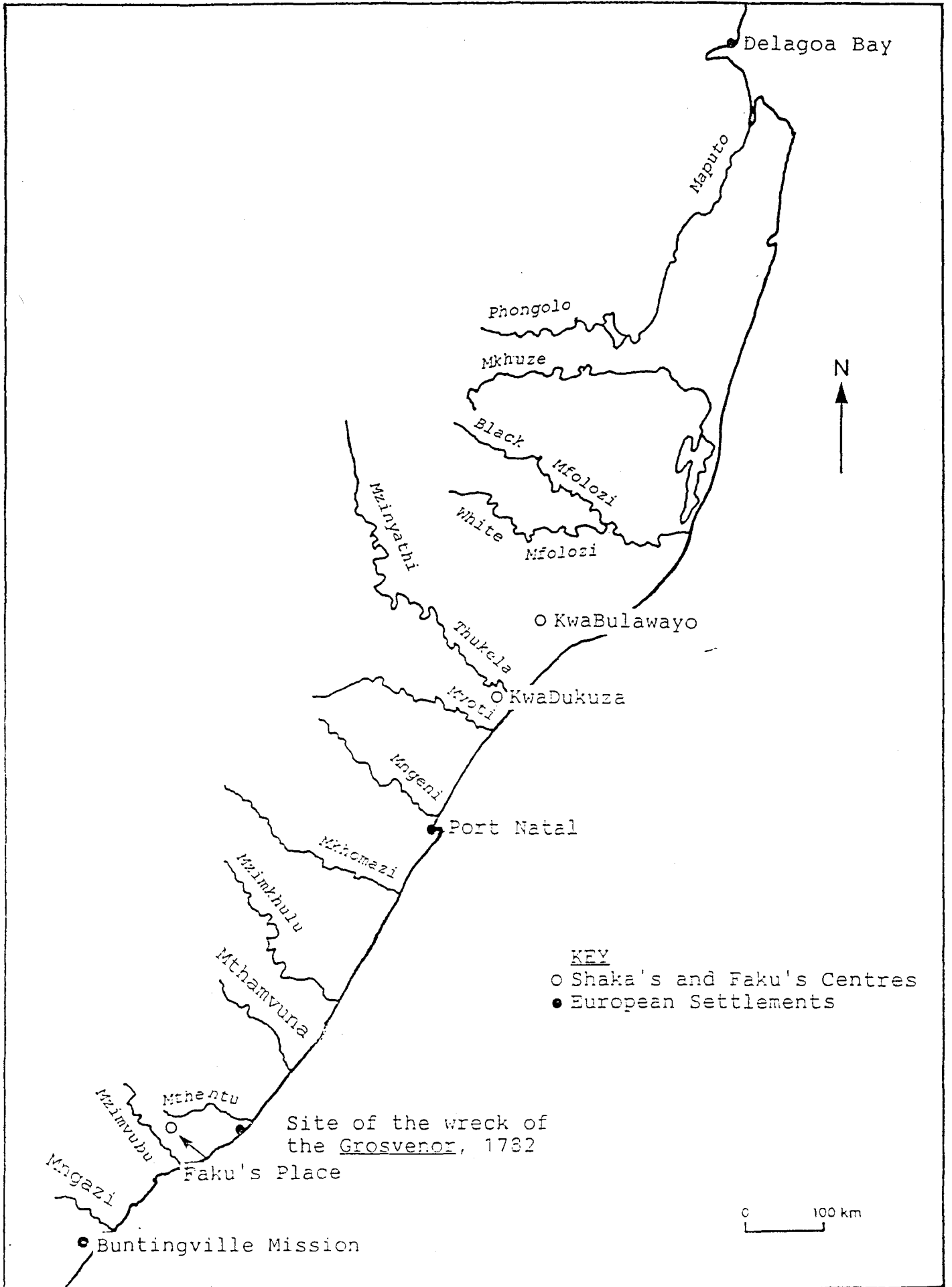


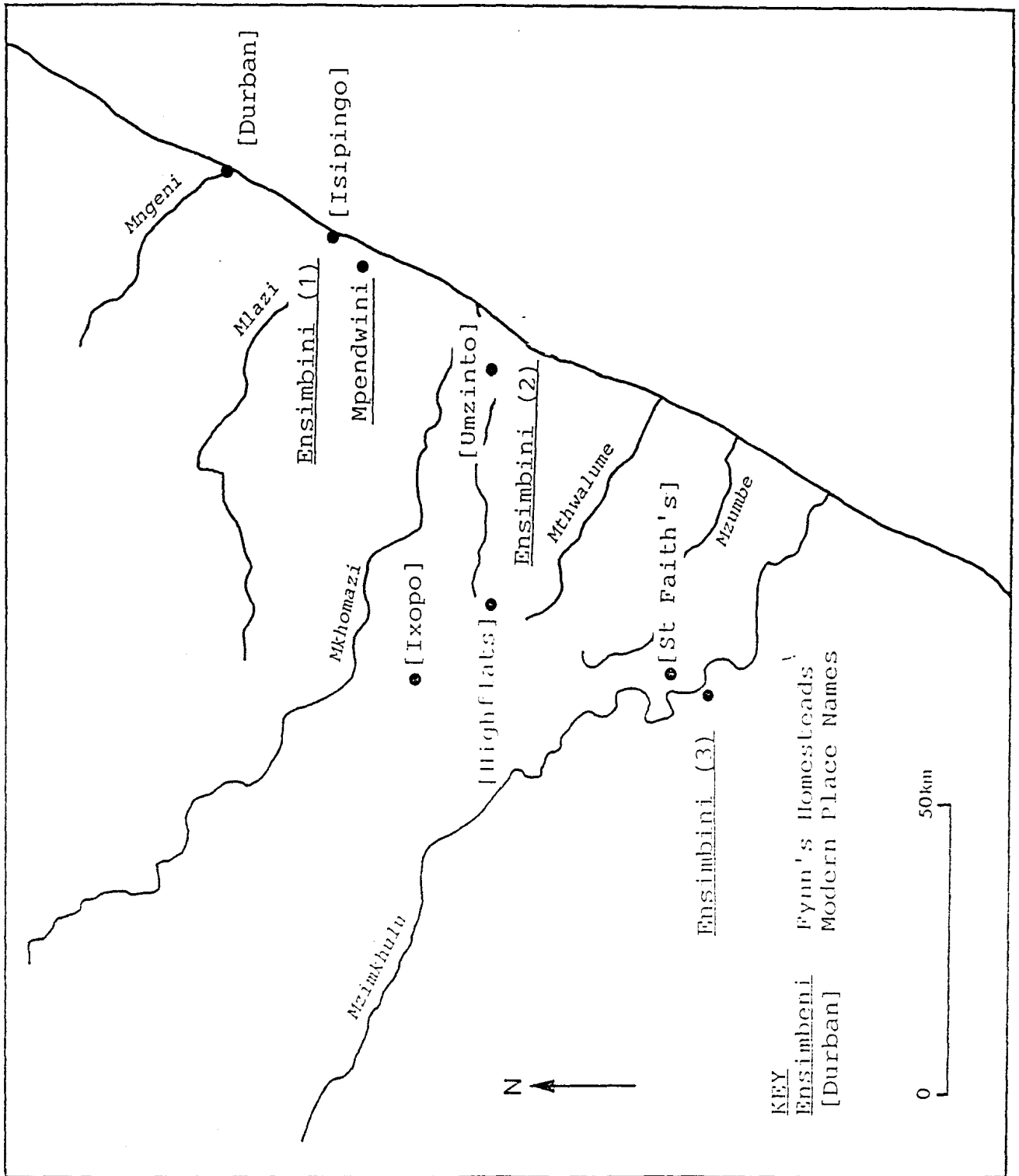
5. Reconstruction of Henry Francis Fynn's Cottage in about 1830
Model, 1990
Local History Museum, Durban





MAP 1: THE CAPE COLONY AND ADJACENT TERRITORIES, c. 1830-1850





MAP 3: SOUTHERN NATAL, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF FYNN'S HOMESTEADS DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>BPP</u>	British Parliamentary Papers
C.A.	Cape Archives depot
C.O.	Colonial Office
C.S.O.	Colonial Secretary's Office
K.C.A.L.	Killie Campbell Africana Library
L.G.	Lieutenant Governor, Eastern Cape Colony
N.A.	Natal Archives depot
S.N.A.	Secretary for Native Affairs, Natal
S.P.	Stuart Papers, Killie Campbell Africana Library

NOTE ON THE USE OF TERMS

The geographical term **Natal** has been used to refer to the region between the Mzimkhulu and Phongolo rivers, rather than the broader 'South East Africa' or the modern 'Kwa-Zulu Natal'.

The term **African** has been used to refer to the black people in Natal.

The term **mixed-race** has been used in referring to people descended from different races. This includes the 'coloured' Fynns presently living in southern Natal.

Bushmen has been used to describe Khoisan communities in the Cape Colony and southern Natal as this term was commonly used during the time when Fynn worked in these districts.

CHAPTER 1

FYNN'S EARLY CAREER 1803-1834

Henry Francis Fynn has, at various times, been depicted as having both English and Irish ancestors.¹ Fynn's father, H. Francis Fynn,² had been born in Donegal in Ireland but had moved to England at some stage during the late eighteenth century.³ Fynn senior was employed by the English East India Company which, since the mid-eighteenth century, had been in a strong economic position, having captured much of the French trade with India. The Company had also benefitted from the British occupation of the Cape in 1795, and enjoyed a monopoly on trade between the Cape and other countries.⁴ By the turn of the century, Fynn senior had a steady job on an East India company vessel trading between the Dutch East Indies and the Cape Colony.⁵ By 1800, he had bought property in London where he settled with his wife Elizabeth Copestick. Their eldest child, Henry Francis, was born there in 1803, followed by a daughter Elizabeth in 1805 and William in 1806.⁶

In 1806, Fynn senior was employed as ship's steward to James Buchanan on the ship Neptune

¹M. Davies, Twin Trails: The Story of the Fynn and Southey Families, Durban, K. Davies Publishers, 1974, pp. 4-5; S. Spencer, 'Green are the hills of Natal: Early Irish Settlers in Natal, 1824-1862', Southern African Irish Studies, vol. II (1992), p. 191.

²H. Francis Fynn (? - 1830) was known as Francis Fynn. Hereafter in this text 'Fynn senior'.

³K.C.A.L., Fynn Family Papers, file 30104, item no. 4, statement by H. Fynn junior, 27 December 1906.

⁴W. Freund, 'The Cape under the Transitional Governments 1795-1814' in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee, The Shaping of South African Society 1652-1840, Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1989, pp. 327-328.

⁵K.C.A.L., Fynn Family Papers, file 30104, item no. 3, Diary of William McDowall Fynn.

⁶Davies, Twin Trails, pp. 3-5.

and, on the way from England to China, this vessel stopped at Cape Town. Having attempted to land some of their cargo, Buchanan was prosecuted by the Customs Department and his goods were confiscated by the Batavian authorities at the Cape on the grounds that it was illegal to export 'Indian corn' (maize) from the Colony.⁷ Fynn appealed to the Batavian government for permission to remain in the colony and 'open a tavern with the assistance of his friends'.⁸ In 1807, he moved his family from London, and settled in Cape Town, where he opened an establishment known as the British Hotel, situated in Long Street.⁹ The hotel experienced financial problems from the outset,¹⁰ despite the increase in British trade with the Cape Colony from 1806 and the ascendancy of British merchants at the Cape during this period.¹¹ Fynn's economic circumstances were not improved by the fact that his family was growing rapidly. Within a year of their settling at the Cape, the Fynns had another son, Francis (Frank) born in 1808. A fourth son, Edward, was born in 1816.¹²

Of the Fynn children, only the eldest, Henry Francis received a sound education, having been left with relations in England in 1806 solely for this purpose. In 1809 at the age of six, he was admitted to Christ's Hospital School in London where he remained until the age of thirteen. Christ's Hospital or the 'Blue Coat School' had, by the end of the eighteenth century, achieved the status of an English public school. It had originally been founded in 1552 as a 'charity school', admitting pupils whose parents were unable to pay fees, many of them being the sons

⁷S. Spencer, British Settlers in Natal 1824-1857: A Biographical Register, vol. 6, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1992, p. 226.

⁸Cape Archives, Colonial Office, CO 3860, no. 584, H. Fynn to D. Baird, 25 October 1806.

⁹P. Philip, British Residents at the Cape 1795-1819: Biographical Records of 4 800 Pioneers, Cape Town, David Philip, 1981, p. 135.

¹⁰Cape Archives, Colonial Office, CO 3864, no. 412 E, Fynn to Baird, 18 March 1807.

¹¹C. Eldridge, Victorian Imperialism, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1978, pp. 59-60.

¹²Davies, Twin Trails, pp. 15-16.

of lower clergy and 'indigent gentlemen'.¹³ There is no evidence that Fynn senior belonged to either group, though he was certainly in a weak financial position by 1809. At Christ's Hospital, Henry Francis received an education that was of an exceptionally high standard for the average boy in the early nineteenth century. Christ's Hospital had, in the seventeenth century, led the way in adding subjects like mathematics to the usual classics-orientated curriculum¹⁴ During the eighteenth century, the school had undergone a revival, pre-empting the innovative work by Thomas Arnold at Rugby in the mid-nineteenth century. The improved standards aimed to attract fee-paying pupils rather than the sons of 'needy gentry'.¹⁵

Fynn's educational grounding during his seven year period at Christ's Hospital was of a sufficient standard to enable him to become a surgeon's apprentice upon his 'discharge' from school at the age of thirteen. Despite his father's request that he join the family at the Cape, he preferred to make an attempt to obtain some skills with a view towards future employment, and he worked as a surgeon's assistant, probably at one of the London teaching hospitals, for the following two years. Medicine and surgery at the beginning of the nineteenth century were mostly unscientific, and although anatomical and physiological knowledge had improved during the course of the eighteenth century, many practitioners still based their ideas on the theories of Hippocrates and Galen.¹⁶ Medicine remained the province of physicians, and surgeons at the time of Fynn's apprenticeship were still largely unskilled and poorly-trained individuals.¹⁷ Scientific developments in surgery occurred largely during the nineteenth century,¹⁸ and as a

¹³B. Gardner, The Public Schools: An Historical Survey, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1973, p. 78.

¹⁴J. Gathorne-Hardy, The Public School Phenomenon: 577-1977, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977, p. 31.

¹⁵J. Chandos, Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864, London, Hutchinson, 1984, pp. 247-255.

¹⁶A.J. Youngson, The Scientific Revolution in Victorian Medicine, London, Croom Helm, 1979, pp. 11-12.

¹⁷G. Williams, ed., The Age of Miracles: Medicine and Surgery in the Nineteenth Century, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸L.N. Magner, A History of Medicine, New York, Marcel Dekker, 1992, p. 280.

surgeon's assistant or 'loblolly boy', Fynn's experiences would have been restricted to routine hospital tasks and a limited knowledge of surgical procedure.¹⁹

Possibly realising that, as an untrained youngster his prospects in surgery were restricted, Fynn decided in 1818 to join his family in the Cape Colony. Although the Cape had officially become a British colony in 1814, resulting in an unprecedented volume of British shipping calling at Cape Town,²⁰ Fynn senior seemed to be still experiencing financial difficulties and he was unable to employ his sons in the family hotel business on a paid basis.²¹ There were few prospects for young British lower-middle class men in the new colony, and, as a career in surgery did not seem to offer many opportunities,²² Fynn eventually sought employment on the Government Farm which had been established by Robert Hart at Somerset in 1814.²³ This project had been set up to experiment with various crops and animal-breeding in the colony while at the same time supplying British troops on the eastern Fish River border.²⁴ By the early 1820s, Somerset Farm was suffering from the repercussions of a depression which had affected the entire colony, and had been made worse by local cattle raids. By 1822 the farm was showing severe financial losses and in early 1823 was forced to close.²⁵

¹⁹R. Porter, Disease, Medicine and Society in England: 1550-1860, London, Macmillan, 1987, p. 48; G.B. Risse, 'Hospital History: New Sources and Methods', in R. Porter and A. Wear, eds., Problems and Methods in the History of Medicine, London, Croom Helm, 1987, pp. 186-88.

²⁰J .B. Peires, 'The British and the Cape Colony 1814-1834', in Elphick and Giliomee, eds., The Shaping of South African Society, p. 475.

²¹Cape Archives, Colonial Office, CO 3913, no. 404, H. Fynn and Frank Fynn to Somerset, 8 July 1818.

²²P. McMagh, The Three Lieschings: Their Times and Contribution to Cape Medicine 1800-1843, Cape Town, Society for the History of Pharmacy in South Africa, 1992, pp. 90-91.

²³Cape Archives, Colonial Office, CO 66: Records of Somerset Farm, 1814-1819.

²⁴G. Thompson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, vol. 1, ed. V.S. Forbes, Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1967, (1st publ. London, 1827), pp. 54-57.

²⁵Cape Archives, Colonial Office, CO, vol. 177, Report from Auditors, 26 December 1821; Report on Cattle Thefts, 17 April 1822; John Pringle to Robert Hart, 9 August 1822; Robert Hart to Colonel Bird, 30 December 1822.

Fynn remained on Somerset Farm from 1818 to 1822 but apart from a brief reference to this in his manuscripts,²⁶ there is little source material on this period of his career. Later academic writers have conjectured that his contact with the 'frontier' region during these years was crucial in providing a context for his later actions. In reconstructing Fynn's later career, an American scholar, Todd Ellison, argued that Fynn's Cape experiences in 'giving the black communities the tools of his civilisation' provided the grounding for his 'kind' behaviour towards the Natal blacks in the 1850s.²⁷ In a recent biographical survey, a local researcher, Shirron Bramdeow depicted Fynn as a member of a 'frontier' society and suggested that Fynn's contact with 'African people' in the Cape Colony gave him the necessary experience for his 'frontier' period at Port Natal in the 1820s and 1830s.²⁸ Louis Du Buisson, a popular writer has recently described Fynn as having 'his heart set on adventure and stirred by tales which drifted back from the frontier'.²⁹

These modern reconstructions are narrow in that they do not attempt to place Fynn within a realistic social and political setting in early nineteenth-century Cape society. In the British Cape colony, contact between Europeans and Africans by the early 1820s was characterised by attitudes of hostility and suspicion. This was the result of an ongoing series of conflicts which had culminated in the British 'closing' of the frontier by establishing the Fish River as an official boundary of the colony in 1812.³⁰ Tensions between white and black were intensified by the British defeat of the Xhosa under Nxele following an attack on Grahamstown in 1819.³¹

²⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 16, Diary of H. Fynn.

²⁷J. Todd Ellison, "'In remembrance of your kindnesses to us", Henry F. Fynn's Other Decade in Natal, South Africa, 1852-1861', unpubl. Honours thesis, Middlebury College, 1977, pp. 73-4.

²⁸S. Bramdeow, 'Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community in Natal, 1824-1988', unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1988, p. 15.

²⁹L. Du Buisson, The White Man Cometh, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1987, pp. 40-41.

³⁰C. Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape 1770-1865, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1992, p. 56.

³¹N. Mostert, Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People, London, Jonathan Ball, 1992, pp. 478-9.

Academic and popular writers of the 1970s and 1980s tried to stress that Fynn's interaction with indigenous Cape communities was part of an 'assimilation' process which characterised 'frontier' societies. Although early nineteenth-century writers described the Cape inhabitants as being 'imbued with positive qualities',³² this tolerance and acceptance of differences was, by the early 1820s, being replaced by hardened racist attitudes.³³ Following the inclusion of the Cape in the British empire, Europeans at the Cape saw themselves increasingly as the representatives of 'civilisation' as opposed to black peoples who were imbued with 'savagery'.³⁴

In 1822 Fynn found himself once more unemployed and without prospects, and contemplated returning to England in search of work. He moved from Somerset East to Grahamstown, where his family had settled in 1820, Fynn senior's hotel business having collapsed owing to financial problems.³⁵ The family was in a poverty-stricken state by 1822, as were the majority of Grahamstown's English inhabitants, many of them unemployed settlers who were destitute as a result of the problems encountered following their immigration in 1820 and 1821.³⁶ With no potential employment in Grahamstown and having left Somerset Farm with no savings, Fynn covered the six hundred miles to Cape Town on foot, and eventually managed to find employment as supercargo on the vessel Jane owned by a British trader, Henry Nourse.³⁷ In this capacity, Fynn spent several months in 1822 and 1823 travelling up the east coast as far as Delagoa Bay.³⁸

³²J. Barrow, A Narrative of Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, London, Cadell, 1802, p. 28.

³³A. Keppel-Jones, ed., Philipps: 1820 Settler, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1960, pp. 182-3.

³⁴M. Wade, White on Black in South Africa: A Study of English-Language Inscriptions of Skin Colour, London, Macmillan, 1993, p. 1.

³⁵Davies, Twin Trails, p. 5.

³⁶Peires, 'The British and the Cape Colony 1814-1834', p. 477.

³⁷E. Morse-Jones, Roll of the British Settlers in South Africa: Part I up to 1826, Cape Town, Balkema, 1971, p. 146.

³⁸Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, File 16.

Nourse's trading trips were motivated by reports of possible ivory supplies in the south-east African hinterland, with Port Natal and Delagoa Bay as potential ports for this trade. Ivory was becoming scarce in the Cape colony as elephant had been hunted almost to destruction in the early nineteenth century, and hunters and traders had to move the 'hunting frontier' to the Natal region.³⁹ At the same time, the British government was showing an increased interest in the Indian Ocean as an area for the expansion of imperial trade,⁴⁰ and in 1823 an official sea-going expedition travelled to Delagoa Bay with instructions to survey the eastern coast. Prior to the widespread use of quinine to combat malaria, penetration of the African interior was hazardous for Europeans,⁴¹ but coastal trade had been steadily increasing since the early nineteenth century.⁴² The 1823 official reconnaissance party, under the command of William Owen consisted of three vessels, the Leven, the Barracouta and the Cockburn, and these were supplemented by Nourse's vessel the Andromache.⁴³ Although Owen claimed to have secured some kind of trading concession with a paramountcy which he called the 'kingdom of Temby', this agreement was not accepted by the colonial office.⁴⁴ Following Owen's voyage, the British government did not sponsor any further east coast ventures.⁴⁵

³⁹J.M. Mackenzie, The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988, p. 62; W. Beinart and P. Coates, Environment and History: The Taming of Nature in the U.S.A. and South Africa, London, Routledge, 1995, p. 21.

⁴⁰P. Kennedy, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in British Imperialism 1815-1914' in C. Eldridge, British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1984, pp. 26-7.

⁴¹D.R. Headrick, The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 62-63.

⁴²R. Hyam, Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp. 15-16.

⁴³B.J.T. Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, Pretoria, Government Printer, 1984, p. 1, Nourse to Somerset, 17 March 1823.

⁴⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, pp. 15-17, Cession of the Kingdom of Temby, March 1823, pp. 18-19, Bathurst to Somerset, 10 October 1823.

⁴⁵Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, pp. 18-19, Bathurst to Somerset, 10 October 1823, pp. 29-30, Somerset to Bathurst, 22 April 1824.

In 1823, F.G. Farewell, an ex-naval officer retired on half-pay, set up a private expedition from Cape Town, and attempted to reach the Natal interior through Lake St Lucia.⁴⁶ Farewell's aim was to trade for ivory with the St Lucia hinterland but his attempt was unsuccessful. On his return to the Cape he formed a second venture backed by a number of Cape businessmen.⁴⁷ By April 1824, Farewell had made final plans for a voyage to the Bay of Natal in order to investigate this port as a possible trading base for ivory, and had hired the sloop Julia from James Gosling, a merchant from the Stellenbosch district.⁴⁸ Fynn, having returned from Delagoa Bay, left Nourse's employ and managed to persuade Farewell that his knowledge of the east coast would be invaluable for the new expedition, thus securing a job as supercargo aboard the Julia. This vessel left Cape Town in May 1824 with Fynn in charge of the supplies and the advance party to Port Natal.⁴⁹

In none of their earlier trips up the east coast had European travellers gained detailed information about the inhabitants of the Delagoa Bay or Port Natal interior. Owen had referred to the 'kingdom of Temby', referring to the area surrounding present-day Maputo.⁵⁰ Other early voyagers had mentioned indigenous people in the interior, though never clearly, and Fynn later recalled that he had been treated for a fever by people in the St Lucia district.⁵¹ Farewell's first observation to the authorities in Cape Town in 1824 was that 'the whole country from Natal to Delagoa Bay, extending inland ... some hundred miles' belonged to 'Chaka the King of the Zulos'. He added that there was a strong military presence in the form of 'about eight or nine thousand armed men' and that Shaka's 'subjects appeared to treat him with such submission

⁴⁶Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, pp. 19-20, Notarial Deed, 4 December 1823.

⁴⁷Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 1, Notarial Deed, 16 May 1823, p. 11, Charter, 21 June 1823, pp. 5-6, Agreement between F.G. Farewell and J. Thomson, 28 May 1823.

⁴⁸Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 27, Notarial Deed, 15 April 1824.

⁴⁹Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, pp. 35-6, Farewell to Somerset, 1 May 1824.

⁵⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, pp. 15-17, Cession of the Kingdom of Temby, March 1823.

⁵¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, File 16.

and respect as to rank him far above any chiefs I believe at present known in South Africa'.⁵²

The traders' aim of securing ivory supplies depended upon their relationship with the individual whom they perceived to be in a position of economic control,⁵³ and it was also essential that Farewell convince the Cape authorities that he was dealing with the political leader in the Port Natal region. Within weeks of his arrival, Farewell was able to write to the Cape government stating that he had acquired a 'land grant' from Shaka which gave the Europeans trading rights at Port Natal.⁵⁴ For Farewell, Shaka was the legitimate ruler in the region and this made the 'land-grant' deal official enough to be reported in official language to the Cape government, thereby indirectly connecting British interests with the traders' activities.

From a contemporary perspective, it is extremely difficult to provide an accurate analysis of the social, economic and political context in which the traders operated at Port Natal.⁵⁵ Since the 1820s, successive layers of discourse have overlain Farewell's early description of Shaka as a powerful leader with military influence.⁵⁶ Within a year, Farewell's initial description had been taken up by the Cape press which stressed Shaka's political control over vast areas of territory, as far as the Maputo area in the north.⁵⁷ During the 1820s, the imagery of Shaka's control was extended to notions of military power and by 1832, Isaacs was referring to Shaka's Zulu force which consisted of 40 000 fighting men.⁵⁸ In the course of the early nineteenth

⁵²Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 37, Farewell to Somerset, 6 September 1824.

⁵³D.W. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics in Southern Mocambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, London University, 1978, pp. 233-234.

⁵⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, Farewell to Somerset, 6 September 1824, pp. 36-40.

⁵⁵J. Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989, pp. 320-352.

⁵⁶C. Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka": A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as "Mfecane Motor"', Journal of African History, vol. 33 (1992), pp. 37-63.

⁵⁷Cape Town Gazette and Commercial Advertiser, 4 June 1825.

⁵⁸Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 226, Isaacs to Cole, December 1832.

century, portrayals of Shaka as the centre of a Zulu military machine were further developed and by the time Fynn recorded his reminiscences in the 1850s, he was reiterating the accepted view of the indigenous people of south east Africa, as 'an immense black and continuous mass of natives, all armed and in their war dresses'.⁵⁹

From these nineteenth-century images, a fully fledged 'mfecane' historiography emerged during the twentieth century.⁶⁰ The basic tenets of this theory were the authority of Shaka over other groups and his military conquest of a large region, evident in all-embracing historical themes such as the 'wars of Shaka'.⁶¹ Recent research has questioned this ideology and has suggested that the forms of control exerted by ruling groups in pre-colonial south east Africa were far more complex than initially suggested by nineteenth century reports.⁶² Farewell's original stress on the dominant role played by 'King Shaka' has also been re-examined,⁶³ while the notions of a Zulu-centered state emerging from Shaka's conquests have been questioned from a contemporary perspective.⁶⁴

Farewell's depiction of Shaka as a prominent individual served to provide the traders at Port Natal with a political setting in which they, as specific individuals, enjoyed a particular relationship with an indigenous leader. In his despatch to the Cape governor which contained Shaka's alleged 'land grant', Farewell referred to the fact that Shaka had rewarded the Europeans, Farewell in particular, with land 'for his kind attention to me in my illness from a

⁵⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, File 16.

⁶⁰J. Wright, 'The Political Mythology of the Mfecane', Canadian Journal of African Studies, vol. 23, no. 2 (1989), pp. 272-291.

⁶¹J. Wright, 'A.T. Bryant and the "Wars of Shaka"', History in Africa, vol. 18 (1992), pp. 409-425.

⁶²J. Wright and C. Hamilton, 'The Making of the AmaLala: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Pre-Colonial Context', South African Historical Journal, vol. 22 (November 1990), pp. 15-17.

⁶³C.A. Hamilton, 'Authoring Shaka: Models, Metaphors and Historiography', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1993.

⁶⁴D. Wylie, 'King Shaka and the Modern Zulu State', History Today, (May 1994), pp. 8-12.

wound.' Fynn was, as Farewell's employee, one of the signatory witnesses to this document.⁶⁵

The only other early nineteenth-century reference to Farewell's medical treatment of Shaka is that of William Owen who recalled a voyage to Port Natal in the 1820s during which he noticed that 'Shaka ... conceives that while he can procure (English medicines) shall never die; in consequence he soon drank all that Mr Farewell had brought with him'.⁶⁶ However, in almost all secondary accounts Fynn has been portrayed as the person with medical skills, and from as early as 1836, his abilities were depicted as an integral part of the diplomatic process between the traders and Shaka.

When he wrote his reminiscences in the 1850s, Fynn recalled that, while he had given Shaka medical treatment following an assassination attempt in July 1824, Shaka's own doctor had been present and had dressed the wound with herbal remedies.⁶⁷ It is probable that the methods of Shaka's *inyanga* were as useful, if not more effective than the limited measures carried out by Fynn.⁶⁸ Later informants, for example Maquza kaGawushane, who gave evidence to James Stuart in the early 1900s, did not have any knowledge of an oral historical account which placed Fynn at the scene when Shaka was wounded, or of his carrying out any doctoring.⁶⁹ Fynn's significance as the individual who was personally responsible for 'healing' the king and thus establishing close diplomatic ties between the Europeans and Shaka, were ideas generated wholly in later secondary accounts.

There is little evidence to suggest, as many secondary accounts have done, that Fynn was in a particular position of favour with Shaka or that he acted as some kind of negotiator between

⁶⁵Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, pp. 36-40, Farewell to Somerset, 6 September 1824, Enclosure.

⁶⁶W. Owen, Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar, London, Bentley, 1833, vol. II, p. 221.

⁶⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, File 16.

⁶⁸A.T. Bryant, Zulu Medicine and Medicine-Men, Cape Town, Struik, 1970, p. 77.

⁶⁹J. Wright and C. de B. Webb, eds., The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples, Pietermaritzburg and Durban, University of Natal Press, 1979, vol. II, evidence of Maquza kaGawushane, p. 232.

Farewell and Shaka. The Europeans' relationship with Shaka was not in fact particularly good, and although Farewell was able to exchange European goods for ivory,⁷⁰ this did not occur on any substantial scale⁷¹ and the Europeans were reportedly forbidden to hunt elephant without Shaka's permission.⁷² Far from being Shaka's favourite, Fynn was singled out as a person whom Shaka reprimanded for attempting to secure a private ivory supply.⁷³

By September 1824, Farewell's party was extremely isolated from contact with other European communities as most of the traders had returned to the Cape aboard the Ann, while the Julia was lost in a second trip to the Cape in late 1824.⁷⁴ Being more or less stranded at Port Natal, Farewell decided that an attempt at an overland route back to the Cape colony was essential if his limited ivory trade was to enjoy any success. Fynn, possibly motivated by a personal desire to ensure the safe transport of his own ivory supply,⁷⁵ took the initiative in seeking out a southern route and in December 1824 he left on a trip towards the Mpondo territory to the south of the Mzimkhulu river. Although forced to turn back due to a lack of adequate food supplies, Fynn together with his coloured retainers, travelled as far as the Mzimvubu river, a distance of about 220 kilometres from Port Natal. In the course of their journey, Fynn and his companions stumbled upon the remains of the East Indian vessel, the Grosvenor, which had been shipwrecked on the east coast in 1782.⁷⁶ Following this unsuccessful attempt, Fynn set out again in early 1825 and managed to reach the capital of the Mpondo ruler, Faku, with whom

⁷⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 17, Campbell to Bell, 10 October 1828.

⁷¹Hedges, 'Trade and Politics in Southern Mocambique and Zululand', pp. 230-231.

⁷²Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 12, Farewell to Dundas, 10 September 1828.

⁷³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, Extract from a Private Letter from Port Natal, 6 January 1826, p. 80.

⁷⁴Cape Town Gazette and Commercial Advertiser, 2 October 1824.

⁷⁵Webb and Wright, eds., The James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of Dinya kaZokozwayo, p. 111.

⁷⁶P.R. Kirby, ed., A Source Book on the Wreck of the Grosvenor East Indiaman, Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1953, pp. 33-35; P.R. Kirby, The True Story of the Grosvenor East Indiaman, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 151-155.

he established some kind of diplomatic relationship.⁷⁷ Fynn was one of the earliest Europeans to visit Faku. His attempts to utilise the Mpondo territory as a mid-point for the Port Natal-Cape ivory trade route marked the beginning of an increasing overland traffic between European traders in Natal and the eastern Cape colony.⁷⁸ Though this trade was on a small scale compared to the Delagoa Bay Portuguese-controlled trade,⁷⁹ Fynn's efforts in obtaining concessions in the Mpondo region were crucial for the onset of British- instigated colonial penetration of the Natal region.

Stapleton

In October 1825, Fynn returned from his trading trip, at the same time that a second European trading party arrived at Port Natal under the leadership of J.S. King.⁸⁰ Although Fynn had explored unaided the potential ivory route in the south, he was by no means an independent agent and remained technically an employee of Farewell's. With the arrival of King as a potential rival trader, Fynn's loyalty to Farewell's party was extremely important, particularly in view of his valuable contacts with Faku and his knowledge of the overland trade route. During Fynn's absence in the Mpondo region, Farewell's situation had become extremely difficult as the trading party was not only stranded at Port Natal but had, in addition, used up or lost all their trading exchange goods.⁸¹ In order to maintain a monopoly on the ivory trade at Port Natal, it was essential that Farewell's group should exercise control over the overland route, while at the same time maintaining their co-operative relationship with Shaka. J.S. King quickly realised the necessity of securing good diplomatic relations with Shaka, and by December 1825 he had

⁷⁷D.G.L. Cragg, 'The Role of the Wesleyan Missionaries in Relations between the Mpondo and the Colonial Authorities', in C. Saunders and R. Derricourt, eds., Beyond the Cape Frontier: Studies in the History of the Transkei and Ciskei, London, Longman, 1974, pp. 145-6.

⁷⁸W. Beinart, 'Production and the Material Basis of Chieftainship, Pondoland, c. 1830-80' in A. Atmore and S. Marks, eds., Economy and Society in Preindustrial South Africa, London, 1980, pp. 125-129.

⁷⁹H. Slater, 'Transitions in the Political Economy of South-East Africa Before 1840', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Sussex University, 1976, p. 331.

⁸⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 40, King to Bathurst, 10 July 1824; Bathurst to Somerset, 23 September 1824.

⁸¹Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 50, Edward Hawes to C.R. Moorsom, 16 May 1825.

negotiated a concession for ivory trading.⁸²

By April 1826, King had become frustrated with the lack of trading opportunities and returned to the Cape aboard the visiting vessel the Helicon to secure further supplies, but possibly also to obtain some official recognition for his own ventures at Port Natal.⁸³ Although in competition with Farewell, King did state that he was attempting to procure another ship, the Frances, to voyage to Port Natal in order to assist Farewell's party.⁸⁴

Fynn's attempt to establish an overland trade route, and King's return to Cape Town illustrated the lack of communication between the Europeans at Port Natal and the Cape colony. Relatively few vessels called at Port Natal as the fledgling trading base was by no means a major port for shipping on the east coast.⁸⁵ There is evidence of one vessel, the York calling at Port Natal in 1825 and another vessel the Helicon in 1826, by which ship King returned to Cape Town.⁸⁶ These vessels were despatched by the Cape authorities to investigate the fate of Farewell's and King's parties, and hardly constituted a significant volume of shipping and it seems unlikely, as Cobbing has suggested, that members of Farewell's and King's parties were participating in the Portuguese and American east coast slave trade. Cobbing has argued that the traders' reluctance to leave Port Natal, even when there were vessels available for their departure, indicated their probable involvement in fairly lucrative slave-raiding and slave-trading activities.⁸⁷

⁸²Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 28 April 1826.

⁸³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 86, Acland to Collector of His Majesty's Customs, Simonstown, 6 May 1826.

⁸⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 86, J.S. King to Sir Richard Plasket, 26 May 1826.

⁸⁵G.S. Graham, Great Britain in the Indian Ocean: A Study of Maritime Enterprise 1810-1850, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967, pp. 55-7.

⁸⁶Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 49, Edward Hawes to C.R. Moorsom, Captain of the Andromache, 16 May 1825; p. 86, Acland to Collector of Customs, 6 May 1826.

⁸⁷J. Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle: The Early Zulu and the Slave Trade' in D. Edgecombe et.al. eds., The Debate on Zulu Origins, Pietermaritzburg, Department of Historical Studies, University of Natal, 1992, pp. 15-17.

Whether slave trading or not, the European community at Port Natal was by necessity a relatively settled one. Following the loss of the Julia in late 1824, Farewell's few remaining traders along with their mixed-race servants and employees could not rely on a regular source of European goods and were left with no choice but to adapt as comfortably as possible to the indigenous society and environment.⁸⁸ Although initially dependent on their Cape servants for menial tasks,⁸⁹ the Europeans soon acquired indigenous followers. Fynn in particular had, by late 1825, acquired a number of adherents, many of whom had attached themselves to him during his trip south.⁹⁰ By 1826, reports were reaching the Cape to the effect that Fynn had been allocated about 450 followers by Shaka in order to 'cultivate the land and to do whatever he may require of them'.⁹¹ These people were viewed by both the Europeans and their mixed-blood employees as an inferior group, demonstrated by the attitude of the Cape Malay woman Rachel who administered 'a wholesome quantity of personal chastisement' to the 'rude and ignorant' locals.⁹²

While the Europeans considered themselves to be of a superior social class to the non-Europeans at Port Natal, they could not, without fresh supplies of clothing and European goods, retain a contrasting appearance, and by early 1826 a witness from a passing vessel noted that they had all, with the exception of Farewell, 'adopted the dress of the country, which is nearly nudity'.⁹³ When the members of J.S. King's party arrived at Port Natal in 1825 they were struck by the disreputable appearance of Farewell's companions.⁹⁴ Fynn was singled out by

⁸⁸Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 6 January 1826; 28 April 1826.

⁸⁹S. Gray, ed., The Natal Papers of 'John Ross', Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1992, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁰N. Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1968 (1st publ. 1836), p. 95.

⁹¹Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 18 July 1826.

⁹²Isaacs, Travels and Adventures, p. 14.

⁹³Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 6 January 1826.

⁹⁴Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, file no. 26031/27107, extract no. 1, Charles Maclean, 'Among the Kafirs', p. 2.

King's young employee, Nathaniel Isaacs, as a specific example of the extent to which a European could adapt to 'native dress'. Isaacs had arrived at Port Natal with King while Fynn was away in the Mpondo territory and the former's first meeting with Fynn demonstrated this:

'It is almost impossible to convey a correct idea of the singular appearance of this individual when he first presented himself... His head was partly covered by a crownless straw hat, and a tattered blanket, fastened round his neck by means of strips of hide, served to cover his body, while his hands performed the office of keeping it round his nether man; his shoes he had discarded for some months, while every other habiliment had imperceptibly worn away'.⁹⁵

Although relatively independent and nonconformist in his behaviour, Fynn was still part of the group of Europeans who were cut off from colonial society and completely dependent on the indigenous community, existing wholly 'under the protection of the king (Shaka)'.⁹⁶ Natal historian Charles Ballard has suggested that the nature of the relationship between black and white at Port Natal was an example of the type of 'clientship' experienced in a frontier context and that the traders were 'clients' rather than subjects of Shaka.⁹⁷ Fynn's relatively free movement between Port Natal and Faku's territory is perhaps illustrative of a relationship of clientship rather than submission, but his participation in Shaka's military campaign against the Ndwandwe in the Phongolo district in about September 1826 demonstrates the fact that he was, like the other Europeans, a significant ally for Shaka.⁹⁸ While Cobbing has stressed that this

⁹⁵Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, vol. I, p. 95.

⁹⁶Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 49, Edward Hawes to C.R. Moorsom, 16 May 1825.

⁹⁷C. Ballard, 'Natal 1824-1844: The Frontier Interregnum', Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol. 5 (1982), pp. 49-53; C. Ballard, 'Traders, Trekkers and Colonists', in A. Duminy and W. Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910: A New History, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1989, pp. 114-117.

⁹⁸J. Wright, 'Political Transformations in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' in C. Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath:

was an instance of the Europeans assisting a Zulu-led slave-raid,⁹⁹ there is also evidence which points to Shaka's awareness of the benefits of European firearms.¹⁰⁰ Although this conflict was remembered as a 'very sanguinary affair' resulting in the river becoming 'red with blood',¹⁰¹ Fynn made a specific attempt to describe his own participation as an example of humane behaviour, as shown by his rescue of prisoners sentenced to execution.¹⁰²

Fynn, like the other Europeans was rewarded for his actions in the Ndwandwe campaign by a gift of cattle. Using these gains, the individual traders set up separate homesteads at Port Natal, and Fynn was able to move away from Farewell and King.¹⁰³ By late 1826, the rivalry between Farewell's and King's parties had resulted in a physical separation and while neither leader was able to obtain official support from the Cape colony, they were unable to work from a position of strength as their trading interests were divided.¹⁰⁴ Fynn clung to his independence and avoided supporting either Farewell or King.¹⁰⁵

The various members of the trading parties, having set up relatively isolated imizi, or homesteads, each headed by an individual European male, followed the indigenous pattern and

Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History, Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg, University of the Witwatersrand and University of Natal Press, 1995, p. 181.

⁹⁹Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle', p. 27.

¹⁰⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 269, Bourke to Somerset, 26 August 1828.

¹⁰¹Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. III, evidence of Mkotana ka Zulu, p. 223.

¹⁰²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 16.

¹⁰³Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. II, evidence of Maziyana ka Mahlabeni, p. 269.

¹⁰⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 86, King to Plasket, 26 May 1826; pp. 87-8, Colonial Office to J.S. King, 7 June 1826; p. 91, Notarial Deed, 22 July 1826.

¹⁰⁵Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 36-8, Notarial Deed, 24 May 1828.

collected a number of indigenous women for their households.¹⁰⁶ Early twentieth-century oral tradition records that sexual intercourse between white men and black women 'took place on the Zulu plan; that is, any woman required would be specially sent for. She would at nightfall come to the man's house'.¹⁰⁷ Fynn had several imizi a considerable distance south of Port Natal in the present day Isipingo and Umzinto districts¹⁰⁸ and was remembered by James Stuart's informant, Dinya ka Zokozwayo as the European with the greatest number of common-law wives.¹⁰⁹ Fynn's assimilation into indigenous society was further strengthened by his marriage to Vundlase, the daughter of a local induna. He settled with her and various coloured and black followers at his Ensimbini homestead in the Mzimkhulu area.¹¹⁰ Fynn's extended household consisted not only of his black wives and mixed-race offspring, but also a substantial number of adherents, known as the Izinkumbi or 'locusts'. Bryant has interpreted this term to mean 'refugees' or 'wanderers',¹¹¹ though oral tradition has been more specific in defining the Izinkumbi as Fynn's mixed race retainers from the Cape, later supplemented by his mixed-race children.¹¹² Tom Fynn, a nephew of Fynn and later a chief in Nqabeni in the Alfred Country district, recalled in 1896, when giving information to the Natal government, that Shaka had allowed Fynn to 'collect all natives from the Umgeni River to the Umzimkulu River ... I (Shaka)

¹⁰⁶J. Guy, 'Gender Oppression in southern Africa's pre-capitalist societies' in C. Walker, ed., Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945, Cape Town, David Philip, 1990, pp. 36-7.

¹⁰⁷Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of Dinya ka Zokozwayo, pp. 111-112.

¹⁰⁸Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. II, evidence of Maziyana ka Mahalabeni, p. 297; vol. III, evidence of Mkando ka Dhlova, p. 187; vol. IV, evidence of , p. 239.

¹⁰⁹Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of Dinya ka Zokozwayo, p. 111.

¹¹⁰Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of Dinya ka Zokozwayo, p. 113; vol. II, evidence of Maziyana ka Mahlabeni, p. 269.

¹¹¹Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 373, 532.

¹¹²Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. III, evidence of Melapi ka Magaye, p. 74.

won't trouble them any more'.¹¹³ Cobbing has interpreted the Izinkumbi in a negative way, taking the term 'locusts' to refer to the destructive and ravaging actions of the Europeans and their mixed- race and indigenous followers in slave-raiding in the region.¹¹⁴

Fynn's move to the Mzimkhulu was the culmination of an ongoing attempt to distance himself from the rest of the European community. From as early as 1824 he had, through his trips to the Mpondo territory demonstrated his relative independence from Farewell's party, and by early 1827 he was successfully avoiding European activities at Port Natal, to the extent that he did not participate in Shaka's military expedition against the Khumalo in February 1827.¹¹⁵ Fynn's failure to join this campaign suggests that he was to some degree beyond Shaka's influence and able to exercise control over his involvement in local politics. A further instance of Fynn's autonomous behaviour was his attendance at the last illness and death of Nandi in August 1827, events which, according to some accounts, were a result of Shaka's ill treatment of his mother.¹¹⁶ Other sources state that Nandi died of natural causes,¹¹⁷ and Fynn himself reported that he attended her at Shaka's request and diagnosed her illness as dysentery.¹¹⁸

In late 1827, Shaka moved his capital from kwaBulawayo in the north to kwaDukuza, some seventy kilometres from the trading settlement at Port Natal.¹¹⁹ This was motivated by an attempt at consolidation of what was probably a fairly tenuous regional authority. John Wright has suggested that, by the later 1820s, Shaka was searching for protection from both external

¹¹³Natal Archives, Bird Papers, vol. 5, Notes on Henry Fynn by Chief Tom Fynn, p. 9.

¹¹⁴Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle', p. 15.

¹¹⁵Isaacs, Travels and Adventures, pp. 86-88.

¹¹⁶Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. II, evidence of Mabonsa ka Sidhlayi, pp. 21-22; evidence of Magidigidi ka Nobebe, p. 81; evidence of Maquza ka Gawushane, p. 232.

¹¹⁷Ibid., vol. II, evidence of Madhlebe ka Njinjana, p. 45.

¹¹⁸Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 16.

¹¹⁹Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of Lunguza ka Mpukane, pp. 298-9.

and internal opponents and proximity to the Europeans with their superior firepower seemed to offer a degree of security.¹²⁰ However, by this time, the European group, while still retaining a technological advantage in the Port Natal region, were completely divided amongst themselves and did not in any sense present a united front. Since 1826, the rivalry between Farewell and King had intensified to the extent that King attempted to claim the prerogative in land rights at Port Natal.¹²¹ Fynn, as the only other prominent European was, by virtue of his isolation on the Mzimkhulu, unable to move to a power base at Port Natal, and there is no evidence of any reaction from Fynn to the European struggles for dominance. He seems to have adopted a neutral stance in the face of the Farewell-King dispute.¹²²

In the first half of 1828, King had attempted to obtain official recognition from the Cape authorities for his own supposed 'land grant' from Shaka. However, his embassy was given a poor reception at Port Elizabeth and failed to reach Cape Town.¹²³ One of the major reasons for the negative reaction of the colonial authorities was the rumour circulating about Zulu forces under Shaka's command advancing southwards towards the Cape, 'towards the country of Hyntsa (Hintza)'.¹²⁴ At the same time there were skirmishes between the Mpondo and a force from the north, depicted in official despatches as a 'Zulu attack' on the Mpondo people.¹²⁵ Cobbing has suggested that it was in fact Fynn who created the idea of Shaka raiding in the south in order to cover up a raid by his own followers on Faku.¹²⁶ Faku reported to Major Dundas that Fynn had been present and that 'there were other white people with Fynn'.¹²⁷ Oral

¹²⁰Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', p. 392.

¹²¹Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 154, Francis to Bell, 9 May 1828.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Ibid., vol. II, p. 36, Chaubard to Bell, 14 November 1828.

¹²⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 180, Milner to Bell, 21 June 1828.

¹²⁵Mostert, Frontiers, p. 603.

¹²⁶Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi', pp. 510-511.

¹²⁷Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 274, Report by Major Dundas, 15 August 1828.

evidence given to James Stuart by two informants, Maziyana and Mbovu, in the early twentieth century refers to Shaka's forces planning a 'deliberate attack on Faku' from a headquarters based at Fynn's Ensimbini umuzi on the Mzimkhulu.¹²⁸

The evidence seems to point to Fynn's involvement, either directly or indirectly, in this conflict, but it is extremely difficult to establish whether the forces from the north were under the control of Shaka or Fynn.¹²⁹ Whatever the degree of Fynn's involvement, the clash in the Mpondo territory elucidated an immediate reaction from the Cape authorities. Military officials on the eastern border of the colony believed that other groups such as the Thembu in the Mbashe-Mthatha river area were having to defend themselves against a substantial force of 'marauding Zoolahs'.¹³⁰ In August 1828, colonial troops allied themselves with various Xhosa, Thembu and Mpondo groups and fought against forces which they assumed were 'Zulu' but were in fact an alliance of Bhaca and Ngwane people.¹³¹ Prior to the battle of Mbholompo which marked the climax of this clash, the Cape military leadership reported that the 'Zulu army' against which they believed they were fighting, was assisted by Europeans using firearms. The only European mentioned by name was Fynn, who Major Dundas viewed as the leader of the European participants.¹³² Dundas described the European mercenaries in a negative manner as the 'marauders' who assisted Shaka, but he singled out Fynn as the person who had given medical assistance to a wounded man, thereby saving the life of this individual.¹³³

In early September 1828, Fynn himself reported to the Cape military authorities under Lieutenant Colonel Somerset that the Europeans' relationship with Shaka had deteriorated

¹²⁸Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. II, evidence of Maziyana ka Mahlabeni, p. 274; vol. III, evidence of Mbovu ka Mtshumayeli, p. 44.

¹²⁹Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka'", p. 56.

¹³⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, Bourke to Husskison, 26 August 1828, p. 268.

¹³¹Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, pp. 98-99.

¹³²Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 269, Dundas to Bell, 15 August 1828; pp. 273-4, Bourke to Husskison, 26 August 1828.

¹³³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 274, Report by Major Dundas, 15 August 1828.

following the failure of King's diplomatic mission to the Cape. He noted that:

'our situation is precarious and the former respect he (Shaka) showed to Europeans is now turned to disdain. Myself, who was left as an hostage for their care, am now looked upon in the blackest light, and was never before out of his favour.'¹³⁴

Cobbing has conjectured that Fynn's relationship with Shaka deteriorated to the extent that it was Fynn who instigated the assassination of Shaka in September 1828.¹³⁵ Although there is no evidence to place Fynn at the scene at the time of this event,¹³⁶ there is material which could imply a link between the Europeans and Shaka's death. Oral informants reported Shaka's dying words as 'the land will see white people and locusts come'¹³⁷ and 'the country will be overrun with locusts; it will be ruled by white men'.¹³⁸ Yet another informant reported that 'When Tshaka died he said the white men would overrun the land; the whole land would be white with the light of the stars; it would be overrun by swallows'.¹³⁹ Cobbing has suggested that the references to 'locusts' refer to Fynn's followers the izinkumbi,¹⁴⁰ while Tom Fynn, the son of Fynn's brother Frank, pointed out to John Bird in 1896, that Shaka's reference to the the country being 'governed by swallows' was a reference to the European traders who 'like Swallows travel from place to place'.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 74, Fynn to Lt Col. Somerset, 9 September 1828.

¹³⁵Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle', p. 15.

¹³⁶Bryant, Olden Times, p. 662.

¹³⁷Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of Dinya ka Zokozwayo, p. 96.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, vol. I, evidence of Jantshi ka Nongila, p. 198.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 155, evidence of Mkando ka Dhlova.

¹⁴⁰Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle', p. 16.

¹⁴¹Natal Archives, Bird Papers, vol. 5, Notes on Henry Fynn by Chief Tom Fynn, p. 9.

Carolyn Hamilton has noted that there is no concrete evidence which implicates Fynn or his fellow traders in the assassination of Shaka.¹⁴² An alternative explanation is that, a political assassination had become necessary for Shaka's rival half-brothers to secure control of the leadership position. Fynn himself endorsed this view by stating at the time that Shaka was murdered by his half-brothers, Dingane and Sigujana, while a third half-brother was 'despatched in like manner' as he was also a rival for power. Fynn provided evidence for this plot by reporting that Shaka's dying words were 'what is the matter, children of my father?'.¹⁴³ Fynn's description of the succession wrangle was reflected by Farewell's report to the Cape authorities where he pointed out that 'a great deal of blood will be shed' before the dispute was resolved.¹⁴⁴

Despite Farewell's reports of the unsettled nature of the Port Natal region following Shaka's death,¹⁴⁵ two of the remaining Europeans, Fynn and Henry Ogle, were described by John Cane as having 'expressed a determination to spend their lives among the Zolas', having been encouraged to do so by Shaka's successor Dingane who was described as having a 'friendly disposition towards the English at Port Natal'.¹⁴⁶ Although the rivalry between Farewell and King ended with the latter's death in late 1828, the European group still consisted of a number of relatively autonomous individuals who were generally motivated by self-interest and who remained isolated from each other in their scattered *imizi*. Fynn had not, prior to the death of King, demonstrated particular support for either King or Farewell. However, he was present at King's fatal illness in late 1828 and considered Farewell's behaviour in failing to mend the quarrel reprehensible, commenting that King had died without a 'kind word' from his rival. From the end of 1828, Fynn and Farewell were in a state of constant ill-feeling, though the dispute was largely fuelled by Cane who influenced Farewell against Fynn.¹⁴⁷ Farewell himself was

¹⁴²Hamilton, "The Character and Objects of Chaka", pp. 57-8.

¹⁴³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 74, Fynn to Lt Col Somerset, 28 November 1828.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 61, Farewell to Bell, 19 December 1828.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 48, Farewell to Somerset, 15 December 1828.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 63, Campbell to Bell, 19 December 1828.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 114, Farewell to Campbell, 17 September 1829.

away from Port Natal on an extended trip to the Cape from late 1828 to September 1829.¹⁴⁸ During his absence, Cane circulated rumours to the effect that Farewell's 'hottentot' servant was being encouraged by Fynn to take over his master's property at Port Natal if the latter had not returned within six months. Cane added that his servant had been 'acting up to that idea and furthering Fynn's object in injuring (Farewell's) interest'.¹⁴⁹ While away from Port Natal, Farewell remarked that Fynn, along with his employees and adherents 'have done their utmost to injure my establishment'.¹⁵⁰

Being almost completely estranged from the other Europeans, Fynn continued to carry out his own southern-based ivory trade and informed the Cape authorities that he was assured of 'fair promises of peace' by Dingane.¹⁵¹ Possibly encouraged by such statements, Cape travellers, from the late 1820s, began to undertake journeys towards the Mzimkhulu River with the ulterior motive of participating in the ivory trade from Port Natal.¹⁵² Fynn's Ensimbini umuzi was strategically well-placed to accommodate such travellers, and he was able to act as an intermediary between potential ivory traders and Dingane as well as ensuring his own control of the overland route to the Mpondo region. Fynn's establishment was increased from 1829 by the arrival of his father and younger brothers, Frank and William, all of whom settled at the Mzimkhulu.¹⁵³

In January 1829, two Cape merchants, Alexander Cowie and Benjamin Green, crossed the

¹⁴⁸Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 114, Bell to Farewell, 6 March 1829; p. 139, Farewell to Campbell, 17 September 1829.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 139, Statement of John Cane, September 1829.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 141, Farewell to Campbell, 25 September 1829.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 73, Fynn to Lt Col Somerset, 28 November 1828.

¹⁵²Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', pp. 379-80.

¹⁵³Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, folder 30104, item no. 3, Diary of William McDowall Fynn, p. 1.

Mzimvubu River and proceeded to Fynn's establishment on the Mzimkhulu where they remained for a few days the following month.¹⁵⁴ Fynn escorted them to Dingane who provided them with supplies and permission to request food from imizi under his jurisdiction on their way to Delagoa Bay, where they planned to open up further trading networks.¹⁵⁵ Their expedition was unsuccessful and on their return journey in April 1829 they contracted malaria and died from the disease.¹⁵⁶ A 'hottentot' servant of Fynn's had accompanied the Cowie-Green expedition and he returned with their travel notes which Fynn then forwarded to J.C. Chase, a prominent eastern Cape colonist.¹⁵⁷ Chase's own report for the colonial authorities described Fynn as living 'in a kraal'.¹⁵⁸ This particular access to indigenous society made Fynn, for Chase, a valuable source of information on south-east Africa and in December 1829 he wrote to him requesting material on indigenous society and particularly on Shaka.¹⁵⁹ Fynn became a useful source of knowledge for potential ivory traders beyond the borders of the eastern Cape colony, and travellers like Andrew Geddes Bain noted the advantages of making contact with traders like Cawood and Turvey who had visited Fynn.¹⁶⁰

Both Fynn and Farewell, although in rival camps by late 1829, expressed their confidence to the colonial authorities in Dingane's favourable disposition towards Europeans.¹⁶¹ Unfortunately for the Europeans, they were unable to escape the upheavals following Dingane's succession,

¹⁵⁴E.C. Tabler, Pioneers of Natal and South-Eastern Africa 1552-1878, Cape Town, Balkema, 1977, pp. 25-6, 64-5.

¹⁵⁵The Grahamstown Journal, 1 June 1832; 8 June 1832; 15 June 1832.

¹⁵⁶Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 176, Cole to Goderich, 14 April 1831.

¹⁵⁷Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 179-80, Summary of travellers' journals by J.C. Chase.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 184, Report by J.C. Chase, October 1829.

¹⁵⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, vol. I, no. 1, Chase to Fynn, 10 December 1829.

¹⁶⁰M.H. Lister, ed., Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain: Trader, Explorer, Soldier, Road Engineer and Geologist, Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1949, p. 98.

¹⁶¹Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p.147, Fynn to Lt Col Somerset, 14 August 1829; p. 139, Farewell to Campbell, 17 September 1829.

and in October 1829, Farewell and his adherents, with the exception of Cane, were killed by Dingane's opponents, the Qwabe people.¹⁶² Fynn, as one of the remaining self-appointed European leaders, undertook the responsibility of reporting these events to the Cape officials.¹⁶³ In April 1830, King's employee Isaacs, together with Fynn, met with Dingane to secure their trading rights at Port Natal. Isaacs supported Fynn as a successor to the attempts at a trade monopoly carried out by Farewell and King and stated in his published account that Dingane had tried to establish Fynn as leader of the European-dominated Port Natal community.¹⁶⁴ Fynn however, preferred to retain control of his ivory route in the southern region around the Mzimkhulu river and refused Dingane's offer.¹⁶⁵

Isaacs was extremely ambitious for a significant place in the trade rights at Port Natal, and at some stage during 1830 he put forward a prospectus for a merchant company to engage in 'commerce, colonisation and agriculture at the Bay of Natal'. He even took it upon himself to speak to the British authorities at the Cape on Fynn's behalf with regard to the potential of the Port Natal hinterland which had been 'lately explored' by himself and Fynn, and pointed out that their trading rights were safeguarded by 'a friendly alliance (with) Dingaan, King of the Zoolos'.¹⁶⁶ Although Fynn had made efforts to maintain a positive relationship with Dingane through the acquisition of trade goods from the Cape which would 'meet his (Dingane's) approbation', he did not hold sole rights as Dingane's trading contact.¹⁶⁷ By the second half of 1830, Cane had been selected by Dingane as his European representative, and was sent on a diplomatic mission to the Cape with four elephant's teeth as a gift to the Cape authorities for

¹⁶²Ibid., vol. II, pp. 157-8, Moodie to Bell, 5 March 1830.

¹⁶³Ibid., vol. II, p. 160, Fynn to Bell, 16 June 1830.

¹⁶⁴Isaacs, Travels and Adventures, vol. II, p. 27.

¹⁶⁵The Grahamstown Journal, 21 February 1832.

¹⁶⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, file 26031, extract no. 2, Prospectus for a Company at the Bay of Natal, 1830, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 147-8, Fynn to Lt Col Somerset, 14 August 1829.

which Dingane expected 'a present in return'.¹⁶⁸

Isaacs had overestimated Fynn's influence at Port Natal and in 1831 he left to take up a merchant position in St Helena. However, by 1830 it was also clear that Fynn no longer had a trade monopoly even in the Mzimkhulu district. In September 1830 the merchants John Biddulph and James Collis stopped at Fynn's umuzi on their way to Port Natal.¹⁶⁹ On his return to the Cape, Collis wrote a report for John Bell, the Cape Governor's secretary, in which he pointed out that an American vessel was trading off the coast at Port Natal. This he perceived as a direct threat to 'the interests of the British government at Port Natal'.¹⁷⁰ This issue was a matter of considerable interest to the British officials in the Cape colony. The governor, Sir Lowry Cole, remarked that should United States forces or representatives in any way occupy Port Natal it would be 'hardly necessary to remark how embarrassing such neighbours might eventually prove to this Colony'.¹⁷¹ Despite the concern of the Cape government with the presence of a foreign power at Port Natal, the British colonial office showed no inclination to initiate any process of colonisation in the Natal region, though the idea of formal annexation did slowly gain ground during the 1830s.¹⁷² Individual traders during the 1830s were anxious for a more formal British presence at Port Natal, as was demonstrated by Collis, who suggested to the Cape government in 1831 that he might be appointed as an 'agent to communicate with the king of the Zoolahs and also to watch over the interests of the British government at Port Natal'.¹⁷³

Fynn's own circumstances by 1831 were indicative of the reasons for the imperial government's reluctance to become involved in gaining formal control of Port Natal. Although the civil

¹⁶⁸Ibid., vol. II, p. 172, Campbell to Bell, 26 November 1830.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., vol. II, pp. 166-167, Biddulph to Cole, 10 December 1830.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., vol. II, p. 170, Memorial of James Collis, 7 January 1831.

¹⁷¹Ibid., vol. II, p. 171, Cole to R.W. Hay, 11 January 1831.

¹⁷²Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, pp. 115-116.

¹⁷³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 170, Memorial of James Collis, 7 January 1831.

upheavals following Shaka's death had resulted indirectly in the death of Farewell, the remaining Europeans had remained unmolested during 1830 and the first part of 1831. However, in April of that year, a dispute between Cane and Dingane's adherent Jacob Msimbiti (also called Hlambamanzi) resulted in the latter seeking support from Dingane with the result that Cane's umuzi was attacked by Dingane's forces.¹⁷⁴ The other Europeans - Fynn, Ogle and Isaacs - fled with their households southwards and sought refuge at William Boyce's mission station at Buntingville in the Mpondo region.¹⁷⁵ Both Fynn and his brother William reported these events to the Cape government and stressed the intense hostility of Dingane and explained how they had had to flee from the Zulu and arrive in a 'starving state' at Buntingville.¹⁷⁶ William Fynn was so distressed by this forced flight that he chose to return immediately to the Cape colony and did not return to the Mzimkhulu.¹⁷⁷

The Fynns undoubtedly fled in a state of panic. Cane reported that Fynn's flight had been unnecessary and that he had been 'startled at a feather'.¹⁷⁸ During the course of these events, Fynn had executed one of his retainers, Lukilimba, whom he suspected of conspiring with Msimbiti and Dingane against the Europeans.¹⁷⁹ Fynn later defended his actions by stating that he had 'consulted with several of the people with me as to his (Lukilimba's) conduct', and that summary execution should be the 'fate of all such dogs'.¹⁸⁰ Despite his questionable behaviour at the time of these events, Fynn became an important source for the eastern Cape settler newspaper, The Grahamstown Journal which had been established by Robert Godlonton in

¹⁷⁴Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, folder 30104, item no. 3, Diary of William McDowall Fynn, p. 2.

¹⁷⁵Natal Archives, Bird Papers, vol. 5, evidence of Chief Tom Fynn, pp. 16-17.

¹⁷⁶Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 207, Fynn to W.R. Thompson, 21 July 1831; p. 200, Statement of William Fynn, 21 July 1831.

¹⁷⁷Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, folder 30104, item no. 3, Diary of William McDowall Fynn, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸South African Commercial Advertiser, 10 September 1831.

¹⁷⁹The Grahamstown Journal, 23 August 1832.

¹⁸⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 207, Fynn to Thompson, 21 July 1832; Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of William Bazley, p. 58.

1831. Following Dingane's attack on Cane, the paper published Fynn's comments on Dingane's 'hostile disposition' towards the European community in general.¹⁸¹ Godlonton, as editor of the Grahamstown Journal, defended Fynn against Cane's criticism and pointed out that Fynn 'would not have left Port Natal without very sufficient reasons for doing so.'¹⁸²

While enjoying a certain degree of recognition as the European source from Natal for the Grahamstown Journal, Fynn, on his return to Mzimkhulu in September 1831, was unable to re-establish his trading venture with the same degree of independence that he had previously enjoyed. In October 1831, Collis returned to Port Natal and joined Fynn in trading for various goods. In January 1832 the Cawood brothers, together with their families, joined this group.¹⁸³ Though official annexation of Port Natal and its environs was still untenable in the mind of the colonial office, there was, from 1832, a slight increase in Cape trade with Port Natal, largely by means of the overland route previously controlled from Fynn's umuzi on the Mzimkhulu. The Grahamstown Journal, with its readership of eastern Cape businessmen, was an ideal vehicle for promoting the economic potential of the Natal interior, and traders like Collis wrote reports to this paper emphasising the investment possibilities of the region.¹⁸⁴ By 1832, Fynn was commenting in the same paper on the difficulties of trading 'without government protection'.¹⁸⁵ Fynn's inability to control the southward overland route is demonstrated by his complaint that the Europeans were in a state of 'constant rivalry'.¹⁸⁶ Isaacs, writing to the Cape governor from St Helena, echoed Collis' earlier report when he stated that settlement of the Port Natal area was essential in order to forestall the 'great injury which ... the Americans would do to this colony, (with) their natural shrewdness, their enterprising spirit and indefatigable exertions'.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹The Grahamstown Journal, 12 August 1831.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 21 September 1832.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, 3 August 1832; 22 November 1832.

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 30 March 1832; 27 July 1832; 22 November 1832.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 21 September 1832.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 226, Isaacs to Cole, December 1832.

The Cape authorities finally sent an official representative to Port Natal in early 1832 in the person of Andrew Smith, a medical officer from the 98th regiment.¹⁸⁸ Smith's visit was ostensibly a 'scientific expedition', but has also been interpreted as an initial investigation into the possibilities for the annexation of Port Natal and the immediate hinterland that had been supposedly ceded to Farewell and party in 1824.¹⁸⁹ Smith's expedition arrived at Port Natal in March 1832, and was accommodated by Fynn and Collis, who then escorted Smith to meet Dingane.¹⁹⁰ Smith received all his information on African politics from Fynn, whom he perceived as an authority on the history and current affairs of the region.¹⁹¹ Fynn's reputation as an expert on Natal was largely a result of his reports to The Grahamstown Journal in which he referred to the 'unsettled' nature of the country and the necessity of constantly having to 'flee for his life' from Dingane's forces.¹⁹² It is possible that Fynn's writing was in part a result of his education at Christ's Hospital, where he would probably have been exposed to the stereotypes of Africa contained in text-books in the late eighteenth century.¹⁹³ However, he was also encouraged by Isaacs who wrote to him stressing the necessity of writing an account in which the Zulu were depicted in a manner that was 'as bloodthirsty as possible', with the aim of persuading the British government to instigate full-scale annexation of the region.¹⁹⁴

Smith returned to the Cape in May 1832 and reported to the Cape government 'in the highest

¹⁸⁸Ibid., vol. II, p. 209, Smith to Bell, 9 December 1831; pp. 210-211, Letter from D.P. Francis, 18 February 1832.

¹⁸⁹Hedges, 'Trade and Politics in Southern Mocambique', pp. 245-6.

¹⁹⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 258, Report by Andrew Smith, undated.

¹⁹¹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, file 4, Andrew Smith to Fynn, 28 September 1836.

¹⁹²The Grahamstown Journal, 15 June 1832; 28 June 1832; 24 August 1832.

¹⁹³T. Lilly, 'The Black African in Southern Africa: Images in British School Geography Books' in J. Mangan, ed., The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience, London, Routledge, 1993, pp. 41-2.

¹⁹⁴Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 2, Isaacs to Fynn, December 1832.

terms of (the) capabilities' of Port Natal, and what he loosely described as the 'neighbouring country'.¹⁹⁵ He also published glowing accounts, partly obtained from Fynn, of the potential of the region in the Grahamstown Journal.¹⁹⁶ As a result of Smith's publicity, Fynn became widely regarded by travellers and missionaries as an authority on the state of the Natal hinterland, and the Wesleyan missionaries Phillips and Jarvis wrote to him seeking advice on the possibilities of expansion from the Cape.¹⁹⁷ Traders and other expeditions continued to utilise Fynn's hospitality at the Mzimkhulu homestead and often commented on his integration into indigenous society. Steedman, a Dutch travel-writer, using information from the missionary Boyce, pointed out that Fynn lived in a 'kraal' where the huts were built 'after the manner of the Caffres proper'.¹⁹⁸

In his reports to the Grahamstown Journal, Fynn had referred to Dingane's hostility towards the Europeans at Port Natal. These reports were not without foundation and during 1832 there was at least one clash between Dingane's forces and Fynn's adherents.¹⁹⁹ By mid-1833, the Cawood family had left Fynn's umuzi in order to return to the Cape, fearing an attack by Dingane's forces which were moving south in order to recover cattle from the Bhaca people. Rumours then reached the Cape by the medium of the Grahamstown Journal to the effect that all the Europeans in Natal had been attacked by Dingane.²⁰⁰ Although his adherents had fought off an attack, Fynn and his immediate family, including his brother Frank, remained unharmed.²⁰¹ However, Fynn's attitude towards Dingane after these events was blatantly antagonistic and he described him as 'that barbarous despot' who 'under no circumstances

¹⁹⁵Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 219, Francis to Hay, 17 January 1833.

¹⁹⁶The Grahamstown Journal, 21 September 1832; 28 September 1832.

¹⁹⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 3: Phillips to Fynn, September 1833; no. 4: Jarvis to Fynn, October 1833.

¹⁹⁸A. Steedman, Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa, London, Longman, 1835, vol. II, pp. 282-3.

¹⁹⁹The Grahamstown Journal, 21 September 1832.

²⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 25 July 1833; 25 October 1833.

²⁰¹*Ibid.*, 26 September 1833.

whatever should be trusted'.²⁰²

By 1834, Fynn felt that his prospects in the Mzimkhulu region were limited. He not only felt himself to be in physical danger but was also unable to compete with the increasing volume of Cape trade through the Mpondo region. By mid-1834, Collis along with several other traders had sent a considerable volume of goods to Port Natal by means of the overland route previously controlled by Fynn.²⁰³ At the same time there was growing competition from American shipping off the south-east coast. According to Andrew Smith, 'hundreds of American whalers' were able to control a firearm trade monopoly with the 'Zoolahs'.²⁰⁴ In the absence of the government protection he desired, and given his deteriorating relationship with Dingane and his inability to compete with this growing trade network, Fynn decided to leave the Mzimkhulu in September 1834.²⁰⁵

In 1832, Fynn had succeeded in making a favourable impression on Andrew Smith, and in 1834 this officer approached Governor D'Urban with a list of Fynn's 'virtues and qualifications', thus securing a post for him as headquarters interpreter.²⁰⁶ Fynn took up this post in December 1834²⁰⁷ and thereby entered the colonial administrative structure which shaped the rest of his career. When he left his Mzimkhulu umuzi in September 1834, Fynn left forever his virtually unrestricted lifestyle as an ivory trader who had become assimilated into indigenous society. Returning to formal colonial society in the Cape, Fynn had to abandon his black women and mixed-race children. These families, including his wife Vundlase, he left in the care of his

²⁰²Ibid., 7 August 1834.

²⁰³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 273-4, W. Field to D.P. Francis, 24 October 1834.

²⁰⁴Ibid., vol. II, p. 262, Statement of Andrew Smith, undated.

²⁰⁵Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, Folder 30104, item no. 4, Notes on the Life of H. Fynn, dictated to James Stuart by Fynn junior, December 1906, p. 24.

²⁰⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, file 4, letter from Andrew Smith to Fynn, 8 December 1836.

²⁰⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 10, Instructions to Interpreters.

younger brother Frank, who remained at the Mzimkhulu settlement until his death in about 1838.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸Spencer, British Settlers in Natal, p. 220; Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. III, evidence of Melapi ka Magaye, p. 74; vol. IV, evidence of Ndongeni ka Xoki, p. 243;

CHAPTER 2

FYNN'S CAPE CAREER 1834-1852

In September 1834, after more than ten years in Natal, Fynn decided to leave his umuzi on the Mzimkhulu river and return to the Cape colony.¹ During his absence from the Cape, the colony had experienced fundamental political changes in its relations with the societies on the eastern border. The peace arrangements of 1819 which had been implemented before Fynn joined Farewell's expedition up the east coast, had, by the late 1820s, clearly failed, as was demonstrated by the battle of Mbholompo in 1828². This conflict was a clash between an imperial force, in alliance with the Thembu and Mpondo, and a group consisting of the Ngwane people.³ Some colonial military personnel believed that their opponents were led by Shaka, and that the conflict was indicative of a Zulu advance towards the eastern Cape colony.⁴ Although some members of groups like the Thembu and Mpondo were moving southwards, there is no evidence of a Zulu-instigated threat either to these people or to the colony. Nevertheless, the battle of Mbholompo in which the Ngwane were defeated, resulted in a feeling of insecurity on the part of the colonial population in the eastern Cape.⁵ Following the 1828 conflict there were also a number of refugee groups, including Ngwane survivors, many of whom gradually moved into the Cape colony and became assimilated as labourers. These people became known under the collective title of

¹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, folder 30104, item no. 4, Notes on the Life of H. Fynn dictated to James Stuart by Fynn junior, December 1906, p. 24.

²Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, p. 99.

³Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi', p. 519.

⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, p. 180, Miller to Bell, 21 June 1828.

⁵Mostert, Frontiers, pp. 604-5.

'Fingoes'⁶

Somerset's settlement which had ended the conflict of 1819 had established Maqoma, the son of the Rharabe Xhosa chief Ngqika, as the dominant figure in the region between the Kei and Keiskamma rivers.⁷ Following the 1828 conflict, the colonial authorities viewed Maqoma as an enemy of stability, and expelled him from his territory in the Kat river valley, which was then declared a 'neutral zone'.⁸ By 1829, Maqoma's people were in conflict with the Thembu who, since the battle of Mbholompo, had been regarded as colonial allies.⁹ By the early 1830s, further imperial expansion in the eastern Cape had forced Maqoma's people and their supporters across the Keiskamma river, resulting in clashes with colonial forces in 1831 and 1833.¹⁰ These escalating trends of dispossession and violence were characteristic of the eastern border by the 1830s. The increasing antagonism between colonial and indigenous communities was demonstrated by the attitude of the missionaries.¹¹ The London Missionary Society had sent English-speaking missionaries to the Cape from 1799, following the first British occupation of the colony.¹² By the 1820s, Wesleyan missionaries had also established ministries in the eastern Cape. Under the leadership of William Shaw, who had emigrated to the colony in 1819, these Wesleyan groups tended to support the

⁶R. Moyer, 'A History of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape: 1815-1865', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1976, p. 74.

⁷J.B. Peires, The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981, Chapter 6.

⁸J. Milton, The Edges of War: A History of Frontier Wars 1702-1878, Johannesburg, Juta, 1983, pp. 99-100.

⁹T. Stapleton, Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance, 1798-1873, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1994, pp. 66-67.

¹⁰Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, pp. 113-116.

¹¹Ibid., p. 104.

¹²A. Ross, John Philip (1775-1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1986, pp. 138-9.

colonists, particularly the new English settlers in the eastern districts.¹³ This was in marked contrast to the earlier efforts of London Missionary Society representative John Philip, who had opposed the colonial stance on issues relating to the rights of the indigenous population.¹⁴

In January 1834, in the context of this tense situation, Sir Benjamin D'Urban was appointed by the colonial office to implement a policy based on treaties with the indigenous leaders and to create a region which would become a 'neutral territory', patrolled by imperial and colonial forces, but uninhabited by any group.¹⁵ D'Urban's appointment of Fynn was based on the governor's need for an interpreter to negotiate with compliant leaders, particularly among the Thembu and Mpondo. However, before D'Urban could implement this treaty-based system, a major war erupted between Europeans and the Gcaleka Xhosa under Hintsa and Maqoma's Rharabe in December 1834.¹⁶ The intensity and length of this engagement - the war lasted until September 1835 - exceeded that of any previous clash between Europeans and Xhosa-speaking peoples, and had a devastating effect on indigenous society.¹⁷ This conflict was viewed by contemporary settlers as a direct result of Xhosa aggression, but recent historians have re-examined the conflict as a consequence of imperial actions on the eastern border of the colony.¹⁸ By late 1834, British forces had pushed Ngqika's communities beyond the newly-declared 'neutral zone', thus depriving them of their

¹³W. Shaw, Memorials of South Africa, Cape Town, Struik, 1970 (1st publ. London, 1840), pp. 73-6.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 138-9; Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, p. 104.

¹⁵ Mostert, Frontiers, pp. 639-640.

¹⁶Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 99-100.

¹⁷L. Switzer, Power and Resistance in an African Society: The Ciskei Xhosa and the Making of South Africa, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1993, pp. 59-60.

¹⁸Mostert, Frontiers, pp. 641-642.

traditional lands and resources.¹⁹ This had been an ongoing process following the expulsion of Maqoma in 1828, and Rharabe efforts to repossess cattle or land from the neutral region were viewed by frontier officials as 'plunder' and 'spoliation' and proof that 'the Caffres have no respect for treaties'. The disturbances were also, as they had been since 1828, indirectly attributed to the actions of Shaka who had forced 'powerful tribes' to displace societies on the colony's borders.²⁰ The British authorities also justified the conflict as an attempt to rescue the Fingoes from dominant Xhosa-speaking groups, particularly the Gcaleka under the leadership of Hintsa.²¹ D'Urban wrote to the colonial office in June 1835 stating that the British and colonial forces, in attacking Hintsa, had committed an act of 'unspeakable mercy to this liberated people (the Fingoes) since in no one instance did that extensive emancipation rescue any race from a life of misery bearing any comparison to the wretched state of slavery and oppression under which this nation groaned'.²²

D'Urban aimed to try to secure the neutrality of the Thembu and Mpondo for the duration of hostilities, and in March 1835 he appointed Fynn as Diplomatic Agent to the Mpondo leader Faku.²³ Faku, like most African leaders at this time, had remained more or less independent of colonial control, though Fynn had secured his support for a trading base for the overland ivory route in 1825. This action had resulted in an increased volume of trade goods through Faku's territory and to some degree, a

¹⁹Stapleton, Maqoma, pp. 60-71.

²⁰Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 297, Campbell, Notes on the Present State of the Eastern Frontier, 28 January 1835.

²¹A.C. Webster, 'Land Expropriation and Labour Extraction under Cape Colonial Rule: The War of 1835 and the "Emancipation" of the Fingo', unpubl. M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1991, Chapter 3.

²²Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 284, D'Urban to Aberdeen, 19 June 1835.

²³Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 1/106, no. 1565: Glenelg to D'Urban, 25 July 1835.

strengthening of economic ties between the Mpondo and the colonial economy.²⁴ European contact between Faku's people and the Cape colony was also maintained by the Wesleyan missionaries under William Boyce, who had been given permission to establish a station in Faku's territory in 1829.²⁵ Although the Mpondo region was a considerable distance from the colony, it was situated to the north-east of the Cape's volatile eastern border, and D'Urban was concerned that Faku's people would ally with Hintsa's people against the colony. The appointment of Fynn was probably a result of information which D'Urban had obtained from Andrew Smith and other European travellers to Port Natal concerning Fynn's earlier contacts with the Mpondo leader and his knowledge of Faku's territory.²⁶ The decision to send Fynn to Faku was approved by the colonial office, though D'Urban was cautioned to keep expenditure as low as possible.²⁷

In April 1835, Fynn took passage with the trader James Collis whom he had known while resident at the Mzimkhulu prior to 1834. Collis' vessel, the Circe, was bound on a trading trip to Port Natal, and he agreed to put Fynn ashore on the east coast in the Mpondo territory, from where he made his way to William Boyce's mission station at Buntingville which was to be his place of residence for the duration of his time with Faku.²⁸ Fynn's task was clearly laid down by the military authorities. He was given thirty pounds for 'presents to the kafir chiefs'. These gifts were to be used effectively as a bribe to secure Faku's loyalty to the Cape colony. At the same time, Fynn was to

²⁴W. Beinart, 'Production and the Material Basis of Chieftainship: Pondoland, c. 1830-1880', in S. Marks and A. Atmore, eds., Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, London, Longman, 1980, pp. 125-9.

²⁵D.G.L. Cragg, 'The Role of the Wesleyan Missionaries in Relations between the Mpondo and the Colonial Authorities', in Saunders and Derricourt, eds., Beyond the Cape Frontier, p. 126.

²⁶Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 257-8, Report on the Memorial of Merchants Regarding the Occupation of Natal, 6 May 1834.

²⁷Cape Archives, D'Urban Papers, vol. 1, Aberdeen to D'Urban, 25 March 1835.

²⁸Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. III, p. 1, Maynard and Norden to D'Urban, 14 August 1835.

communicate with the British military headquarters in Grahamstown any information which he could obtain as to the power and numbers of the Mpondo, and their feelings towards the British nation.²⁹ Having taken up his post with Faku, however, Fynn seemed unable to communicate with D'Urban until September,³⁰ probably owing to the disruptions along the Cape eastern frontier.³¹ Although his correspondence with the Cape governor was limited, Fynn remained in touch with the military authorities and he wrote frequently to Colonel Harry Smith, then stationed in Grahamstown.³² Fynn seemed unperturbed by the isolated nature of his position, and Smith reported that he was 'delighted with his situation'. Although he had moved back into colonial society, Fynn still tended to avoid the company of other Europeans and, Smith described him as a 'retrograde Christian and a progressive barbarian'.³³

Although he seemed cut off from the Cape colony, and particularly from his superior, D'Urban, Fynn was able, by virtue of his proximity to the overland route to the Mzimkhulu river, to renew his contacts with Port Natal. While the colonial office had officially stated that the British government was unable to finance formal British settlement at Port Natal,³⁴ merchants and traders continued to petition the government

²⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 10, Memorandum of Col. Smith, 15 March 1835.

³⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 10, D'Urban to Fynn, 27 September 1835.

³¹Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. III, p. 3, D'Urban to Captain Popham, 27 September 1835.

³²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 10, D'Urban to Fynn, 27 September 1835. D'Urban dates these letters as April 1835 but they have not been traced.

³³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. III, p. 6, H.G. Smith to D'Urban, 28 November 1835.

³⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 276-277, Spring Rice to D'Urban, 10 December 1834.

for official annexation.³⁵

Following Fynn's departure in late 1834, an ex- naval officer Captain Allen Gardiner had travelled to Natal in order to establish a mission station at Port Natal.³⁶ Gardiner wrote to Fynn asking for advice on the political situation in the region controlled by Dingane, and clearly considered Fynn an authority on this issue, despite the fact that he was no longer resident in the region.³⁷ Fynn also remained in contact with eastern Cape settlers who had commercial and political interests in Port Natal, a trend which had started in the early 1830s when prominent individuals like Robert Godlonton had relied on Fynn as a source for his newspaper The Grahamstown Journal.³⁸ In 1835, Godlonton published his history of the recent war in which he argued in favour of formal annexation of Natal on the grounds that the indigenous population, if left to its own devices, would pose a constant danger to the eastern Cape colony. To justify this theory, Godlonton drew heavily on Fynn's descriptions of Shaka and Dingane and their supposedly anarchical reigns in south east Africa.³⁹ Another eastern Cape writer, J.C. Chase, who had previously acquired information from Fynn,⁴⁰ wrote to him again in late 1834, asking for further details on the pre-European history of the Natal region, particularly the period of Shaka's rule.⁴¹ Like Godlonton, Chase depended on Fynn as

³⁵Ibid., vol. III, p. 1, Memorial by Charles and Henry Maynard and others, 14 August 1835.

³⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 7, Campbell to Fynn, 29 December 1834.

³⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 8, Gardiner to Fynn, 21 September 1835; no. 9: Gardiner to Fynn, 22 September 1835; no. 12: Gardiner to Fynn, 16 November 1835.

³⁸The Grahamstown Journal, 12 August 1831; 21 September 1832; 29 November 1832; 17 June 1834; 7 August 1834.

³⁹R. Godlonton, A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Cape Town, Struik, 1965 (1st publ. Grahamstown, 1835), pp. 164-5.

⁴⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 1, Chase to Fynn, 17 November 1829.

⁴¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 6, Chase to Fynn, 14 November 1834.

a crucial source for material which he was preparing for a future publication on south-east Africa.⁴²

By the time of his first successful communication with D'Urban in September 1835, Fynn had left Buntingville in order to join Colonel Smith in the peace negotiations with Maqoma at Fort Cox. In the course of his journey however, Fynn was taken hostage by Maqoma in order that the latter might ensure a fair deal from the British military authorities.⁴³ This situation indicated Maqoma's distrust of Smith despite his reported statements that he and his followers 'wish to be British subjects'.⁴⁴ Maqoma's suspicion of treachery was a result of the death of Hintsa at the hands of Smith and the confiscation of Maqoma's cattle in May 1835.⁴⁵ Following his release after the final peace negotiations, Fynn returned to Faku's territory, but in November 1835, Smith suggested that he return to the colony 'in the way least disagreeable to Faku's people'.⁴⁶ In his report to D'Urban Smith gave a positive description of Fynn's work in the Mpondo territory, stating that he had 'restrained' Faku from joining Maqoma's forces against the colony. At the same time, Smith acknowledged that Fynn was what he called a 'greater ass and Don Quixote than one could possible conceive', in that he had consistently taken sides with Faku in minor disputes with the latter's personal rivals and also with the Methodist missionaries under the leadership of William Boyce. Smith added that the diplomatic agent's involvement in these quarrels had also led to

⁴²P.R. Kirby, 'John Centlivres Chase, Geographer and Cartographer', Africana Notes and News, vol. 18, no. 4 (December 1968), pp. 190-193.

⁴³B. Le Cordeur, ed., The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch, Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1988, pp. 133-4.

⁴⁴Cape Archives, D'Urban Papers, vol. 2, no. 31, Treaty with Maqoma, 6 September 1835.

⁴⁵Cape Archives, D'Urban Papers, vol. 1, no. 4b, Smith to D'Urban, 4 May 1835; vol. 2, no. 18: Smith to D'Urban, 18 May 1835.

⁴⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 11, Smith to Fynn, 3 November 1835.

an unfortunate squandering of colonial funds.⁴⁷ That Smith saw Fynn as a type of 'Don Quixote' indicated the latter's tendency to act independently of authority, a trait evident in his early career at Port Natal and evident in his role as diplomatic agent. Although a European official, Fynn did not always take the side of Europeans, as was demonstrated by his siding with Faku against the missionaries whom he disliked.

The British authorities at the Cape felt that it was necessary for Fynn to remain with Faku until March 1836. Smith informed Fynn that his presence in the Mpondo territory would ensure a continued state of peace between Faku's people and the Cape colony, until such time as the government was able to make final negotiations for a settlement with the border chiefs.⁴⁸ Following the cessation of hostilities in late 1835, D'Urban had attempted his own solution to the frontier conflict by annexing a large stretch of territory, including the former 'neutral zone', as Queen Adelaide Province.⁴⁹ His negotiated treaty with Maqoma, was followed by a formal agreement with the Thembu leader Maphasa in late 1835.⁵⁰ However, the colonial office was not satisfied with D'Urban's actions and he was ordered to immediately reverse the annexation of the Queen Adelaide territory and to negotiate new treaties with all the prominent indigenous leaders.⁵¹ As an integral part of this new 'treaty system', European resident or diplomatic agents were to be appointed to these chiefs, to communicate between them and the colonial authorities. The agents were given the power to apply martial law in their districts until it was considered safe to institute civil control measures.⁵²

⁴⁷Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. III, p. 7, Smith to D'Urban, 30 November 1835.

⁴⁸Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 23, Smith to Fynn, 18 March 1836.

⁴⁹Cape Archives, D'Urban Papers, vol. 2, no. 51, Stockenstrom to D'Urban, 23 May 1835.

⁵⁰Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 54, no. 22, D'Urban to Somerset, 3 January 1836.

⁵¹BPP XXXIX of 1836 (C.279), no. 5, Glenelg to D'Urban, 26 December 1835.

⁵²Le Cordeur, ed., The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch, pp. 15-18.

The colonial office also appointed Sir Andries Stockenstrom to the post of Lieutenant-Governor, with the task of upholding the authority of chiefs who had signed the treaties.⁵³ From the time of his appointment in 1836, local colonial officials, both civilian and military, tended to ignore Stockenstrom's authority and appealed directly to D'Urban for advice and instructions.⁵⁴

At the time of Fynn's return to his job as interpreter for D'Urban in March 1836, the government's treaty negotiations with Maphasa, the Thembu leader, were incomplete, and Fynn was able to assist D'Urban in this process.⁵⁵ The post of resident agent with Maphasa was still vacant, and Stockenstrom, influenced by Smith, considered Fynn as a suitable candidate for this position.⁵⁶ By May 1836 however, Fynn had considered settling permanently in the Beaufort district, and had written to D'Urban requesting that he might appropriate land for a farm in that region. Fynn suggested that he deserved a land grant in return for the service which he had rendered to the Cape government in the 1835 conflict.⁵⁷ The Governor did not agree to this request, and in December 1836 he decided to follow Stockenstrom's recommendation and appoint Fynn to the post as Resident Agent with Maphasa, effective from the following March.⁵⁸

The position with Maphasa was Fynn's first permanent official post in the Cape since his return in 1834. However, it was a job which took him further away from the more

⁵³Cape Archives, Lieutenant-Governor, vol. 53, no. 1, Glenelg to Stockenstrom, 5 February 1836.

⁵⁴J.L. Dracapoli, Sir Andries Stockenstrom: The Origins of Racial Conflict in South Africa 1792-1864, Cape Town, Balkema, 1969, Chapter 16; B. Le Cordeur, The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism: 1820-1854, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 85-7.

⁵⁵Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 17, Smith to Fynn, 18 November 1836.

⁵⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 17, Smith to Fynn, 18 November 1836.

⁵⁷Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. III, p. 37, Fynn to D'Urban, 23 May 1836.

⁵⁸Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 57, no. 58, D'Urban to Stockenstrom, 24 December 1836.

settled region around King William's Town where he had contemplated making a permanent home, as illustrated by his request for a land grant in May 1836. Though only officially appointed from March, Fynn moved to Maphasa's district in January and was stationed near the Moravian Mission station at Shiloh, on the Upper Swart Kei, nearly eighty miles from the nearest village, Cradock. The nearest white community was the military outpost at Fort Beaufort.⁵⁹ The Moravian or United Brethren Mission station had been established in 1828, and was the only station to have emerged unscathed from the 1835 conflict.⁶⁰ Although he was relatively remote from colonial society, Fynn's position was undoubtedly made less lonely by his marriage to a Grahamstown woman, Ann Brown, in April 1837.⁶¹ Recently, a mixed-race descendant of Fynn has stressed that this marriage with a European marked the end of Fynn's early career, during which he had had liaisons with indigenous women at Port Natal, and the beginning of his life as a European within the colonial context.⁶² Whatever the implications for his lifestyle in marrying Ann Brown, Fynn was almost certainly motivated by the fact that his post at Shiloh was isolated and fairly cut off from Cape society.

However, the Fynns' lifestyle was severely affected by what Fynn perceived as a totally inadequate salary. He pointed out that no allowance had been made for the 'extraordinary expenses' involved in building a house at Shiloh and in obtaining supplies from Cradock, some eighty miles away.⁶³ His financial problems were very real, as he had left the Mzimkhulu umuzi in 1834 with few assets, despite his

⁵⁹Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 8/2, no. 124, Stockenstrom to D'Urban, 9 March 1837.

⁶⁰W.A. Maxwell and R.T.McGeogh, eds., The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs, Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1978, p. 248.

⁶¹The Grahamstown Journal, 13 April 1837.

⁶²Statement of Gilbert Fynn, 9 November 1976, quoted in Todd Ellison, "'The Remembrance of your Kindnesses to us'", p. 4.

⁶³Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 531, no. 564, Fynn to Hare, 10 January 1838.

involvement in the ivory trade. Although he had been appointed to a position with Faku from March 1835, the colonial office had only agreed to his being paid a salary for this position from July of that year.⁶⁴ In his new office he was in the position of having no fixed property and a meagre salary.⁶⁵ For some unidentifiable reason, Stockenstrom had appointed Fynn at half the salary of other agents, and this later became a serious point of contention between Fynn and the government.⁶⁶

In terms of the treaty negotiated by Stockenstrom with Maphasa in January 1837, the colonial government required that the Thembu should direct all complaints and correspondence to the governor through the Resident Agent. Fynn was expected to 'observe the strictest impartiality and justice and exert his utmost abilities to promote the peace and prosperity of the Colonists as well as of the Tambookies (Thembu)'.⁶⁷ Prior to his formal appointment in March 1837, he acted, in a purely voluntary capacity, as an unofficial diplomatic representative with Maphasa and was able to view at close quarters the complex circumstances under which such an individual had to act. From the beginning of 1837, Fynn wrote constantly to Stockenstrom's secretary Hudson, reporting on the conflicting land claims in Maphasa's district, between the Thembu and no fewer than three rival land claimants, the Boers, various 'Hottentot' groups and the Fingoes.⁶⁸ There was the additional problem of Sotho-Thembu conflicts over stolen cattle, though Fynn hastened to point out that in most instances cattle had been

⁶⁴Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 1106, no. 1565, Glenelg to D'Urban, 25 July 1835.

⁶⁵Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 531, no. 564, Fynn to Hare, 10 January 1838.

⁶⁶Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 11 of 1841, Fynn to Hare, 23 October 1841.

⁶⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 10, Treaty between Stockenstrom and Maphasa, 18 January 1837.

⁶⁸Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 1, Fynn to Hudson, 4 February 1837; no. 2: Fynn to Hudson, 11 February 1837; no. 3: Fynn to Hudson, 20 March 1837.

returned to their owners and the thieves fined by their chiefs.⁶⁹ While attempting to deal with the immediate problems of the Thembu, Fynn had also to try and cope with the numerous demands made on his time by European officials who were not his immediate superiors. As diplomatic agent, Fynn was supposedly answerable to Stockenstrom, but other individuals, for example Colonel Smith, whom Stockenstrom supposedly replaced with the cessation of martial law in September 1836,⁷⁰ wrote to Fynn requesting confidential information on the 'interior affairs of the kaffirs and Tambookies'.⁷¹ Colonists appealing to the diplomatic agent for advice or assistance were, according to Fynn, in constant danger as they had to ride fifty miles through the unsettled 'kaffir country' in order to consult him at Shiloh.⁷²

The most trying part of Fynn's task as Diplomatic Agent was attempting to maintain what he referred to as the 'tranquil state' of the area inhabited by the Thembu.⁷³ Boers, 'Hottentots' and Fingoes had, in the early months of 1837, all tried to claim territory allocated to Maphasa's people under Stockenstrom's treaty.⁷⁴ These disputes were intensified by increasing cattle thefts from the Thembu. Initially, such thefts were settled fairly peacefully, but in September 1837 Thembu chiefs under Maphasa's leadership declared that 'no Fingoes shall pass through their country unmolested' as a result of these people allowing stolen cattle 'to rest at their kraal'.⁷⁵ Within two

⁶⁹Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 5, Fynn to Hudson, 3 April 1837; no. 6: Fynn to Hudson, 16 April 1837.

⁷⁰Dracopoli, Sir Andries Stockenstrom, p. 135.

⁷¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 23, Smith to Fynn, 26 May 1837.

⁷²Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 531, no. 564, Fynn to Hare, 10 January 1838.

⁷³Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 5, Fynn to Hudson, 3 April 1837.

⁷⁴Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 2, Fynn to Hudson, 11 February 1837; no. 6: Fynn to Hudson, 16 April 1837.

⁷⁵Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 18, Fynn to Hudson, 16 September 1837.

months of these events, Fynn reported that 'Hottentots' were stealing Thembu cattle, the former having been supplied with ammunition by various Boers.⁷⁶ He was completely powerless to stop these incidents and could only inform Stockenström of the events taking place.⁷⁷

Like most colonial officials, Fynn took the part of Europeans against indigenous people, and viewed the problem of cattle theft, along with other border transgressions, as being a result of black rather than white actions. He placed the blame firmly on the Thembu themselves, whom he reported as having 'no legal authority'. Fynn saw the 1835 conflict as an act of aggression on the part of certain chiefs to obtain the support of the colony against their own rivals.⁷⁸ For Fynn, disturbances in Maphasa's district were a direct result of conflicting interests between the Thembu and their enemies, rather than the outcome of colonial policy. Rivalry between chiefs was the inevitable outcome of the 'anxiety that each chief has to increase his strength', and those leaders who desired to fall in line with colonial regulations were deterred from this path by the knowledge that unscrupulous neighbouring chiefs would recruit the more delinquent elements from their communities.⁷⁹ Fynn's only comment on the colonial system which had laid the foundation for this situation was to stress that 'encroachment and plunder' were a result of the fact that the Thembu were divided by the Mbashe river, and that this impeded Maphasa's overall authority.⁸⁰

As far as cattle thefts were concerned, Fynn reiterated the ideas present in legislation

⁷⁶Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 22, Fynn to Hudson, 29 November 1837.

⁷⁷Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 18: Fynn to Hudson, 16 September 1837.

⁷⁸Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, no. 81: Fynn to Hudson, 21 May 1837.

⁷⁹Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, p. 254, (unnumbered): Fynn to Hudson, 29 September 1837.

⁸⁰Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 25: Fynn to Hudson, 10 January 1838.

like Ordinance 50, which had enforced the carrying of passes by all non-Europeans within the colony. He suggested that 'all natives entering into employ with the colonists should have the number of cattle which they bring from the last place stated on their passes'.⁸¹ As with the general state of unrest, Fynn considered cattle theft to be a result of the ineptitude of the chiefs, rather than government policy, and stated that the increase in cattle thefts by June 1837 was largely a result of Maphasa's weakness in failing to punish culprits 'with proper severity', despite attempts to persuade him to adopt 'decisive measures' by the diplomatic agent.⁸² Fynn stressed that the various chiefs in Maphasa's district only demonstrated 'a disposition to punish theft when brought to their notice' by the agent.⁸³

Faced with what he viewed as seemingly unsolvable problems, Fynn began to wonder, by 1838, 'whether my agency here (with the Thembu) is of any essential utility'.⁸⁴ At the same time, the Cape authorities were starting to concede that the Diplomatic Agents' lack of authority over chiefs was a fundamental weakness in the treaties implemented since 1836.⁸⁵ In January 1838, Sir George Napier replaced D'Urban as Cape Governor, and immediately began to investigate Stockenström's implementation of the treaty system. Napier considered that the Lieutenant-Governor's treaties had been unjustly harsh for the eastern Cape colonists, particularly with regard to the ongoing issue of cattle thefts. Fynn, as diplomatic agent, was able to report that in his

⁸¹Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 6: Fynn to Hudson, 16 April 1837.

⁸²Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, p. 277 (unnumbered): Fynn to Hudson, 30 June 1837.

⁸³Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 408, no. 18: Fynn to Hudson, 16 September 1837.

⁸⁴Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 531, no. 564: Fynn to Hare, 10 January 1838.

⁸⁵Peires, The House of Phalo, p. 120.

district, such 'thefts have increased considerable since my arrival here'.⁸⁶ Stockenstrom had tackled this problem by pointing out that settlers themselves should be responsible for preventing thefts by taking the necessary precautions, for example, by arming their herdsmen. Soon after his arrival, Napier recommended that any European person 'who showed good and sufficient reason' should be allowed to cross the colonial boundary in search of stolen livestock. In addition, he put forward the idea that unclaimed stolen cattle on either side of the boundary could be appropriated by colonists and recorded on a 'non reclaimable' list. Once such a document was published, the cattle would not be able to be reclaimed by any other party.⁸⁷

The Diplomatic Agents were required to monitor this new system while at the same time continuing to advise and guide their appointed chiefs. By September 1838 Fynn had become extremely frustrated with the numerous tasks required of him and considered resigning from his post. However, he withdrew his resignation within a week, stating that he believed his presence with Maphasa was 'necessary', though for what specific reasons he did not explain.⁸⁸ By the end of 1838 he was again attempting to prevent conflicts which resulted from the actions of independent chiefs who were 'not answerable to Maphasa',⁸⁹ commenting that he was unable to influence any of these individuals and that his role with the Thembu was therefore more as an observer than an adviser.⁹⁰ For Fynn, the fundamental issue in his role as diplomatic agent was his powerlessness over the conflicts between rival groups. A second

⁸⁶Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 25: Fynn to Hudson, 1 January 1838.

⁸⁷Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 60, no. 2: Napier to Stockenstrom, 1 February 1838.

⁸⁸Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 33: Fynn to Hudson, 22 September 1838.

⁸⁹Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 34: Fynn to Hare, 8 November 1838.

⁹⁰ Government House, vol. 8/7, no. 415: Fynn to Hare, 22 December 1838.

pressing problem for him was the haphazard movement of people through the territory inhabited by the Thembu. In early 1839 he reported that according to colonial legislation, the presence of unidentified indigenous groups in the region supposedly inhabited by the Thembu was illegal. These people refused to acknowledge any chief and appeared to Fynn to be a 'troublesome party'⁹¹. When the diplomatic agent requested them to join their own leader they refused, and proceeded to settle in defiance of Maphasa's or colonial authority.⁹²

Fynn was not only unable to influence Maphasa or other communities in any way, he was also decidedly unpopular amongst some of the Thembu, who accused him of receiving confiscated cattle from colonial troops and appropriating them for his own use.⁹³ Fynn defended himself by claiming that his main accuser, 'Piet, a Tambookie' was one of the many 'lawless vagrants' entering the colony to steal cattle.⁹⁴ Although the evidence is scanty, it is possible that Fynn's decision to stay at Shiloh was motivated by the idea of improving his precarious financial position through cattle appropriation. That he had actions to cover up is illustrated by the paucity of his correspondence during most of the year 1839. Another explanation for his silence however, was the fact that his wife had died at the age of twenty-two in June 1839.⁹⁵ This personal tragedy was a severe blow to Fynn, as he was almost completely isolated from Europeans and would have relied heavily on his wife Ann for companionship and support while carrying out what was a difficult job. Despite

⁹¹Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 456, no. 2: Fynn to Gordon, 9 February 1839.

⁹²Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 456, no. 4: Fynn to Gordon, 15 April 1839.

⁹³Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 8/8, no. 73: Fynn to Napier, 10 April 1839; no. 7: Armstrong to Hare, 25 April 1839; Lieutenant Governor, vol. 456, no. 16: Statement by Piet, a Tambookie, 11 May 1839.

⁹⁴Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 456, no. 22: Fynn to Hudson, 20 May 1839.

⁹⁵Davies, Twin Trails, p. 16.

several months' lack of communication, Fynn was, by September 1839, once more corresponding with Lieutenant- Governor Hare, and explained his possession of cattle by stating that he was often forced to act upon his own initiative, being 'ignorant' of Napier's ideas or views.⁹⁶ By the end of 1839, he was reiterating his earlier arguments that the diplomatic agents were entirely powerless in exerting any influence over chiefs within the framework of the treaty system.⁹⁷

Despite his clear disillusionment with the system under which he operated, Fynn remained with Maphasa, probably for financial reasons. He did not hesitate however, to point out to the colonial authorities that his salary was 'unequal' to his immense responsibilities, given that he was 'the only officer within a wide range of colonial and kaffir territory'.⁹⁸ By the early 1840s he was apparently in even worse financial circumstances, as he complained for the first time about having to attend quarterly meetings at Fort Beaufort, a journey which necessitated his keeping two horses as well as finding the extra money for travelling expenses. He pointed out that he had double the distance to travel that other agents did, while receiving half the normal salary.⁹⁹ Fynn received little sympathy from colonial government which was quite clear on its policy with respect to these issues. Diplomatic or resident agents, Napier reminded Hare, were to make private arrangements for accommodation near the residences of chiefs, and the government was not to own any property in 'Caffreland'.¹⁰⁰ Fynn's request for a salary increase was turned down due to the financial state of the colonial

⁹⁶Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 456, no. 45: Fynn to Hudson, 19 September 1839.

⁹⁷Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 8/8, no. : Fynn to Napier, 15 November 1839.

⁹⁸Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 456, no. Fynn to Hudson, 20 February 1840.

⁹⁹Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 11: Fynn to Hare, 23 October 1841.

¹⁰⁰Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 63, no. 17: Napier to Hare, 7 May 1841.

administration, and Napier pointed out that although his duties were onerous he was no worse off than other public servants in similar circumstances.¹⁰¹ A few months later Fynn again appealed for a better salary, and requested that he at least be placed on the same footing as agents like Stretch and Shepstone who had been appointed as agents prior to him and whose incomes were somewhat better. Napier regretted that this was 'not possible under the present financial circumstances of the colony'.¹⁰²

Fynn's personal financial situation was an indirect result of increasing imperial spending in the Natal region. Although the British government had previously been reluctant to become involved in the region, there was, by mid-1841 a strong Boer presence in the Republic of Natalia, and it seemed that a formal British occupation of Natal was imminent. Hare wrote to Fynn, whom he viewed as an expert on the region, informing him that he 'daily expected' instructions to annex the area as a colony. He asked Fynn if, in the light of his earlier experiences, he would consider going across the Mzimkhulu river in advance of the British forces in order to 'take measures for the protection of imperial forces against any action of the native Zulus'.¹⁰³ Hare perceived Fynn's earlier Natal experiences as a valuable background for the diplomacy required in negotiating a peaceful settlement with the indigenous people in Natal, and was also aware of his contacts with the Natal region as evidenced by Fynn's reports about the actions of white farmers beyond the Mzimkhulu who planned an attack on the 'frontier tribes'.¹⁰⁴ Despite the vague nature of the request, Fynn agreed to undertake the task, though he realised that this might be a temporary appointment.¹⁰⁵ At the last minute, Hare decided that this position would not be created and Fynn was left once more in

¹⁰¹Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 63, no. 22: Napier to Hare, 22 May 1841.

¹⁰²Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 64, no. 12: Napier to Hare, 11 February 1842, enclosure by Fynn.

¹⁰³Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 27: Hare to Fynn 17 August 1841.

¹⁰⁴Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 8: Fynn to Hudson, 6 July 1840.

¹⁰⁵Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 28: Hare to Fynn, 9 September 1841.

embarrassing financial circumstances as he had already sold his small property at Shiloh at a loss in order to move to Natal.¹⁰⁶ His personal financial situation was made more serious by the fact that he had remarried in January 1841. His second wife, Christina, also had the surname Brown, though her family were from Algoa Bay rather than Grahamstown like Ann Brown, his first wife.¹⁰⁷

Fynn remained at his Shiloh post where the local political situation became increasingly tense. By mid-1843 the Thembu were blatantly hostile towards the Wesleyan missionaries whom they claimed were, while 'professing to teach God's word against bloodshed, ... themselves plundering and murdering the people whom they came to teach'.¹⁰⁸ Though he was later complimented on his 'discretion' on mediating between these groups and preventing a physical clash,¹⁰⁹ Fynn did not enjoy the same success in his negotiations between Maphasa and rival chiefs, and by early 1843 he reported that the latter were 'in the act of assembling the whole of their forces for the purpose of making a general attack against the Tambookies'.¹¹⁰ Some months later, he had to call upon the Lieutenant-Governor for troops to intervene between these groups. The complete powerlessness of the diplomatic agent was illustrated by the fact that Maphasa insisted on a more definitive form of European control in order to avoid what he termed 'serious consequences'.¹¹¹ Hare's presence along with a show of imperial forces would, Fynn thought, ensure that the Thembu would 'remain quiet' while the

¹⁰⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Letters, vol. 2, p. 111, Fynn to Secretary of State for Colonies, 20 March 1861.

¹⁰⁷Davies, Twin Trails, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 8/11, encl. in no. 47 of 1844: Fynn to Hudson, 18 July 1843.

¹⁰⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 11, no. 30: Hudson to Fynn, 15 December 1843.

¹¹⁰Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 8/11, encl. in no. 13: Fynn to Hudson, 12 January 1843.

¹¹¹Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 8/11, encl. in no. 47: Fynn to Hudson, 9 May 1843.

dispute could be settled.¹¹²

Although Napier had, during his term of office, managed to avoid outright conflict between the colony and various indigenous chiefs, the treaty system had, by the time of his departure in 1844, caused serious tensions between these groups.¹¹³ Some months after Napier had left the colony, Lieutenant-Governor Hare sanctioned a British military occupation of the former neutral territory beyond the Fish River, which had been reoccupied by various Xhosa-speaking groups under Stockenstrom's treaties. Hare's expedition was essentially a reprisal for the murder of a colonist who had entered the area in search of a supposed horse thief. Although this action seemed excessively harsh in the light of the offence, it indicated the need to demonstrate power by officials like Hare who felt bound to exercise his authority over the chiefs.¹¹⁴

Napier's successor to the Cape Governorship, Sir Peregrine Maitland, followed up Hare's actions in September 1844 when he effectively abolished the treaties negotiated by Stockenstrom in 1837. Maitland did not bother to go through the formal procedure of negotiating with prominent leaders through their respective Diplomatic Agents, but simply imposed his new policy as though these individuals were imperial subjects.¹¹⁵ Charles Stretch, the agent with Maqoma, was a firm believer in Stockenstrom's treaties, and he warned Maitland that this kind of approach would invariably lead to war on the borders of the colony.¹¹⁶ Fynn's own response as an agent was to support Stockenstrom against Hare. He pointed out that the Lieutenant-Governor's actions had led to tension between the colony and the chiefs as he had lacked his predecessor's

¹¹²Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 409, no. 35: Fynn to Hudson, 10 June 1843.

¹¹³Mostert, *Frontiers*, p. 841.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 842-3.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 844.

¹¹⁶G.B. Crankshaw, 'The Diary of Charles Lennox Stretch - A Critical Edition and Appraisal', unpubl. M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1960, p. 4.

'great experience of colonial and kaffir character'. Fynn added that the reason the treaty system had failed was largely due to the actions of the government in frequently changing the method of colonial rule 'to meet the emergencies as they presented themselves', thus causing a lack of confidence on the part of chiefs in the colonial authorities and what he depicted as a general atmosphere of instability.¹¹⁷ Maitland's actions were an instance of an increasingly covetous British policy towards South Africa, instigated by the expansion of imperial interests into the interior. The annexation of the colony of Natal in 1843 was an example of this involvement.¹¹⁸

In 1841, Hare had decided not to appoint Fynn to a post in Natal, despite his detailed knowledge of the region. Fynn's anxiety to return to Natal was demonstrated by his request to Napier for a land grant, following the formal British annexation of the colony in 1843, on the grounds that he had originally been given land by Shaka.¹¹⁹ In 1845, the newly-created post of 'Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes' in the new colony of Natal was given to Shepstone. Maitland was convinced that Shepstone was the most suitable candidate for this post due to his 'knowledge of the native language and customs'.¹²⁰ Although historians have recently commented on Fynn's disappointment in not obtaining this post, there is no evidence to suggest that he coveted this job.¹²¹ By the mid-1840s, his career as a diplomatic agent had been placed on a more secure financial footing and he had finally received the salary increase he had been

¹¹⁷Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 4033, no. 31: Fynn to Pottinger, 5 May 1847, Notes dated 29 September 1844.

¹¹⁸J.A. Benyon, Proconsul and Paramountcy in South Africa: The High Commission, British Supremacy and the Sub-Continent, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1980, pp. 18-19.

¹¹⁹Cape Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, vol. 120, no. 65: Fynn to Napier, 10 August 1843.

¹²⁰BPP XLII of 1847-8 (C. 980), no. 23: Maitland to Stanley, 1 October 1845.

¹²¹Todd Ellison, "'In remembrance of your kindnesses to us'", p. 21; Bramdeow, 'Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community', p. 64.

requesting since 1838.¹²² Shepstone's relations with Fynn had always been cordial,¹²³ and there is nothing to suggest that their friendship was threatened as a result of the Natal appointment.

The formal annexation of Natal seemed to indicate a firm commitment to imperial expansion. However, British interests on the eastern Cape border were far from secure, and Maitland's new treaties in 1844 had added tensions to the already hostile situation between colonial and indigenous societies. His decision to establish military posts in the Xhosa territories was a particular cause of resentment.¹²⁴ In March 1846, a minor incident at Fort Beaufort provoked the colonial authorities into taking offensive action against Sandile's Rharhabe people.¹²⁵ During the first part of this conflict, the Thembu declared their neutrality and did not join forces with other chiefs against the British. However, the dispute between the Thembu and the Moravian missionaries, which had been growing worse since the early 1840s, intensified during the war, and Fynn had to act as mediator between black and white as represented by Thembu and missionaries, particularly over the issue of stock thefts. The missionary, T.C. Smith, wrote constantly to the diplomatic agent's residency, pointing out that such thefts, for which the Thembu were responsible, were incompatible with neutrality.¹²⁶ Given the isolated position of the Shiloh station during the 1846 conflict, the missionaries used Fynn as their only link with the colonial authorities, and he became a channel of communication for their ongoing complaints against the Thembu.¹²⁷

¹²²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 34: Hudson to Fynn, 9 January 1845; Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 4033, no. 16: Hudson to Fynn, 9 January 1846.

¹²³Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, MS 1044, vol. 1, Shepstone to Fynn, 5 October 1836.

¹²⁴Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire*, pp. 166-7.

¹²⁵Peires, *The House of Phalo*, pp. 129-134.

¹²⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, nos. 36-40: T.C. Smith to Fynn, March-April 1846; nos. 47-52: T.C. Smith to Fynn, May-June 1846.

¹²⁷Maxwell and McGeogh, eds., *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, p. 149.

While the Moravian missionaries viewed their own disputes with Maphasa's people as a product of an anti-colonial stance on the part of the Thembu, colonial officials also suspected Maphasa of complicity with Maqoma.¹²⁸ During the course of hostilities, Maphasa eventually entered into an alliance with the Rharhabe against the colonial forces.¹²⁹ This conflict eventually made Fynn's role as diplomatic agent redundant, and in September 1846 his salary was suspended. He considered that this was 'a sudden and unprecipitated dismissal after so long a period of service'.¹³⁰ In the circumstances of conflict, and in view of the fact that his wife Christina was pregnant, Fynn moved his family to the more settled centre of Colesberg where their only child, Henry Francis junior, was born two months later in November 1846.¹³¹

Christina later remembered this as a particularly difficult period, as Fynn was unemployed from September 1846 until April 1848.¹³² Although Maphasa had surrendered in November 1846, there was no possibility of reinstating Fynn with the Thembu as the former treaty system had effectively collapsed. Hostilities continued during 1847, and Fynn spent much of his time in appealing to the colonial authorities for further remuneration, being in dire financial circumstances with no salary and a wife and young child to support.¹³³ In a desperate attempt to obtain a post, he also stressed his considerable frontier experience which placed him in an invaluable position to advise Maitland's successor, Sir Henry Pottinger 'in settling and adjusting the affairs

¹²⁸A. Duminy and L.J.G. Alcock, eds., The Reminiscences of Richard Paver, Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1979, p. 149.

¹²⁹Peires, The House of Phalo, p. 151.

¹³⁰Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 4033, no. 31: Fynn to Pottinger, 5 May 1847, enclosure.

¹³¹Davies, Twin Trails, p. 32.

¹³²Killie Campbell Africana Library, File 30104, extract no. 2, Christina Fynn's Diary, 1841-1861, p. 2.

¹³³Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 4033, no. 30: Fynn to Montagu, 26 July 1847.

of South Africa'.¹³⁴ In particular, Fynn pointed out the failure of the treaty system and the impossibility of Diplomatic Agents having any real 'influence' over chiefs.¹³⁵

Despite his attempts to convince the Cape Governor of his usefulness as a colonial official, Fynn was still unemployed when Sir Harry Smith succeeded Pottinger in December 1847.¹³⁶ Smith had been serving in India since leaving the Cape in 1840, but had known Fynn fairly well whilst acting as a member of Stockenstrom's staff in 1836.¹³⁷ He was appointed not only as Cape Governor but also as High Commissioner over British territories in South Africa.¹³⁸ In this capacity he renewed his acquaintance with Fynn in January 1848 and made immediate efforts to find him employment,¹³⁹ finally securing him a post as Diplomatic Agent to the Mpondo chief Faku, with whom he had previously resided during the 1835 war.¹⁴⁰ Smith's immediate task as governor was to dismantle the former treaty system and to impose imperial control over the territories east of the Fish River, though without employing direct annexation.¹⁴¹ The Mpondo had not been involved in Stockenstrom's treaty system in 1836. From 1829, Faku had been in communication with the Cape government through the Wesleyan missionaries under William Boyce and from 1838 under the guidance of Thomas

¹³⁴Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 4033, no. 31: Fynn to Pottinger, 5 May 1847.

¹³⁵Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 4033, no. 31: Fynn to Pottinger, 5 May 1847, enclosure, notes written in September 1844.

¹³⁶Mostert, Frontiers, p. 929.

¹³⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 23: Smith to Fynn, 18 March 1836; no. 17: Smith to Fynn, 18 November 1836.

¹³⁸Benyon, Proconsul and Paramountcy in South Africa pp. 20-21.

¹³⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, vol. I, no. 54: Southey to Fynn, 5 January 1848.

¹⁴⁰Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 23/18, no. 69: Smith to Colonial Office, 20 April 1848.

¹⁴¹Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, p. 144.

Jenkins.¹⁴² From 1839, the Voortrekker government in the Republic of Natalia had tried to claim part of the Mpondo territory as a native reserve and Faku had appealed for aid from the British Cape colony.¹⁴³ In 1844, Maitland had confirmed British support for Faku against the Voortrekker republic by a treaty which fixed the border of British Natal along Faku's northern Mzimkhulu boundary.¹⁴⁴

The 1844 treaty required that Faku remain neutral in the event of any Cape border conflict. The Mpondo territory was also viewed as a buffer state between the Cape colony's unstable eastern districts and the newly annexed colony of Natal, for which the Cape was directly responsible. No Resident or Diplomatic Agent was appointed to Faku in 1844, although these posts had been an integral part of the treaties under Stockenström's system.¹⁴⁵ The Cape government was determined to ensure Faku's neutrality and thus decided to monitor his actions during the 1846 conflict, as it had done during the previous war in 1835. Fynn's younger brother William was temporarily assigned to Faku in a diplomatic capacity for the course of hostilities.¹⁴⁶ William Fynn had returned to the Cape from his brother's Mzimkhulu umuzi in 1831 and had served the Cape government as a Diplomatic Agent with Chief Sarhili to the north of the Mbashe river, from 1838.¹⁴⁷ Sir Harry Smith decided however, that Henry would be a more suitable person to take over the post with Faku in 1848, given his previous

¹⁴²D.G.L. Cragg, 'The Role of Wesleyan Missionaries in Relations between the Mpondo and the Colonial Authorities', in C. Saunders and R. Derricourt, eds., Beyond the Cape Frontier, p. 146.

¹⁴³Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. IV, pp. 261-264, Memorial of the Emigrants in Port Natal to Napier, 1839.

¹⁴⁴Cragg, 'The Role of the Wesleyan Missionaries', pp. 150-151.

¹⁴⁵Cragg, 'The Relations of the amaPondo', unpubl. thesis, p. 90.

¹⁴⁶BPP XXXVIII of 1847 (C.786), no. 36: W.D. Fynn to Sir Harry Smith, 19 May 1846 encl. in Maitland to Grey, 14 October 1846.

¹⁴⁷Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, file 30104, item 3, Diary of William McDowall Fynn.

experience in the Mpondo territory.¹⁴⁸ Fynn then moved to Faku's region and settled near the Wesleyan mission station at Buntingville in June 1848.¹⁴⁹ The governor defined Fynn's role as a diplomatic one in preserving 'the continuance of universal peace and the advancement of the natives in Civilisation and Christianity'.¹⁵⁰ His task was to ensure that Faku continued to retain an alliance with the Cape colony as laid down in the 1844 treaty.¹⁵¹

Martin West, the Natal Lieutenant-Governor, made it quite clear to Fynn that he was now answerable to both the Cape and Natal governments. Within months of his arrival, he was requested to investigate stock thefts from Boer farmers in the south of Natal. According to West's directives to Fynn, substantial cattle herds had been stolen by 'bushmen' and driven into Faku's territory which was 'beyond the limits of the (Natal) Government'. Faku himself had stated that he was unable to deal with such issues, and the Natal government appealed to Fynn to co-operate with an armed force which would recover the livestock under the direction of Shepstone in his capacity as Resident Agent in Natal.¹⁵² The Natal authorities had been facing the problem of reports of 'bushman' cattle thefts for some time but had been unable to persuade Faku to agree to intervene on behalf of the Natal colonists.¹⁵³ The Wesleyan missionaries at Buntingville also appealed to the Diplomatic Agent to investigate cattle thefts in

¹⁴⁸ Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 23/18, no. 69: Smith to Colonial Office, 20 April 1848.

¹⁴⁹ Killie Campbell Africana Library, file 30104, extract 2, Diary of Christina Fynn, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 56: Southey to Fynn, 3 April 1848.

¹⁵¹ Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 58: Southey to Fynn, 11 April 1848.

¹⁵² Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 76: Moodie to Fynn, 20 December 1848.

¹⁵³ J. Wright, Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg 1840-1870, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1971, pp. 52, 86.

Faku's district.¹⁵⁴ On enquiry, Fynn was able to trace these thefts to a group which did not consist only of 'bushmen'. The Bhaca community under the leadership of Mchithwa were also involved in stock thefts, and they were aided by a mixed-race man, Hans Lochenberg who lived at Buntingville.¹⁵⁵

Fynn reported his findings to the Natal government but West did not take any further action beyond requesting further investigation.¹⁵⁶ As Resident Agent however, Fynn clearly felt that he had the authority to take the initiative, which he did by arresting the Bhaca leader Mchithwa and asking that Faku punish the Bhaca in accordance with the 1844 treaty. In May 1849, Faku attacked a Bhaca community and captured some 140 head of cattle, of which Fynn sent 90 to Natal.¹⁵⁷ Hans Lochenberg tried to prove his own innocence and accused the bushmen of complicity with the Bhaca. The missionaries at Buntingville rallied to his support, criticising Fynn and insisting that the 'bushmen' rather than the Bhaca were the guilty parties.¹⁵⁸ The missionaries were encouraged by their superintendent in the eastern Cape, William Shaw, who effectively told them to ignore Fynn's actions.¹⁵⁹ The Wesleyans were convinced of Bhaca innocence and they also appealed for compensation for Lochenberg and other parties.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 77: Thomas to Fynn, 21 January 1849; no. 78: Thomas to Fynn, 29 January 1849.

¹⁵⁵Natal Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, vol. 19, no. 11 : Fynn to Moodie, 4 April 1849.

¹⁵⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 81: Moodie to Fynn, 11 April 1849.

¹⁵⁷D.G.L. Cragg, 'The Relations of the Amapondo and the Colonial Authorities, 1830-1886 with Special Reference to the Role of the Wesleyan Missionaries', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University, 1959, pp. 124-5.

¹⁵⁸Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 82: Jenkins to Fynn, 1 May 1849; no. 83: Jenkins to Fynn, 2 May 1849; no. 84: Jenkins to Fynn, 7 May 1849; no. 85: Jenkins to Fynn, 9 May 1849.

¹⁵⁹Cragg, 'The Relations of the Amapondo', p. 127.

¹⁶⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 92: Jenkins to Fynn, 22 June 1849.

Fynn then appealed to the High Commission for a full commission of enquiry into the whole issue of cattle thefts and Bhaca involvement. Smith agreed with Fynn that the 'bushmen' were in league with the Bhaca, but shelved responsibility for an investigation by referring the matter to the Natal government.¹⁶¹ The Natal Colonial Secretary, Donald Moodie was quick to send Fynn a negative reply, stressing that the colony of Natal did not have sufficient financial resources for any detailed investigation at that stage.¹⁶² In the meantime, the missionaries continued to deplore the 'lack of control' exercised by the Resident Agent in the Mpondo territory, and they pointed out that people were taking advantage of this, committing murder and other 'depredations' in the name of 'Chief Fynn'.¹⁶³

It was not until March 1850 that the Natal government was able to set up a commission to investigate Fynn's reports. The subsequent Harding Commission of 1850 was not initiated with the sole purpose of enquiring into stock theft from southern Natal colonists - as previously investigated by Fynn - but was a culmination of attempts to obtain a land cession for Natal from Faku.¹⁶⁴ Although the 1844 treaty had established the Mzimkhulu as Natal's southern boundary, the colonial authorities had in mind the idea of extending the colony in the south. The High Commission had approved of this idea soon after Fynn was appointed to the Mpondo territory, and by April 1849 Sir Harry Smith was instructing him to try and secure a voluntary cession of land from Faku.¹⁶⁵ The High Commissioner was supported by Shepstone who favoured the idea of utilising the region between the Mzimvumbu and Mzimkhulu rivers for the overflow

¹⁶¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 99: Southey to Fynn, 30 July 1849; Colonial Secretary's Office, vol. 19, no. 28: Fynn to Moodie, 10 September 1849.

¹⁶²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 104: Moodie to Fynn, 21 September 1849; no. 105: Moodie to Fynn, 27 September 1849.

¹⁶³Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 107: Wakeford to Fynn, 10 October 1849; no. 108: Wakeford to Fynn, 25 November 1849; no. 109: Wakeford to Fynn, 12 December 1849.

¹⁶⁴Wright, Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg, pp. 123-4.

¹⁶⁵Cragg, 'The Relations of the amaPondo', p. 138.

of Natal's surplus black population, a situation he anticipated as result of the location system established in Natal from 1847.¹⁶⁶ In June 1849, Shepstone wrote to Fynn, encouraging him to press Faku to cede land to Natal in order that Natal chiefs would be able to return to their 'original country' south of the Mzimkhulu. The annexation of this region would ensure that such chiefs remained under 'British superintendence and control'.¹⁶⁷

In April 1850, Faku was persuaded by Harding to cede a large part of his northern territory to Natal in return for one hundred head of cattle.¹⁶⁸ By the time of this land deal, Faku's actions had become increasingly monitored by the Natal government. Interference in the Mpondo territory had increased since the appointment of Sir Benjamin Pine, who succeeded West as Lieutenant- Governor in April 1850. Pine believed that Faku was directly answerable to the Natal authorities and he insisted that the outstanding stolen cattle, a total of 1 024, together with the thieves responsible, should be handed over to Harding. With Smith's approval, he reassured Fynn that the Natal government would provide the necessary forces for this process.¹⁶⁹ Faku's authority was clearly severely diminished, and he was given no opportunity to hand over either cattle or culprits, as Fynn went ahead with the assistance of Pine's forces and retrieved the cattle himself.¹⁷⁰ Faku's loss of power was illustrated a few weeks later by a statement which he made to Fynn to forward to the colonial office 'begging

¹⁶⁶N. Etherington, 'The Shepstone System in the Colony of Natal and Beyond its Borders' in Duminy and Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand, pp. 170-174.

¹⁶⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 91: Shepstone to Fynn, 14 June 1849.

¹⁶⁸Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 179/57, no. 23: Harding to Moodie, 2 April 1850.

¹⁶⁹Fynn Papers, Natal Archives, file 1, no. 131: Pine to Fynn, 23 September 1850; no. 127: Smith to Fynn, 7 October 1850.

¹⁷⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 11, Memorandum by Fynn on cattle delivered to Harding, 1850.

the government (Natal) will take the country under their management'.¹⁷¹

Pine immediately informed Smith of the cession in northern Mpondoland, pointing out that it would enable the Natal government to control the actions of Faku's people, an issue made crucial by another impending conflict on the eastern borders of the Cape colony.¹⁷² Faku, realising that his authority had been completely undermined, wrote to Pine, stating that Fynn had forced him to ask for Natal's intervention.¹⁷³ Faku was supported by the Wesleyan missionaries, who had consistently opposed the Diplomatic Agent. Their superintendent, William Shaw, was convinced that Fynn had cheated the Mpondo into submitting their territory to British control.¹⁷⁴ In December 1850, under pressure from the missionaries, Pine sent commissioners to Faku's territory to investigate Fynn's actions. Although he was cleared of the Wesleyans' accusations, Fynn was forced by Pine's commissioners to return the cattle to Faku and the missionaries.¹⁷⁵ By this time however, Fynn's position as a colonial official in the Mpondo region had become practically redundant, as both Faku and the Natal officials sent by Pine had relied on the missionary Thomas Jenkins for information and advice and had completely disregarded Fynn's status as the Diplomatic Agent.¹⁷⁶

For a short period, Pine's government did not intervene further in Faku's affairs, but events to the south of the Mpondo region soon resulted in active Natal involvement in the area south of the Mzimkhulu. In December 1850, war had broken out on the

¹⁷¹Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 48, no. 407: Faku to Colonial Office, 7 October 1850.

¹⁷²Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 48, no. 17: Pine to Smith, 23 November 1850.

¹⁷³Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 48, no. 152: Faku to Pine, 16 November 1850.

¹⁷⁴Wright, Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg, pp. 130-131.

¹⁷⁵Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 133: Pine to Fynn, 20 January 1851.

¹⁷⁶Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 19, no. 18: Fynn to Captain Gordon, 22 July 1851.

eastern Cape frontier, largely as a result of the actions of Sir Harry Smith in enforcing British control in the former treaty territories, now called British Kaffraria.¹⁷⁷ In April 1851, in order to divert Xhosa attention from his own offensive, Smith, in his capacity as High Commissioner, instructed Pine to order Shepstone to join Fynn in raising a 'Zulu force' from Natal and Mpondoland and to proceed to the Kei river.¹⁷⁸ Despite great resistance to this idea by the people living in the Mzimkhulu district, Fynn was able to muster a contingent of about 1 500 men, though these were certainly not 'Zulus'.¹⁷⁹ Faku, from his side of the Mzimkhulu, viewed this expedition with suspicion and, as Fynn observed, evinced a strong sympathy for the 'kafir success against the colony'.¹⁸⁰ Fynn, still technically in his role as diplomatic agent, had been requested by Smith to convince Faku that he was befriended by the 'British people'.¹⁸¹ Once again, Fynn had to try and ensure Mpondo neutrality during a Cape border war. Pine reassured Fynn that he would not interfere with Smith's instructions.¹⁸² The fact that Fynn was still employed by the Cape, and not the Natal government was illustrated by Smith's instructions to him to communicate directly with the High Commissioner's headquarters in King Williams' Town for the duration of the hostilities.¹⁸³ At the same time, Fynn's presence in Natal, where he had gone for medical attention in 1851, did not go unnoticed by the colonial press, which commented that 'Shepstone's influence among the natives has been, in some cases, much diminished by the introduction of

¹⁷⁷Milton, The Edges of War, pp. 183-7.

¹⁷⁸Natal Archives, Garden Papers, vol. 2, pp. 120-121.

¹⁷⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 4, no. 26: Fynn to Moodie, 20 April 1851.

¹⁸⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 4, no. 81: Fynn to Garvock, 25 September 1851.

¹⁸¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 136: Smith to Fynn, 2 February 1851.

¹⁸²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 144: Pine to Fynn, 23 April 1851.

¹⁸³Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 179: Smith to Fynn, 10 November 1851.

Mr Fynn's authority'.¹⁸⁴

The psychological strain involved in constant negotiation between Faku, the Natal government and the missionaries, while at the same time reporting to Smith, had serious effects on Fynn's health.¹⁸⁵ By November 1851 he was forced to leave his post near Buntingville and travel to Natal in search of medical treatment.¹⁸⁶ He was unable to return to Mpondoland until the following February, and shortly afterwards Sir George Cathcart, Smith's successor as High Commissioner, suspended Fynn's position without pay, presumably because of the cessation of hostilities in the Cape colony. Fynn was apparently not even informed of this decision and he found out about it by reading the Government Gazette in April 1852.¹⁸⁷ He had to send frequent requests to the Cape authorities for financial compensation,¹⁸⁸ and it was not until November 1853 that the colonial office finally agreed to pay out two hundred and fifty pounds for his expenses.¹⁸⁹ Fynn eventually received this money in March 1854, two years after his employment in the Cape had been terminated.¹⁹⁰

In 1852, the Fynns had been facing serious financial difficulties for several years, and

¹⁸⁴The Natal Witness, 21 March 1851.

¹⁸⁵Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 176: William Fynn to Fynn, 4 November 1851.

¹⁸⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, file 30104, extract 2, Diary of Christina Fynn, p. 6.

¹⁸⁷Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 48, no. 328: Fynn to Cathcart, 9 October 1852.

¹⁸⁸Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 146: Fynn to Cathcart, 3 May 1852; no. 148: Fynn to Captain Gordon, 6 September 1852; no. 153: Fynn to Cathcart, 26 July 1853.

¹⁸⁹Cape Archives, Government House, vol. 1/237, no. 154: Newcastle to Cathcart, 24 November 1853.

¹⁹⁰Cape Archives, Colonial Office, vol. 4074, no. 2209: Jamieson to Southey, 24 March 1854.

Fynn's removal from the post with Faku seemed to indicate that further employment in the Cape was unlikely. Captain Garden, who travelled back with Fynn from Natal in June 1851 following the expedition to raise a 'Zulu force', described the Fynns' home as 'one of the most wretched I ever put up at'.¹⁹¹ In June 1852, Fynn decided to move his family to Natal, encouraged by Shepstone who promised to do what he could for him in terms of possible employment.¹⁹² Fynn's career as a Cape official within the colonial structure had been characterised by financial struggle, and he moved back to Natal in a similar financial condition to that which he had faced when he left in 1834: virtually bankrupt and with few prospects. Christina Fynn later recalled that her husband was never properly compensated by the Cape government for his services and as a result the entire family existed in an almost continuous state of severe poverty following their move to Natal in 1852.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹Natal Archives, Garden Papers, vol. 2, pp. 190-191.

¹⁹²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 201: Shepstone to Fynn, 28 May 1852.

¹⁹³Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 564, no. 1595: Christina Fynn to Colonial Office, 24 February 1862.

CHAPTER 3

FYNN'S CAREER IN COLONIAL NATAL 1852-1861

Theophilus Shepstone, who had been Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes in Natal since 1845, had written to Fynn in May 1852 stating that he would attempt to find him employment in the colony.¹ Given the shortage of money which resulted from his period of unemployment and from his ill-health which was largely a consequence of stress during his period as a Cape official, Fynn decided to follow Shepstone's advice and he moved his family from the Buntingville mission station district in June 1852, finally settling in Mount Prospect on the Durban Bluff in August. Though this was the Fynn's first permanent home since their marriage, Christina Fynn later recalled that their dwelling was dilapidated and inadequate.²

At the end of August 1852, Fynn was appointed as Assistant Resident Magistrate for the Pietermaritzburg district, in place of Theophilus' brother John Shepstone who had taken up the post of resident agent on the Thukela river border.³ These appointments indicated the complex nature of the Natal colonial structure and the degree to which this had developed during Fynn's eighteen years absence in the Cape. Following the official British annexation of Natal in 1843, it had been considered expedient by the Cape governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, to appoint Shepstone as diplomatic agent to the indigenous population.⁴ In the Cape colony, Diplomatic Agents had been created under the treaty system following the 1835 war. Their role had been to mediate between

¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 201: Shepstone to Fynn, 28 May 1852.

²Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, file 30104, extract no. 2, Diary of Christina Fynn, p. 6.

³Natal Government Gazette, 31 August 1852.

⁴BPP XLII of 1847-8 (C.980), no. 23: Maitland to Stanley, 1 October 1845.

independent chiefs who occupied territories outside the colony and who had signed treaties with the Cape government and white colonists, particularly in disputes which arose between these factions over land occupation. Shepstone's former post at Fort Peddie had been that of Diplomatic Agent with the Fingoes who were allocated land outside the borders of the colony after the 1835 conflict.⁵ From his Cape experience, Shepstone had realised that land disputes were a major cause of contention between indigenous communities and white settlers, and on taking up the Natal post he was anxious to avoid these issues and immediately set about dealing with the formal allocation of land.⁶ In 1846 the Natal government under Lieutenant-Governor Martin West followed Shepstone's advice and set up a Locations Commission which set aside reserved land for the Natal African population.⁷

While the Locations Commission conceived of the idea of separate areas of land for indigenous communities,⁸ the African people who lived in these areas were not to be left to continue to live under their own political system.⁹ At the time of Fynn's return to Natal in the early 1850s, the colonial government was in the process of debating the type of administration which could be used to effectively rule Africans in the region. The resident magistrates appointed from this time were to act as negotiators between local chiefs and the Lieutenant-Governor who was legally defined as 'supreme chief'.¹⁰ Although the local chiefs retained many judicial powers, these magistrates

⁵A. Webster, 'Unmasking the Fingo: The War of 1835 Revisited' in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 272-3.

⁶N. Etherington, 'The Origins of "Indirect Rule" in Nineteenth Century Natal', Theoria, vol. 47 (1976), pp. 11-16.

⁷Ibid.

⁸C. Bundy, The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry, London, Heinemann, 1979, pp. 166-168.

⁹D. Welsh, The Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal 1845-1910, Cape Town, 1971, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰D. Moodie, 'On Our Domestic Relations with the Natives in Natal', Lecture delivered to the Natal Society, 31 May 1858, p. 5.

dealt with matters of local justice before referring specific problems to the Diplomatic Agent. They also collected the colonial-imposed hut tax which paid for this administrative system.¹¹ Although Shepstone conceived of the idea of African magistrates who would eventually replace local chiefs,¹² the Natal government considered European assistant magistrates as more suitable officials as it was feared that 'native magistrates' would become too closely aligned with the people under their jurisdiction.¹³

By 1852, the number of European immigrants into Natal had increased substantially, largely as a result of the Byrne emigration scheme from 1849 to 1851.¹⁴ At the same time, European commercial sugar farming was expanding and thus required more colonial-owned land. With these demands in mind, Lieutenant Governor Pine set up a Commission in 1852 which aimed to establish the number of indigenous communities that could still claim 'location' land while at the same time devising ways to prevent 'further encroachments of natives from adjoining countries'.¹⁵ In 1849, Shepstone had already considered the problem of overcrowding in the areas reserved by the 1847 commission and had attempted to engineer the cession of a portion of the Mpondo territory to allow for this surplus indigenous population.¹⁶

Pine's commission, unlike West's of 1847, consisted of land-owning colonists rather than government officials. These individuals were determined to restrict the rights of Natal Africans to

¹¹N. Etherington, 'The Shepstone System in the Colony of Natal and Beyond its Borders', in Duminy and Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand, pp. 170-174.

¹²Natal Government Gazette, 26 October 1852; 2 November 1852.

¹³Natal Government Gazette, 30 November 1852.

¹⁴J. Clark, Natal Settler-Agent: The Career of John Moreland, Agent for the Byrne Emigration Scheme of 1849-1851, Cape Town, Balkema, 1972.

¹⁵Proceedings and Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1853, p. 2.

¹⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 91: Shepstone to Fynn, 14 June 1849.

ownership of land.¹⁷ At the time of this land commission, Fynn had just taken up his post as assistant resident magistrate in Pietermaritzburg but he was called upon almost immediately to act as interpreter for the commission.¹⁸ Although not required to give evidence at the time of the enquiry, Fynn voluntarily submitted information to Shepstone in the latter's capacity as Diplomatic Agent.¹⁹ He was also viewed as an expert on the pre-colonial societies in the Natal region, and his ideas on the indigenous context at the time of European arrival were published in the local Natal Government Gazette,²⁰ and some weeks later in the Press.²¹ A published version of the commission proceedings also appeared the same year.²² Apart from his earlier reports to the Grahamstown Journal in the 1830s, his evidence to the commission as published in the Natal Government Gazette and The Natal Mercury in 1853, constituted Fynn's first published writing. These accounts were similar to the report published by the commission and represented the earliest colonial history written by Natalians.²³ In his account of pre-European Port Natal, Fynn reported that the hinterland was largely depopulated as a result of Shaka's military excesses and that the remaining people were 'mere living skeletons, obtaining a precarious existence on roots and shellfish'.²⁴ The commission used this information to stress the chaotic nature of indigenous society under Shaka's rule, and reported that in the 1820s, 'the whole country was a desert, occupied by a few miserable stragglers' resulting from Shaka having 'devastated the whole country

¹⁷Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, p. 69.

¹⁸Proceedings and Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1853, p. 1.

¹⁹Natal Archives, Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA), vol. 2/1/2, evidence of H.F. Fynn.

²⁰Natal Government Gazette, no. 220: 22 February 1853; no. 221: 1 March 1853; no. 222: 8 March 1853.

²¹The Natal Mercury, 14 April 1853; 21 April 1853; 28 April 1853; 5 May 1853; 12 May 1853.

²²Proceedings and Report, p. 18.

²³J. Wright, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane', Canadian Journal of African Studies, vol. 23, no. 2 (1989), p. 277.

²⁴Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 2/1/2, evidence of H. Fynn.

... with immense slaughter' so that the entire population had 'ceased to have any separate national existence'. Consequently, with the arrival of the European traders, the local people had 'ranged themselves under the English as their chiefs'.²⁵ Fynn's evidence on these circumstances was invaluable to the Natal government, as it was able to draw on the commission's report in order to justify its own system of rule over black communities in the region, on the grounds that it was imposing order over a situation bordering on anarchy.²⁶

In July 1853, following Shepstone's recommendation, the Natal government appointed Fynn to the post of assistant resident magistrate for the Lower Umkomanzi Division in southern Natal.²⁷ He did not arrive at his new residency near the Ifumi mission station until September however, as he was involved in settling his wife and young son at Mount Prospect where he had finally managed to buy some property, owning a house for the first time in his career. Christina and Henry Francis junior remained in this new home whilst Fynn was employed in the Umkomanzi district.²⁸ Fynn's delay in moving to his new district was criticised by Shepstone, who pointed out that his employment as assistant resident magistrate had commenced in July. Whilst employing a fairly officious tone as Fynn's superior, Shepstone did however express sympathy for the Fynn family and their impending separation, and promised to convey Fynn's circumstances to Pine.²⁹

Within two months of having settled into his new life at Ifumi, Fynn was provided with a clerk and interpreter by the Natal government. A young acquaintance of Fynn's, Robert Struthers,³⁰ was

²⁵Proceedings and Report, p. 6.

²⁶Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', pp. 70-71.

²⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 209: Labouchere to Fynn, 29 July 1853.

²⁸Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, file 30104, extract no. 2, Diary of Christina Fynn, p. 6.

²⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 211: Shepstone to Fynn, 15 September 1853.

³⁰Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 2241, no. 176: Struthers to Pine, 29 June 1852; Note by Fynn, 30 July 1852.

appointed to this position in November 1853³¹ but was unable to take the job until 1856, and in the interim, the post was given to Robert Moreland.³² As a competent speaker of Zulu, Fynn had no need for an interpreter, but an assistant of some kind was essential as he was often away for weeks at a stretch collecting the hut-tax or trying to correct earlier tax discrepancies.³³ The job of assistant resident magistrate was not as onerous as his previous jobs in the Cape colony had been. Most of his work consisted of routine tasks and he did not face the same degree of stress that he had in the Cape as Diplomatic Agent when he had had to attempt to influence chiefs. Fynn's role as magistrate was made by the fact that he considered himself to have some kind of automatic authority over Africans in Natal. He pointed out to Shepstone that although the 'tribes' in the Umkomanzi district had 'recognised and appreciated your authority', these people had, in the 1820s, regarded Fynn with respect and even affection and these feelings had been 'revived' upon his return to the district in the 1850s.³⁴ Fynn regarded the people under his jurisdiction with a sort of benevolent paternalism, and claimed that they looked up to him as a father figure because they acknowledged that he 'had their welfare at heart'.³⁵ Todd Ellison, a contemporary researcher, has interpreted this as unusual 'kindness' on the part of a European within the colonial structure.³⁶ By contrast, contemporaries like the colonist William Leathern noted Fynn's harsh treatment of Africans:

³¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 213: Lumsden to Fynn, 23 November 1853.

³²Clark, Natal Settler-Agent, p. 146.

³³Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 216: Shepstone to Fynn, 4 August 1854.

³⁴Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 155: Fynn to Shepstone, 12 June 1854.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Todd Ellison, "'The Remembrance of your Kindnesses to Us'", p. 61.

'A kaffir came past. Fynn had a sjambok in his hand, one he always carried. The kaffir did not greet him. Fynn asked him who he was. The native was cheeky, saying, "What have you got to do with me?" Fynn said, "Do you know who I am?" He said, "No, I know nothing about you". Fynn now made a jump and caught hold of him and said "I am Mbuyazi, and I'll learn you when you see a white man, to salute him". He gave him a downright good thrashing, whereupon the native called out that he would be careful to do this in future. The native went down on his knees to him then. The other natives were looking on laughing, for they all knew Fynn. This did a good deal of good'.³⁷

Similarly, George Russell remembered Fynn, in his capacity as a magistrate, trying local cases and administering sentences involving a flogging without so much as looking up from his snuff-box. Africans given these punishments would 'respectfully' greet Fynn with the title 'inkosi' before leaving the premises.³⁸ Russell also described how Fynn's treatment of the local population resulted in Africans greeting him with 'respectful salutations'. Less experienced officials, said Russell, who had no knowledge of the Zulu language, caused great restlessness among these 'wild lovers of liberty and cattle', implying that Fynn, in contrast, had a calming effect on the people under his control.³⁹ William Bazley, a colonist and another of Stuart's European informants,

³⁷. Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of William Leathern, p. 277.

³⁸G. Russell, The History of Old Durban and Reminiscences of an Emigrant of 1850, Durban, P. Davis and Sons, 1899, p. 171.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 288.

described Fynn in a less harsh light, referring to his detailed knowledge of indigenous medicine and the way in which he used these skills to treat both Africans and Europeans in Natal in the 1850s.⁴⁰

Despite the fact that as an assistant resident magistrate he was clearly a minor official in the Natal administration, Fynn was viewed by travellers like scientist William Bleek, and missionaries like Daniel Lindley, as an authority on indigenous people, language and customs.⁴¹ John William Colenso, the first Anglican bishop of Natal, visited the colony in January 1854, and described Fynn as holding a key position in southern Natal, being 'pretty much what Mr Shepstone is to the north, being thoroughly acquainted with the natives'.⁴² The government also regarded him as a valuable source of information on the Zulu language, and he was asked by the Legislative Assembly to assist them in interpreting the meaning of 'Mgungundlovu' for the seal and coat of arms of Pietermaritzburg.⁴³ Both the leading colonial newspapers also portrayed Fynn in a favourable light in the mid-1850s, noting that he was a person with considerable knowledge of the Zulu⁴⁴ and 'by far the most experienced person in native character and management'.⁴⁵ Although based in Umkomanzi, he was elected to the Durban Local Council which dealt with municipal affairs, in 1855 and 1856.⁴⁶

In 1856, Fynn was promoted to resident magistrate over the Inanda division, north of Durban, as

⁴⁰Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of William Bazley, p. 60.

⁴¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 219: Daniel Lindley to Fynn, 27 October 1855; O.H. Spohr, ed., The Natal Diaries of Dr W.H.I. Bleek, Cape Town, Balkema, 1965, pp. 91-2.

⁴²Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, p. 216.

⁴³Natal Archives, Bird Papers, vol. 12, p. 74.

⁴⁴The Natal Witness, 6 July 1855.

⁴⁵The Natal Mercury, 11 July 1855.

⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, 7 February 1855; 15 August 1856.

well as the Umkomanzi division.⁴⁷ This was a direct result of what was viewed by the Natal government as his considerable 'influence over the natives'.⁴⁸ At the same time, he had not hesitated to point out his own need for promotion, and the year before he had complained that assistant magistrates junior to himself had been promoted to full magistrates, this being an indication of the 'low value' which the Natal government placed on his services.⁴⁹ Fynn had also suffered personal financial difficulties as a result of his duties in southern Natal. He reported that he had lost two animals to horse sickness and had had to spend a long time on the road collecting the hut tax as the people in the district were widely dispersed.⁵⁰

It is difficult to establish whether the communities Fynn administered from the 1850s included the families of his adherents in the 1830s. According to Garden, the Izinkumbi were settled in the Mzimkhulu area and Fynn had paid them little attention on his trip to Natal in 1851, regarding them as 'the scum and refuse of all the scattered tribes'.⁵¹ However, it was clear that he did show a special interest in the people under his jurisdiction. The 1852 commission had recommended that 'industrial schools' be set up to 'civilise' the African population in Natal, but this scheme had been rejected by the colonial office for financial reasons.⁵² Fynn however, assisted by Robert Struthers, who became his clerk in 1856,⁵³ decided to set up his own industrial and agricultural 'village' in Inyangwini on the Natal south coast.⁵⁴ Acting Lieutenant- Governor Cooper approved this plan,

⁴⁷Natal Archives, Government House, vol. 28, no. 14: Labouchere to Scott, 7 February 1856.

⁴⁸Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 220: Sargeaunt to Fynn, 8 September 1856.

⁴⁹Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 74, no. 38: Fynn to Colonial Secretary, 2 February 1855.

⁵⁰Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 76, no. 38: Fynn to Colonial Secretary, 27 March 1855.

⁵¹Natal Archives, Garden Papers, vol. 2, p. 306.

⁵²Welsh, The Roots of Segregation, p. 49.

⁵³Robert Briggs Struthers' Hunting Journal 1852-1856 in the Zulu Kingdom and the Tsonga Regions, eds., P. Merrett and R. Butcher, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1991, p. 21.

⁵⁴Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of William Bazley, p. 53.

although he stressed that it was to be at Fynn's own expense.⁵⁵ Fynn considered that it was to the 'advantage' of the people in southern Natal to 'promote industry' among them. In particular he suggested that the Africans be allowed to provide woven rush sugar bags for the growing south coast sugar industry.⁵⁶ Within less than a year of the establishment of the Inyangwini village, Struthers was able to provide a favourable report on agricultural progress.⁵⁷

Having settled into colonial life in Natal, in 1856, Fynn tried once again to secure a land grant in the region, his first attempt in 1843 having received no response.⁵⁸ He reiterated his earlier points about the 'land grant' which Shaka had supposedly made to him in the Isipingo area in return for medical treatment. Acting Lieutenant-Governor Cooper followed up Fynn's request and recommended to the colonial office that he be given a land grant of 2 000 acres in return for his services as a magistrate, which duties Fynn had carried out with 'zeal and efficiency'.⁵⁹ The colonial office however, replied that land grants were not issued in return for services to the government and that Dick King had occupied the land in Isipingo which Fynn had abandoned in 1834. In accordance with the terms of the 'proclamation of sovereignty' over Natal in 1844, King's rights to this land had been confirmed by a Crown Grant.⁶⁰ The result of Fynn's request was that Lieutenant- Governor Scott regretfully informed him that his claim had been rejected on the

⁵⁵Natal Archives, Government House, vol. 1211, no. 55: Cooper to Colonial Secretary, 30 October 1856.

⁵⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, MS 1.04, vol. 3, Miscellaneous Notes, 1850-1860.

⁵⁷Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 193: Report by R.B. Struthers, 31 August 1857.

⁵⁸Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 1, no. 65: Fynn to Napier, 10 August 1843.

⁵⁹Natal Archives, Government House, vol. 1211, no. 38: Cooper to Colonial Secretary, 27 June 1856.

⁶⁰Natal Archives, Government House, vol. 30, no. 18: Emigration Office to T. Elliot, 22 November 1856; no. 59: Colonial Secretary to Elliot, 14 September 1857.

grounds that he had 'at no former time possessed a claim to ... land'.⁶¹

In November 1856, the Colony of Natal received a charter from the British government and became a separate Crown Colony.⁶² This new status meant changes in the administration of the Natal region. Shepstone's position as Diplomatic Agent was upgraded to that of Secretary for Native Affairs, and his powers as a colonial official were greatly increased.⁶³ In his recent analysis of Fynn's career in colonial Natal, Todd Ellison has stressed the more formal relationship between Fynn and Shepstone which resulted from the latter's position as Fynn's superior.⁶⁴ The political hierarchy of their relationship in Natal in the 1850s was clearly in contrast to Fynn's and Shepstone's periods in the Cape in the 1830s where both individuals had corresponded as peers in their posts as Diplomatic Agents. William Bazley, who knew Fynn during the 1850s, thought that Shepstone was 'always very down on Fynn',⁶⁵ while Fynn's son later told James Stuart that:

'Sir Theophilus Shepstone could not bear anyone being looked upon as anything greater than himself. My father had great influence over the natives, was always entrusted with missions at a distance from headquarters. This gave him power which Sir T. Shepstone objected to'.⁶⁶

⁶¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 233: Allen to Fynn, 29 December 1857.

⁶²Natal Government Gazette, 6 November 1856; 11 November 1856.

⁶³P.A. Kennedy, 'The Fatal Diplomacy: Sir Theophilus Shepstone and the Zulu Kings, 1839-1879', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of California, 1976, pp. 125-8.

⁶⁴J. Todd Ellison, "'The remembrance of your kindnesses to us'", pp. 21-4; Bramdeow, 'Henry Fynn and the Fynn Community', pp. 96-99.

⁶⁵Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of William Bazley, p. 61.

⁶⁶ K.C.A.L. Fynn Family Papers, file 30104, extract no. 4, Notes on the Life of H. Fynn dictated to James Stuart by Fynn junior, December 1906, p. 13.

Shepstone's post as Diplomatic Agent had required him to intervene in issues beyond the colony's Thukela border. From the mid-1840s, he retained a good diplomatic relationship with the Zulu king Mpande, who had entered into a treaty with the Natal government in 1843.⁶⁷ In late 1856, political tensions within the Zulu state culminated in a civil war between two of King Mpande's sons, Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi. On 2 December, these rival forces met in battle at Ndondakusuka near the mouth of the Thukela River. Mbuyazi, together with five other sons of Mpande, was killed in this conflict. A group of white traders from Natal, including John Dunn fought on the side of Mbuyazi.⁶⁸ The Natal government was concerned with the outcome of this succession dispute in that it feared that Cetshwayo, who had emerged as Mpande's heir, would call upon the Transvaal Republic for support against his father, particularly given the fact that Natal traders had supported his rival.⁶⁹ Shepstone was worried that numbers of refugees fleeing from Cetshwayo would pour into the colony and place pressure on the limited area of land set aside for Africans in Natal in the locations.⁷⁰

Shepstone was also afraid that Cetshwayo might, with the assistance of the Transvaal Boers, attack Natal, as two of his rival brothers, Mkhungo kaMpande and Sikhotha kaMpande sought refuge in the colony in early 1857. Mkhungo was in a sense Shepstone's hostage as he was

⁶⁷P.A. Kennedy, 'Mpande and the Zulu Kingship', Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol. 4 (1981), pp. 31-5.

⁶⁸Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. IV, evidence of Mtshapi ka Noradu, pp. 61-2; evidence of Mvayisa ka Tshingili, pp. 165-7; evidence of Ndukwana ka Mbengwana, pp. 273-5.

⁶⁹P. Colenbrander, 'The Zulu Kingdom, 1828-1879' in Duminy and Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand, p. 130.

⁷⁰Kennedy, 'The Fatal Diplomacy', pp. 130-32.

harboured in Natal under the combined protection of Shepstone and Bishop Colenso.⁷¹ In early 1857, Shepstone decided to try and establish the nature of Mpande's attitude towards the Natal government while at the same time investigating Cetshwayo's possible future political plans. He chose Fynn to go to the Zulu kingdom and collect information about the relationship between Mpande and Cetshwayo. Shepstone was anxious to find an opportunity to actively intervene in Zulu politics, and with this in mind he instructed Fynn to find out if Mpande required Natal's support against Cetshwayo. Fynn himself was given no authority to interfere in the internal affairs of the Zulu kingdom and was reminded that he acted under Shepstone's guidance.⁷²

Fynn was chosen for this task presumably because he had an excellent grasp of the Zulu language and had also been closely connected with the earlier Zulu monarchs, Shaka and Dingane. There is no evidence that Mpande had ever met Fynn, although Mkhungo later pointed out that Mbuyazi, Mpande's favourite son, was named after Fynn.⁷³ It is not unlikely that Fynn and Mpande had met during the 1820s at Shaka's capital, Mpande having been a member of Shaka's army from about 1816 or 1817.⁷⁴ In January 1857 Fynn travelled to the Thukela river border and crossed into the Zulu territory. Although he did not visit Mpande at his Nodwengu capital, Fynn had, by early February, interviewed a number of prominent individuals, and satisfied himself that Mpande wanted British or Natal support against Cetshwayo, the latter being in league with the Transvaal Boers and various chiefs who opposed Mpande.⁷⁵ On receiving Fynn's report, Shepstone was able to convince Lieutenant- Governor Scott that the advisable line of action would be to offer the Zulu

⁷¹N. Etherington, 'Anglo-Zulu Relations 1856-1878' in A. Duminy and C. Ballard, eds., The Anglo Zulu War: New Perspectives, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1981, p. 16.

⁷²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 222: Shepstone to Fynn, 2 January 1857.

⁷³Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. III, evidence of Mkhungo kaMpande, p. 232.

⁷⁴D.R. Edgecombe and J.B. Wright, 'Mpande kaSenzangakhona' in C. Saunders, ed., Black Leaders in Southern African History, London, Heinemann, 1979, p. 47.

⁷⁵Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 61: Fynn to Shepstone, 6 February 1857.

king British support against the Cetshwayo-Boer alliance. Fynn was instructed to assure Mpande of this assistance, and also to request that the latter should insist on Cetshwayo's compensating the Natal traders who had lost cattle as a result of the civil war.⁷⁶ Fynn then travelled to Nodwengu in the north west of the Zulu kingdom and by April he had relayed Shepstone's messages of goodwill to Mpande.⁷⁷

By the late 1850s, the Natal colonial public, along with the government, had quite clearly accepted the idea of Shepstone as an authority on Zulu affairs.⁷⁸ Fynn however, had played a vital role in establishing diplomatic relations between Zululand and Natal. He was one of the first official Natal representatives to assure Mpande of the colonial government's support, and to inform Shepstone of the dynamics of internal politics within the Zulu state.⁷⁹ Fynn was able to deduce almost at once that Mpande had little authority left, but that Cetshwayo would not take over the kingship while he remained uncertain about British intentions from the south of the region.⁸⁰ Within a few days of Fynn's arrival, he was able to strike up a diplomatic relationship with Cetshwayo to the extent that the latter agreed to become 'a subject of the Natal government'. Cetshwayo clearly explained his intentions to Fynn: 'My father has no more judgement. Mr Fynn may guide me and take care of my father whose regrets for his lost children (Mbuyazi, Mkhungo and Sikhotha) have disabled him'.⁸¹ Fynn, through this conversation, reported to Shepstone that the situation of 'tranquillity' in Zululand was due entirely to 'our (colonial) presence'.⁸²

⁷⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 224: Shepstone to Fynn, 27 February 1857.

⁷⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 157: Fynn to Shepstone, 5 June 1857.

⁷⁸The Natal Mercury, 12 August 1858; 9 September 1858.

⁷⁹Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 124: Fynn to Shepstone, 29 April 1857.

⁸⁰Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 123: Fynn to Shepstone, 1 May 1857.

⁸¹Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 126: Statement of Cetshwayo, 1857.

⁸²Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 127: Fynn to Shepstone, 15 May 1857.

The Natal press, however, heavily influenced by colonists who favoured direct intervention in Mpande's territory, was harsh in its criticism of Fynn's mission. The Natal Mercury described the expedition as 'useless' and as having created an impression of Natal's 'fear and weakness' to the aggressive Cetshwayo.⁸³ Traders who had demanded compensation for cattle losses in the 1856 conflict, and had not received it, considered that Fynn had made a 'bungling mess' in his visit to Mpande.⁸⁴ For several months, anonymous letters signed by 'traders' appeared in the press, all highly critical of Fynn's actions.⁸⁵ Despite this public reaction however, it was clear that Lieutenant-Governor Scott regarded Fynn's expedition to the Zulu state as opening the way for Shepstone's further involvement in the affairs of Mpande and Cetshwayo.⁸⁶

In mid-1857, Fynn returned to his job in Natal and to a reasonably contented existence. Although he had not received the land grant he had hoped for,⁸⁷ he had, since 1853, been able to provide his family with a regular income and to settle them in a permanent home at Mount Prospect. Fynn's and Struthers' experimental village at Inyangwini showed rising productivity from 1857, particularly with regard to coffee.⁸⁸ However, in late 1857, Fynn wrote an official despatch objecting to regulations imposed by the Natal government, although he had hitherto carried out all instructions given to him.⁸⁹ That year the Natal Legislative Council had passed a bill which prohibited all Natal Africans from carrying any kind of weapon. This was deemed necessary in order to preserve the peace of the colony. Fynn vehemently opposed this, stressing to the colonial

⁸³The Natal Mercury, 4 July 1857.

⁸⁴The Natal Mercury, 4 June 1857.

⁸⁵The Natal Mercury, 27 June 1857; 16 July 1857; 17 December 1857; 23 December 1857.

⁸⁶Kennedy, 'The Fatal Diplomacy', p. 151.

⁸⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 231: Allen to Fynn, 16 November 1857; no. 233: Allen to Fynn, 29 December 1857.

⁸⁸Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 194: Report of H.F. Fynn, October 1857.

⁸⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 226: Shepstone to Fynn, 16 June 1857.

secretary that such a measure would lead to the kind of friction he had experienced in the Cape. He pointed out that the Africans had traditionally carried weapons to protect themselves against criminals, and to suddenly prohibit this would be interpreted as an unnecessary European attack on 'ancient custom'. In addition, he argued that this kind of legislation would indicate that Europeans feared Africans, a situation which would lead to outright conflict between the two groups.⁹⁰ Fynn was concerned that such a measure would alienate the African population and end the tranquillity which had existed thus far in contrast to the eastern Cape border region. In order to preserve this peaceful state of affairs, he felt it was essential to establish confidence between Africans and the Natal government.⁹¹

In February 1858 Fynn decided that he could not reconcile himself to the legislation on Africans carrying weapons and wrote to the colonial secretary, stating his intention to resign.⁹² Scott at once replied, stating that Fynn had carried out his magistrate's duties well and that the loss of his services would be 'greatly regretted'.⁹³ The colonial office agreed that Fynn's resignation would be a loss to the colony but suggested that this be withdrawn as the legislation had not yet been passed by the British government.⁹⁴ As it was clear that he would lose his pension if he resigned, and given his relatively weak financial situation, in that he had not been able to obtain a land grant, Fynn withdrew his resignation. Lieutenant Governor Scott regarded Fynn as a valuable official and expressed his pleasure at this decision.⁹⁵ This was the only occasion on which Fynn had questioned the system under which he worked. He complied with other requests from the government, for example in supplying labour in terms of the isibhalo or forced labour system,

⁹⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 159: Fynn to Allen, 18 August 1857.

⁹¹Natal Archives, SNA, vol. 1/3/6, no. 208: Fynn to Allen, 12 September 1857.

⁹²Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 103, no. 171: Fynn to Allen, 15 February 1858.

⁹³Natal Archives, GH, vol. 1211, no. 12: Scott to Labouchere, 4 March 1858.

⁹⁴Natal Archives, GH, vol. 32: Stanley to Scott, 5 May 1858.

⁹⁵Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 239: Allen to Fynn, 13 April 1858.

without comment.⁹⁶

It is possible that Fynn did not genuinely disagree with the government's policy about Africans carrying weapons but that he used this as a pretext to resign from his post. From 1858 he no longer seemed interested in his job. He started to neglect his duties at the experimental farm and he handed over the responsibility for new projects, for example cotton-growing, entirely to Struthers.⁹⁷ At the end of 1859, he took leave to attend to his health and visit his family and he left his assistant in charge of Inyangwini village.⁹⁸ During the last two years of his career, Fynn handed over a great deal of responsibility to Struthers while he concentrated on trying to obtain a land grant from the government. In 1843 and again in 1856, Fynn had used his own recollection of his early decade at Port Natal in an attempt to assert his rights to land, pointing out that Shaka had given him land.⁹⁹ During 1858 and 1859 he started once again to write up his reminiscences, this time with Struthers' assistance,¹⁰⁰ and in February 1860 he once more submitted his resignation, probably with the motive of spending his time in appealing to the government for a land grant.¹⁰¹

As he was fifty-six years old in 1859, Fynn's resignation was accepted and, having freed himself from his official duties, he set to work in earnest to put forward his justification for a land-grant. In early 1860, he wrote again to the colonial secretary, pointing out that he had been the 'first

⁹⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 169: Fynn to Shepstone, 29 September 1859.

⁹⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 240: Shepstone to Fynn, 20 April 1858; no. 273: Struthers to Fynn, 11 December 1859.

⁹⁸Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 268: Fynn to Bird, 25 August 1859; no. 270: Fynn to Bird, 7 September 1859.

⁹⁹Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 1, no. 65: Fynn to Napier, 10 August 1843; GH, vol. 1211, no. 38: Cooper to Colonial Secretary, 27 June 1856.

¹⁰⁰Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, file no. 30104, item no. 4, Notes on the Life of H. Fynn, dictated to James Stuart by H. Fynn junior, 27 December 1906, p. 8.

¹⁰¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 185: Fynn to Erskine, 29 February 1860.

pioneer' in the region and had been accepted as 'chief' over local communities at Port Natal, hence his right to the land.¹⁰² He also sent a lengthy petition to the Colonial Office along these lines.¹⁰³ In defence of the Natal government's earlier refusal to grant Fynn land, Scott pointed out to the Colonial Office that the land requested lay within an area already set aside as an African location. Scott's argument was accepted as legitimate and Fynn's appeal was turned down by the colonial secretary, Lord Newcastle.¹⁰⁴ In March 1861, Fynn tried once more to try and persuade the colonial office to agree to his land grant. The area which he had tried to claim in 1860 had been part of the Umlazi location but since that time the Natal government had relocated the Africans living there.¹⁰⁵ Scott still objected, arguing that this land was too valuable to be given to Fynn and that he should be granted a piece of Crown Land that was of more 'average value'.¹⁰⁶

Fynn's health had never been good and early in 1861 he became seriously ill, partially as a result of the emotional stress involved in his ongoing dispute with the Natal government. Fynn junior later recalled that his father had died 'broken hearted' in September 1861, as a result of Scott's refusal to grant him property.¹⁰⁷ Having resigned from his post as magistrate, he was not entitled to a pension, and poverty forced him to mortgage his Mount Prospect property and move his family to lodgings in central Durban.¹⁰⁸ When Fynn died, he did so intestate and his widow Christina was

¹⁰²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 174: Fynn to Allen, 29 February 1860.

¹⁰³Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 178: Fynn to Newcastle, 29 May 1860; GH, vol. 1211, no. 30: Williamson to Newcastle, 5 July 1860.

¹⁰⁴Natal Archives, GH, vol. 36, no. 81: Newcastle to Williamson, 23 October 1860.

¹⁰⁵Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 5, no. 179: Fynn to Newcastle, 20 March 1861.

¹⁰⁶Natal Archives, GH, vol. 1212, no. 19: Scott to Newcastle, 6 April 1861.

¹⁰⁷Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 115/8, no. 40: Fynn to Colonial Secretary, 1 December 1897.

¹⁰⁸Cape Archives, Lieutenant Governor, vol. 564, no. 1595: Christina Fynn to Colonial Office, 24 February 1862.

forced to appeal to the Natal Legislative Council for financial assistance.¹⁰⁹ Ironically, a despatch from the Colonial Office finally arrived in September 1861, recommending that the Lieutenant-Governor allow Fynn as much 'liberality' as he considered suitable in choosing a land grant.¹¹⁰ Christina Fynn and her son Henry Francis were eventually awarded two plots of land of 300 and 600 acres in Illovo.¹¹¹ Theophilus Shepstone, to whom Christina had appealed for help with the land grant plea, did not even attend Fynn's funeral, though he did write to Christina, expressing his condolences and stressing his 'sincere regard' for Fynn.¹¹² Christina ensured however, that her husband was remembered for his services to the Natal government by having inscribed on his gravestone that he had been 'for 37 years most actively engaged as a Government Officer in the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal - much to the satisfaction of both Governments'.¹¹³ Many decades after Fynn's death, the colonist William Bazley told James Stuart that the African people in southern Natal had been particularly close to Fynn and 'for months they mourned him on their own accord'.¹¹⁴ This kind of statement however, needs to be regarded critically. There is no contemporary evidence to demonstrate that Fynn was, as Todd Ellison suggested, 'loved' by the Africans in Natal.¹¹⁵

By the time of his death in 1861, Fynn had begun to be recognised by Natal writers as a 'pioneer' who paved the way for European settlement in the region. In 1857, J. Shooter published one of the first histories of white settlement in the colony: in it he depicted Fynn as the embodiment of the

¹⁰⁹K.C.A.L., Fynn Papers, file 1.04, Fynn Letters, vol. I, Christina Fynn to Legislative Council, 4 August 1862.

¹¹⁰Natal Archives, GH, vol. 37, no. 137, Newcastle to Scott, July 1861.

¹¹¹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 14, Diary of Christina Fynn, p. 3.

¹¹²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 3, no. 285, Shepstone to C. Fynn, 6 November 1861.

¹¹³Quoted in Davies, Twin Trails, p. 22; The inscription is on the Fynns' combined gravestone in the West Street Cemetery, Durban.

¹¹⁴Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, evidence of William Bazley, p. 130.

¹¹⁵Todd Ellison, "In Remembrance of your Kindnesses to Us", pp. 15-16.

'civilising influence' of Europeans at Port Natal, where destitute blacks were cared for under the 'chieftainship' of the English traders.¹¹⁶ R.J. Mann, who worked for the Emigration Board, wrote a similar history, which he published in 1859, and in which he emphasised the positive effects of white rule in Natal. Like Shooter he portrayed Fynn as an example of a humane European who protected indigenous people and was adopted by them as 'the great chief'.¹¹⁷

The Natal histories which appeared in the 1850s by writers like Colenso, Shooter and Mann, all depicted Fynn in positive ways. It is clear that at the time of his death, Fynn was well-known to white Natalians, both by reputation and through these publications. Fynn's reputation was illustrated by his obituary, an honour not accorded to most colonists. The obituary was written by John Robinson, the editor of the Natal Mercury, who had for many years written favourable reports on Fynn. He described Fynn as 'the patriarch of our pioneers' who had left behind invaluable evidence for future policy-makers and historians.¹¹⁸ During the course of his career in Natal during the 1850s, Fynn was often viewed as an unmatched source of evidence on the pre-colonial and early European period in the region. In 1855, Bishop Colenso had used Fynn's manuscripts on Shaka's reign in writing his own account of the events of the 1820s.¹¹⁹ In 1859, Colenso had included material obtained from Fynn in his Zulu publication on the history of the black people in Natal.¹²⁰ These accounts all served to entrench the idea of Fynn as a literate and informed authority on the Natal past, ideas already set in circulation by Fynn's published material following the official commission in 1852. Fynn was the only member of the early trading party who was

¹¹⁶J. Shooter, The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country, London, Stanford, 1857, p. 280.

¹¹⁷R.J. Mann, The Colony of Natal, London, National Geographic Society, 1859, p. 15.

¹¹⁸The Natal Mercury, 26 September 1861: Obituary.

¹¹⁹J.W. Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal: A Journal of a First Tour of Visitation Among the Colonists and Zulu Kafirs of Natal, Cambridge, Macmillan, 1855, pp. ix-x.

¹²⁰J.W. Colenso, Izindatyana zaBantu kanye nezindaba zas'eNatal, Pietermaritzburg, 1859; M.M. Fuze, The Black People and Whence They Came, (translated by H.C. Lugg), Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1979, pp. 69-70.

available in colonial Natal and who could fulfil the role of a European who was sufficiently well-educated to become an accepted literary figure. Thus, Fynn's image as an individual who could author the history of a pre-literate community in Natal was, by the late 1850s, well established in the developing historiography of the colony.

Fynn's career was not, in contrast to individuals like Shepstone, one of political significance in the developing colony of Natal. Nevertheless he had, by the late 1850s, acquired a specific set of images in the emerging historiography of the region. This iconography had developed from ideas about Fynn's first 'pioneer' period at Port Natal, with particular emphasis on his role as a European at Shaka's court from 1824 to 1828. The images of the binary opposition of civilisation and savagery, which these portrayals evoked, fitted in perfectly with early white Natalians' notions of their own political role as the dominant colonising influence in the region. For this reason, Fynn's Shakan period, during which he travelled amongst indigenous people, became the main historical context for the images of him which developed in early Natal historiography. Fynn's more settled trading years at Port Natal during Dingane's reign from 1829 to 1834 were downplayed by early writers as this framework lacked the romance and adventure required by white Natalians in their quest for an iconography which reflected their self-constructed role in the region. It was this particular set of images, focusing on Fynn's relations with Shaka, which fed into all future accounts and can be detected throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century.

CHAPTER 4

THE SETTLERS' FYNN 1820s-1880s

The earliest recorded mention of Fynn was contained in a report about Farewell's trading party which appeared in the Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser in June 1825. This account, based on observations by Lieutenant Hawes, master of the vessel York, described the party at Port Natal as consisting of Farewell, Fynn and 'four other Europeans' who were 'upon the most friendly terms with the natives and have the protection of Chaka, the King'.¹ This observation established Fynn as an important individual member of Farewell's trading party. The idea of Shaka as 'king of the Zulu' had already been articulated by Farewell, in his reports to the Cape government describing the 'land grant' given by Shaka to the Europeans.² In his capacity as supercargo for Farewell's expedition, Fynn had signed this document as a literate witness but despite this fairly insignificant role, he was, by the time of Hawes' report, already acquiring prominence in the Cape press, as Farewell's companion and was portrayed in a superior position to the other Europeans who were merely employees.

Hawes depicted both Farewell and Fynn in a manner which contrasted their European qualities with Shaka's indigenous traits. The Europeans' approach was 'friendly' whereas Shaka was, responsible for 'having put to death or driven away all the original tribes' of the region.³ J.S. King, whose trading expedition arrived at Port Natal in October 1825, described Fynn as a particular instance of the courage showed by Europeans in an unknown and alien environment. Fynn, stated King, had 'suffered intensely' from deprivation and had 'undauntedly penetrated forests, passed through savage nations, and ... narrowly escaped from several attempts that have been made

¹Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 4 June 1825, Report of H.M.S. York.

²Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. I, pp. 38-9, Farewell to Somerset, 6 September 1824.

³Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 4 June 1825.

on his life'.⁴ For King, Fynn was an example of an intrepid European explorer in a territory ruled by the 'despotic and cruel monster', Shaka.⁵

These early contextualisations of the Europeans at Port Natal did not emerge from a literary vacuum. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, a distinct discourse of Cape colonial writing in English was evident. While this was in a sense part of the broad genre of British-based literature on Africa and Africans which had developed from the late eighteenth century,⁶ it also had specific origins in the early-nineteenth century travel literature which focused increasingly on imperial expansion, following the acquisition of the British Cape Colony in 1795.⁷ Early Cape-based literature, both historical and fictional, had concentrated on what the authors considered to be the essential differences between Europeans and indigenous South Africans.⁸ By the early 1800s, non-Europeans were being depicted as having innate qualities of physical and pathological 'savagery',⁹ and were constantly juxtaposed with representatives of European civilising influences.¹⁰ Early nineteenth-century European accounts of the Cape colony focused on the contrast between black and white, and emphasised the

⁴Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 4 January 1826.

⁵Ibid.

⁶P.D. Curtin, The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action 1780-1850, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1964, p. 243; D. Hamond and A. Jablow, The Africa that Never Was: Four Centuries of British Writing About Africa, New York, Twayne, 1970, pp. 20-23; E.W. Said, Culture and Imperialism, London, Vintage, 1993, pp. 43-4.

⁷M.L. Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, London, Routledge, 1992, pp. 67-9.

⁸M. Wade, White on Black in South Africa: A Study of English Language Inscriptions of Skin Colour, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp. 1-2; A. Brink, The First Life of Adamastor, London, Secker and Warburg, 1993, p. 2.

⁹S.L. Gilman, Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1986, pp. 85-6.

¹⁰M.L. Pratt, 'Scratches on the Face of the Country: or what Mr Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen' in H.L. Gates, ed., "Race", Writing and Difference, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 85-89.

negative traits of indigenous peoples and the positive influence of Europeans in their encounters with these societies.¹¹ The first inclusions of Fynn in Cape writing, as a member of a European expedition to the south east African interior were reflective of these ideas. The juxtaposition of Shaka and individuals like Farewell and Fynn were clear examples of the 'empire against the savages' literary dialectic which was developing in the written discourse of Cape colonial society.¹²

The conservative political ideology of the British Cape colony¹³ was reflected in the government-controlled newspaper, the Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser which was printed from 1800 and was regulated by the British authorities in 1825.¹⁴ The more liberal paper, the South African Commercial Advertiser, printed by George Greig and edited by Thomas Pringle, was started in 1824¹⁵ but was twice closed down for lengthy periods by the Cape government for its support for the liberal rhetoric of missionaries like John Philip.¹⁶ The South African Commercial Advertiser was criticised by the authorities for printing Philip's humanitarian appeals against slavery and in favour of tolerance between different race groups in the Cape colony.¹⁷ The British government at the Cape from the 1820 has been associated with a form of liberalism

¹¹J. Barrow, A Narrative of Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, London, Cadell, 1802, p. 28.

¹²Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, Chapter 7.

¹³J. Peires, 'The British at the Cape 1814-1834' in Elphick and Giliomee, eds., The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-c.1840, pp. 472-4.

¹⁴J.R. Wahl, Thomas Pringle in South Africa 1820-1826, Cape Town, 1970, p. 121.

¹⁵A.M. Lewin Robinson, None Daring to Make Us Afraid: A Study of the English Periodical Literature of the Cape from 1824 to 1834, Cape Town, Balkema, 1962, p. 22.

¹⁶L.H. Meurant, Sixty Years Ago or Reminiscences of the Struggle for the Freedom of the Press in South Africa, Cape Town, 1963 (first publ. Cape Town, 1885), pp. 12-14.

¹⁷Ross, John Philip (1775-1851), pp. 161-2.

that favoured humanitarianism. On closer examination however, it is evident that the government endorsed the conservative racist attitudes present in colonial society while at the same time opposing the institution of slavery. This was reflective of a general trend among colonial administration, which on the one hand considered slavery a social and moral evil and something to be actively discouraged in British colonies,¹⁸ and at the same time endorsed the basic inequalities in colonial society which were based on the servitude of one race to another.¹⁹ As a result of a long association with the African slave-trade, many ideas about Africans in English literature were based closely on notions of slavery.²⁰ Although slavery was, by the 1820s, quite definitely a negatively depicted condition in both politics and literature, the ideas which categorised African slaves as both racially and socially inferior had become an integral part of colonial political and literary discourse.²¹

Nineteenth-century travel accounts were a curious blend of actual experiences and images taken directly from fictional narratives.²² A particularly enduring model for travel writers was Daniel Defoe's hero Robinson Crusoe, and this plot, since its first publication in 1719, had been consistently adopted by travellers in British colonies who saw in Crusoe's created environment, their own perceived situations of isolation and

¹⁸J. Walvin, England. Slaves and Freedom 1776-1838, London, Macmillan, 1986, pp. 123-7.

¹⁹R. Ross, Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1994, pp. 69-74.

²⁰D. Dabydeen, 'Eighteenth Century English Literature on Commerce and Slavery' in D. Dabydeen, ed., The Black Presence in English Literature, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985, pp. 25-6.

²¹P. Brantlinger, 'Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent' in Gates, ed., "Race", Writing and Difference, pp. 185-7; B. Davidson, The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State, London, James Currey, 1992, p. 48.

²²P. Knox-Shaw, The Explorer in English Fiction, London, Macmillan, 1987, pp. 143-4.

alienation in distant lands and amongst unknown indigenous 'savages'.²³ Although Defoe's original eighteenth-century setting, which legitimised black slavery, was outlawed, his writing had set an important precedent in placing Africans in positions where they were dependent on, and subservient to, European 'masters'.²⁴ By the early nineteenth century, depictions of Crusoe were being used to stress the virtues of European imperialism when imposed on aboriginal communities.²⁵ Defoe was also used as a model for representation by nineteenth-century travel writers who copied his literary style in order to conceptualise their narratives in a specific environment - that of the European in a strange land.²⁶

The first published description of Fynn's travels in south-east Africa, which appeared in 1827, must be viewed against the framework of this emerging travel writing genre.²⁷ George Thompson, who edited a volume of material on journeys into the interior, must also be viewed in his specific economic and political context. Thompson was a foundation member of the Commercial Exchange founded in Cape Town in 1822. In 1823 he had helped sponsor Farewell's expedition to Port Natal.²⁸ His aim in publishing was to engender mercantile interest in Port Natal, and for inclusion in his book he selected reports printed in the African Advertiser which portrayed the settlement in a positive light. To this end he reproduced an account by J.S. King which

²³Ibid., pp. 32-6.

²⁴R.B. Kaplan, 'Daniel Defoe's Views on Slavery and Racial Prejudice', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 1970.

²⁵M. Green, Dreams of Adventure: Deeds of Empire, London, Routledge, 1980, pp. 80-81.

²⁶M.L. Pratt, 'Conventions of Representation. Where Discourse and Ideology Meet' in W. van Peer, ed., The Taming of the Text: Explorations in Language, Literature and Culture, London, 1989, pp. 15-18.

²⁷G. Thompson, ed., Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, vols. I and II, Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1968 (1st publ. London, 1827).

²⁸V.S. Forbes, Introduction in Ibid., vol. I, pp. xii-xiii.

had first appeared in the newspaper in January 1826.²⁹ A central individual in King's narrative was Fynn, who was depicted as a person who had 'suffered intensely' from deprivation', had 'undauntedly penetrated forests, passed through savage nations, and ... narrowly escaped from several attempts that have been made on his life'.³⁰ To King, Fynn had to survive not only alien surroundings and dangerous terrain, for example crocodile-infested rivers, but had also to confront a savage ruler in the person of Shaka, whom Thompson described as a 'despotic and cruel monster'.³¹

Thompson's motive in using this extract was essentially a political one as he hoped, by illustrating the courage of Europeans in their isolated and dangerous setting at Port Natal, to persuade the colonial government to protect their interests by means of annexation of the region. The Crusoe-type analogies used by King were particularly suitable for this purpose as they emphasised the isolation and difficulty experienced by Europeans who existed outside of formal colonial political structures. For King, Fynn was an ideal example of a lone explorer in this context as he was an individual who had travelled extensively in the Natal and Cape colony, and had been away for several months establishing a trade route through the Mpondo territory at the time of King's arrival at Port Natal in 1825. Fynn could also be effectively utilised as a civilised counterpart to Shaka, whom King depicted as a 'monster'.³²

A further reason for King's selection of Fynn as the epitome of a European explorer was the fact that he had, through his contact with Shaka, quickly acquired substantial knowledge of indigenous society. King could construct information he obtained from Fynn into a literate account, and in the European view this immediately imbued it with

²⁹Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 4 January 1826.

³⁰Thompson, Travels and Adventures, vol. II, p. 244.

³¹Ibid., p. 248.

³²Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka": A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as "Mfecane" Motor', pp. 50-51.

immense value as source material.³³ Fynn was a unique eye-witness of events in the Port Natal hinterland, hitherto unknown to Europeans, and his experiences could be converted into a literate, and therefore authentic account of the unexplored interior. From the late 1820s, Fynn was, by virtue of his personal contacts with Shaka and Dingane, acquiring a reputation as an authority on Natal. This idea was demonstrated by travellers to the Mzimkhulu who relied increasingly on Fynn for information on the region to the north, and Cape writers like J.C. Chase, who had heard of Fynn's wide knowledge from the survivors of the Cowie and Green expedition,³⁴ wrote to him requesting further information on the interior.³⁵

Thompson's publication set an important precedent in contextualising Fynn as a lone, Crusoe-like European in a savage and alien environment. During the early 1830s, other published accounts followed this trend in the juxtaposition of civilised Europeans and savage indigenous people at Port Natal. The traveller William Owen, for example, emphasised Shaka's firm belief in the superiority of European medicines.³⁶ Kay took this image further and contrasted Shaka's supposed outrages to the behaviour of the English traders whom he viewed as the forerunners of the 'civilisers of Africa'.³⁷ Cape businessmen like Thompson had had economic motives in publishing accounts which stressed the need for a politically and economically stable European presence at Port Natal. This theme was taken up by writers from the eastern Cape who were interested not only in trading along the east coast as far as Port Natal, but also in establishing a permanent British settlement in the region. In 1831, The Grahamstown Journal was established by the eastern Cape landowner, politician and journalist, Robert Godlonton.

³³Pratt, Imperial Eyes, p. 30.

³⁴Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 179-80, Report by J.C. Chase, October 1829.

³⁵Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, vol. I, no. 1: Chase to Fynn, 10 December 1829.

³⁶Owen, Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar, vol. II, p. 221.

³⁷S. Kay, Travels and Researches in Caffraria, London, Mason, 1834, pp. 344-5, 398.

Godlonton was interested in British expansion in the Indian Ocean hinterland, and had a strong personal interest in Port Natal as a potential colony.³⁸ As editor of this newspaper, he printed material by travellers to Natal, which highlighted the economic potential of the region.³⁹ Some of these reports were obtained from individuals like Andrew Smith who had in turn acquired much of his information from Fynn.⁴⁰ Another ivory trader, James Collis, also wrote substantial reports for the Grahamstown Journal based partly on his contact with Fynn.⁴¹ Like earlier writers for the Cape press, Godlonton stressed the differences between European civilisers and indigenous savages. He published accounts written by Fynn which emphasised the 'hostile disposition' of individuals like Dingane which was in direct contrast to Fynn's own 'peaceful intentions'.⁴² In a report to Godlonton for publication in the editorial of the Grahamstown Journal, Fynn also pointed out that Europeans living beyond the Cape borders, such as the missionary William Boyce at Buntingville in the Mpondo territory, were isolated and beyond the reach of 'civilisation'.⁴³ Fynn's own juxtaposition of the isolated European with the dangerous black leader was interpreted by Godlonton as an example of the way in which the traders at Port Natal were 'placed (like Robinson Crusoe) out of reach of humanity and its laws'.⁴⁴ While Thompson's publication of King's descriptions had hinted at the precarious position of Fynn and his companions, Godlonton associated him directly with Defoe's hero, a comparison which immediately

³⁸ Le Cordeur, The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism, pp. 4-5.

³⁹ The Grahamstown Journal, 30 March 1832; 27 July 1832; 22 November 1832.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15 June 1832; 28 June 1832; 24 August 1832; 28 September 1832.

⁴¹ The Grahamstown Journal, 30 March 1832; 27 July 1832; 22 November 1832.

⁴² The Grahamstown Journal, 12 August 1831: Report from H. Fynn, Pondoland; 21 September 1832: Editorial.

⁴³ The Grahamstown Journal, 29 November 1832: Letter from H. Fynn, September 1832.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 August 1832.

suggested to the settler readers of the Grahamstown Journal that Fynn was isolated from civilised society and in imminent peril from unpredictable savages.

Godlonton was not alone in his realisation that information on the Europeans' isolated position at Port Natal could be used to reinforce arguments in favour of formal annexation of the region. Fynn's trading partner, Nathaniel Isaacs, who had left Port Natal in 1831, did not concern himself with the local press but instead wrote directly to the Cape Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, from his new trading base on St Helena, pointing out that British control at Port Natal was essential in order to protect British trade from the 'enterprising spirit' of American whalers off the east coast. Isaacs added that 'barbarous and wanton acts of cruelty' by leaders like Shaka and Dingane had resulted in the local inhabitants at Port Natal being only too pleased to welcome the 'humanity and benevolence' of the white traders as the forerunners of European rule.⁴⁵ In an attempt to gain further support, Isaacs also wrote to Fynn, suggesting that he make haste to publish all his knowledge in book form and to 'make the Zulus as bloodthirsty as you can', ostensibly to 'make the work interesting'.⁴⁶ It was evident however, from his correspondence to Cole, that Isaacs intended to use Fynn's material as further argument for the necessity of British rule at Port Natal.

Although Fynn did make some attempts to organise his written notes during the period from 1832 to 1834,⁴⁷ he was unable to prepare these manuscripts for publication at this time, possibly as a result of his unsettled lifestyle during these years. His writing was restricted to his reports to The Grahamstown Journal, which he continued until he left his Mzimkhulu umuzi in 1834. Like his earlier reports to Godlonton's paper, these narratives were consistently negative in their portrayal of Dingane, whom he described

⁴⁵Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, p. 230, Isaacs to Cole, December 1832.

⁴⁶Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, vol. I, no. 2: Isaacs to Fynn, December 1832.

⁴⁷K.C.A.L., Fynn Family Papers, File no. 30104, item no. 4, Notes dictated to James Stuart by H. Fynn, junior, 1906.

as distinctly hostile to the Europeans.⁴⁸ From Fynn's correspondence, Godlonton was able to piece together his own account of Port Natal during the 1820s and include it in his 1835 Introductory Remarks, a publication which was essentially an extensive preface to his Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes which appeared the following year.⁴⁹ This work was essentially an account of the border conflict which started in December 1834 and was a heated argument in favour of a less conciliatory and harsher colonial policy towards indigenous people. Godlonton emphasised the need for British rule over anarchical pre-colonial societies, and used the Natal region as an example of a territory which held out 'a fair prospect of success for the formation of a new settlement'.⁵⁰ Like Thompson, Godlonton stressed the 'hazardous' nature of Farewell's expedition in an unexplored territory inhabited by natives of a violent disposition, and contrasted Farewell's civilised behaviour with Shaka's capricious savagery.⁵¹

For Godlonton however, Fynn was not a particular example of European virtue. His usefulness lay instead in his value as a source and a collector of information. Though he never acknowledged Fynn as a source, Godlonton made extensive use of Fynn's reports to the Grahamstown Journal, and, in his writing on Port Natal, he used these accounts to demonstrate Farewell's rights to land in Shaka's territory and to stress the necessity for a European presence in Natal.⁵²

Nathaniel Isaacs, Fynn's former trading partner at Port Natal, had, from the early 1830s, tried to persuade Fynn to publish his own reminiscences. These attempts had been unsuccessful and Isaacs then decided to publish his own book, Travels and

⁴⁸The Grahamstown Journal, 17 June 1834; 7 August 1834.

⁴⁹R. Godlonton, A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Cape Town, Struik, 1965 (1st publ. as Introductory Remarks, Grahamstown, 1835 and A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, Grahamstown, 1836.).

⁵⁰Godlonton, Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, p. 165.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

Adventures in Eastern Africa, which appeared in 1836, and was a direct attempt to persuade the British government to formally annex Natal.⁵³ To this end, Isaacs' depiction of Shaka was deliberately negative and he blamed him for the annihilation of the 'surrounding tribes' in the region, thus making British rule imperative in order to 'rescue' the inhabitants and restore law and order.⁵⁴ In the wider literary and historical context of an emerging European discourse on Africans as different and inherently savage,⁵⁵ Isaacs' work was the most detailed account to date of a South African example of descriptions of both groups and individuals as representatives of these negative qualities.⁵⁶ The 'Zulu' as portrayed by Isaacs provided a basis for a whole body of literature,⁵⁷ in which these people were portrayed as the instigators of the 'mfecane' conflicts.⁵⁸ Isaacs' metaphoric images of Shaka as a supreme example of a bloodthirsty African despot were used to shape a narrative supposedly written by an eye-witness of Shaka's actions and as such, a reliable source on the events in Natal.⁵⁹ This use of autobiographical narrative form was an instance of a growing trend in nineteenth century historical literature, where the style of such a text was effectively utilised to convince the reader of its authenticity as historical evidence.⁶⁰

⁵³Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, vol. I, no. 13: Isaacs to Fynn, 20 June 1836.

⁵⁴Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, vol. I, pp. 95-6.

⁵⁵P. Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 19-25.

⁵⁶D. Wylie, 'Autobiography as Alibi: History and Projection in Nathaniel Isaacs' Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa (1836), Current Writing, vol. 3 (1991), pp. 77-8.

⁵⁷R. Martin, 'British Images of the Zulu, c. 1820-1879', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1982, pp. 17-18, 60-64.

⁵⁸J. Wright, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane', Canadian Journal of African Studies, vol. 23, no. 2 (1989), pp. 275-6.

⁵⁹D. Wylie, 'Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth', History in Africa, vol. 19 (1992), pp. 411-414.

⁶⁰L. Gossman, Between History and Literature, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1990, pp. 390-398.

In contrast to Godlonton, Isaacs, who had lived at Port Natal from 1825 to 1831, did not need to draw on Fynn for source material. For Isaacs, the value of Fynn was his personality, which was in direct opposition to the personality of Shaka. This good-versus-evil imagery had been present in colonial-based literature since the publication of Robinson Crusoe,⁶¹ and during the nineteenth century it acquired a specifically African context.⁶² It was Isaacs who first gave it a Natal-focused setting in the careful juxtaposition of Fynn and Shaka. This depiction of Fynn as a Crusoe-like figure was taken even further in Isaacs' narrative where he was described as the person who had rescued numbers of refugees from Shaka's war-mongering. According to Isaacs, these people were so grateful to Fynn that they adopted him as their 'chief', in which role he replaced their own leaders⁶³. This subjection of the inhabitants at Port Natal to Fynn's protection was reminiscent of the ideological justification for colonial rule which was contained in the image of Crusoe's domestication of 'Friday' in particular and savages in general.⁶⁴ Another instance of Fynn's analogy with Crusoe was Isaacs' reference to the process of assimilation into indigenous society. Isaacs recalled that at the time of his arrival at Port Natal in October 1825, Fynn had become so unkempt that he was hardly recognisable as a European.⁶⁵

Isaacs' text had widespread influence over writers during the nineteenth century, and his images of both Shaka and Fynn provided examples of the possibility for future depictions of these individuals. For white writers on Natal, Isaacs' juxtaposition of Shaka and Fynn as Manichean opposites were images that they could utilise in their own narratives, and these ideas remained dominant in historical and literary accounts

⁶¹P. Brantlinger, Crusoe's Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America, New York, Routledge, 1990, p. 1.

⁶²A.R. JanMahomed, Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa, London, University of Massachusetts Press, 1983, pp. 1-3.

⁶³Isaacs, Travels and Adventures, pp. 30-31; 73.

⁶⁴D. Loxley, Problematic Shores: The Literature of Islands, London, Macmillan, 1990, p. 6.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 95.

for many decades after the publication of Travels and Adventures.⁶⁶

By the mid-1830s, European interest in Natal had become considerably diversified and was no longer restricted to merchant-linked needs. While politically motivated authors like Godlonton and Isaacs were anxious to obtain annexation for economic and political purposes, there was also an increasing missionary interest in the interior. Given the lack of information on Natal, missionaries had, like prospective travellers to Natal, consulted Fynn since the early 1830s.⁶⁷ A.F. Gardiner who travelled to Natal in 1835, had to rely on the supposed experts on the region. By 1834, through the medium of the Grahamstown Journal, Fynn had been depicted as an individual with specific knowledge of indigenous society at Port Natal, and in particular on Dingane's attitude towards the traders.⁶⁸ Gardiner consulted Fynn for details on Dingane's relations with Europeans and on the possibility of setting up a mission at Port Natal.⁶⁹ As a missionary, Gardiner had different motives from writers with economic interests, like Godlonton and Isaacs, and the image of Fynn which appeared in his book focused on him as a person who had 'rescued' a number of 'refugees'. For Gardiner, this provided valuable evidence that missionary work was essential for the future well-being of indigenous people at Port Natal.⁷⁰

Gardiner's ideas were part of a wider trend in British expansionist discourse from the 1800s. Motivated by humanitarian notions of aboriginal protection, individuals like

⁶⁶D. Wylie, 'Language and Assassination: Cultural Negations in White Writers' Portrayal of Shaka and the Zulu', in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 85-86.

⁶⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 3: Philips to Fynn, September 1833; no. 4: Jarvis to Fynn, October 1833.

⁶⁸See for example, The Grahamstown Journal, 7 August 1834, Letter from Fynn dated 27 June 1834.

⁶⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 1, no. 7: Campbell to Fynn, 29 December 1834.

⁷⁰A.F. Gardiner, Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country in South Africa, Cape Town, Struik, 1966 (1st publ. London, 1836), pp. 139, 274.

Bannister argued for annexation by propagating the idea that the indigenous inhabitants of the Natal interior were in need of rescue from barbaric lifestyles and despotic rule.⁷¹ C.H. Eden argued that it was impossible for missionaries to carry out their essential work of conversion in the presence of anti-Christian African leaders like Dingane, and that British rule was imperative for this valuable task.⁷² Missionaries like the Wesleyans William Boyce and William Shaw, who published accounts of early Natal, had similar motives to political advocates of annexation, and, like Godlonton and Isaacs, tended to emphasise Fynn's role as a civiliser of indigenous societies.⁷³

By the early 1840s, calls for the annexation of Natal were being expressed on a wide literary front. Traders like Isaacs continued to argue for the benefits of British political control for the economic potential of Port Natal.⁷⁴ At the same time the impassioned humanitarian discourse of the missionaries had been adopted by advocates of colonial rule who pointed out that the presence of the Voortrekkers in Natal indicated the possibility of enslavement of the indigenous population,⁷⁵ an evil which was, by 1840, considered absolutely unacceptable in British territories overseas.⁷⁶ Literary publications like the Colonial Magazine, published from 1840, produced a colonial-focused discourse on Africa, in which British control was seen as the inevitable forerunner of civilisation, Christianity and peaceful rule which would automatically

⁷¹S. Bannister, British Colonisation and Coloured Tribes, London, Bell, 1938 (1st publ. London, 1838), pp. 214-218.

⁷²C.H. Eden, An Inherited Task: Or Early Mission Life in Southern Africa, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1874 (1st publ., London, 1836), p. 72.

⁷³W. Boyce, Notes on South African Affairs From 1834 to 1838, Grahamstown, Aldum and Harvey, 1838, pp. 173-4; Shaw, Memorials of South Africa, pp. 44-5.

⁷⁴Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 26: Isaacs to Fynn, 7 September 1840.

⁷⁵The Colonial Magazine, vol. 4 (January-April 1841), p. 8.

⁷⁶Walvin, England, Slaves and Freedom, pp. 123-7.

replace indigenous indolence, violence and anarchy.⁷⁷ This publication also stressed the point that literate knowledge of the Natal region had commenced with the arrival of whites.⁷⁸ This idea was by no means new and had been in circulation in published accounts since the late 1820s, but accounts by people like Godlonton and Isaacs in the 1830s had reinforced the image that Europeans like Fynn had unique access to knowledge of the pre-colonial Natal communities. By the time of the formal annexation of Natal in the mid-1840s, Fynn had been firmly established in the literature of the region not only as the individual who represented European 'civilisation' but also as a reliable source of literate information on the region's past and present.

J.C. Chase was, like Robert Godlonton, an eastern Cape landowner with vested interests in a British settlement in Natal.⁷⁹ He had been in contact with Fynn from the late 1820s, when he had written to him asking for further information on the Natal interior.⁸⁰ Chase's interest in the region had been roused by his acquisition of written manuscripts from a surviving member of the Cowie-Green expedition to Delagoa Bay in 1829.⁸¹ Chase continued to collect material from Fynn and clearly regarded him as a crucial source on Natal during Shaka's reign⁸². By the early 1840s, Chase had realised that this collected knowledge was potentially valuable in arguing for British annexation, and in 1843 he published his collected accounts as The Natal Papers.⁸³

⁷⁷The Colonial Magazine, vol. I (January-April 1840), pp. 446-7.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 446.

⁷⁹P.R. Kirby, 'John Centlivres Chase, Geographer and Cartographer', Africana Notes and News, vol. 18, no. 4 (December 1968), pp. 190-193.

⁸⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file I, no. 1: Chase to Fynn, 17 November 1829.

⁸¹Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. II, pp. 179-184, Report by J.C. Chase, October 1829.

⁸²Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, vol. I, no. 6: Chase to Fynn, 14 November 1834.

⁸³J.C. Chase, The Natal Papers: A Reprint of all Notices and Public Documents Concerned with That Territory, Cape Town, Struik, 1968 (1st publ. London, 1843).

Included in this publication was a lengthy description of Shaka, originally obtained from Fynn through Major Charters, who had led the British occupation of Port Natal in 1838. This piece of Chase's narrative depicted Shaka in the most negative terms, portraying him as a 'South African Attila' who had been responsible for the death of one million people.⁸⁴ Unlike Isaacs, however, he did not depict Fynn as a counterpoint to Shaka. Chase viewed Fynn in a similar way to Godlonton and he pointed out Fynn's dependability as a source on the 'history of the tribes' and the position of these people as fugitives in a wasteland as a result of Shaka's atrocities.⁸⁵ For Chase, Fynn's evidence of the early traders' actions in providing patronage for these people under their collective 'chieftainship' was written (and therefore indisputable) proof that the communities in Natal were in urgent need of the benefits offered by British rule.⁸⁶

By 1843, when Chase's Natal Papers was published, the British authorities had taken steps to secure the official annexation of Natal, and Henry Cloete, a Cape advocate, was appointed as Special Commissioner to Natal.⁸⁷ Cloete adopted the arguments on European settlement at Port Natal already put forward by Isaacs and Chase: that the members of Farewell's trading party had become 'chiefs' over what were essentially refugees and this 'state of vassalage' was effectively still in place in the 1840s, needing only official recognition in a colonial structure.⁸⁸ Cloete justified the idea of a European administration over indigenous people by pointing out that the 'aboriginal natives' had, since the arrival of Farewell, been 'under the protection of Fynn' and other Europeans. These communities had become dependent on benign Europeans, of whom Fynn was a prominent example, his humane behaviour being in stark contrast to that of Zulu rulers like Shaka or Dingane. For Cloete, as for Isaacs, Fynn was the epitome of a

⁸⁴Chase, The Natal Papers, p. 20.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁷Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁸Letter from Cloete to Montagu, 10 November 1843, quoted in Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. II, p. 311.

civilised presence at Port Natal, and was in all respects the opposite of Shaka, who represented the qualities of savagery and anarchy.⁸⁹ Although Cloete's arguments for a European-dominated administrative structure in colonial Natal were reminiscent of the earlier juxtapositions of Fynn as civiliser and Shaka as savage, it is clear that the dominant image of Fynn from the 1840s was of a literate recorder. Fynn's value, for writers like Chase and Cloete lay not in the fact that he represented a lone, Crusoe-like European in an alien and hostile environment, but rather that he provided reliable evidence on the chaotic state of south-east Africa at the time of European arrival.

Prior to the 1850s, the Natal past was reconstructed by authors writing from a Cape colonial perspective. With the exception of a few individuals like King, Isaacs and Gardiner, they wrote without experience of the Natal region. These early writers were largely motivated by commercial concerns, and used Fynn as an example of a lone European requiring official support for his trading enterprises. From the 1850s however, the historiography of the Natal region changed significantly in that many of its proponents were permanent residents within the newly created Colony of Natal and their motives in publishing histories were quite different from those of the absentee merchants of the 1830s and 1840s. Historians in colonial Natal were not aiming to persuade the British government to annex a new territory but rather to justify their own presence as settlers in the region. As part of this presence, they also had to argue for the necessity of subjugating indigenous communities to European rule.⁹⁰ The depiction of African societies as different, inherently savage and therefore inferior became increasingly important for the effectiveness of this settler-controlled historiography in justifying their own domination.⁹¹

⁸⁹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Letters, 1835-1860, vol. I, Cloete to Secretary of State for Colonies, 3 April 1846.

⁹⁰H.K. Bhabha, 'Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism' in F.Barker, et.al. eds., The Politics of Theory, Colchester, Essex University Press, 1983, p. 195.

⁹¹A.R. JanMahomed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonial Literature' in Gates, ed., "Race", Writing and Difference, pp. 83-6.

In the absence of any other written material, Natal historians of the mid-nineteenth century had to rely on existing texts for source material. Publications like Isaacs' and Chase's books became crucial accounts for these colonial writers as they were the detailed published narratives of the Natal past. The writers of the 1850s were in a strong position to circulate their reproductions of earlier ideas as the reading public, both in Britain and in the colonies, was expanding considerably during the decades after 1850.⁹² The metropolitan readership was also acquiring a specific sense of its own English past, and from contemporary historical texts like Carlyle's French Revolution and Macaulay's History of England they absorbed ideas about the moral correctness of British political development,⁹³ including the legitimacy of imperial expansion overseas.⁹⁴ European settlers in the colonies were particularly receptive to these notions of the past as they provided a sense of justification for their own presence as a morally superior ruling class, imbued with the responsibility of governing native peoples.⁹⁵

In 1851, the Natal Society was established by a small group of English-speaking colonists to encourage literary and historical work.⁹⁶ Within a year, Natal politicians like Donald Moodie were presenting lectures which accorded with the ideas of English historians, for example, with Macaulay's notion of political 'liberty' in Britain with its origins in the revolution of 1688. Moodie connected this broadly defined concept of 'liberty' to the undoubted benefits of English governance for the inhabitants of Port Natal. In contrast to the pre-1824 Dutch traders who had simply visited the region,

⁹²J. Walvin, Victorian Values, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1987, pp. 81-4.

⁹³J.W. Burrow, 'A Sense of the Past' in L. Lerner, ed., The Victorians, London, 1978, pp. 37-40.

⁹⁴J.W. Burrow, A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 11-13.

⁹⁵Brantlinger, 'Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent' in Gates, ed., "Race", Writing and Difference, p. 197.

⁹⁶Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, p. 139.

Farewell's party, for Moodie, marked the onset of a civilised influence in Natal.⁹⁷

Although this type of historical narrative viewed the white settlement in Natal in the broadest terms, other writers put forward more detailed accounts of the historical provenance of the European presence. Henry Cloete, in a series of lectures to the Natal Society, argued that although Natal was settled by English traders and Voortrekker immigrants, 'civilised' rule did not commence until the official British annexation in 1843.⁹⁸ A central theme for mid-nineteenth century Natal historians was Shaka's 'devastation' of the region, an idea originally developed by Isaacs and later Chase. This supposed depopulation process was appropriated by historians who wrote of Natal as a colonial territory as it provided the perfect justification for permanent white settlement in what was perceived of as a virtually uninhabited space.⁹⁹

Charles Barter, who lived and travelled in Natal in the early 1850s, and was later a member of the Natal Legislative Council,¹⁰⁰ was one of the first settlers in the colony to appropriate the ideas developed since the 1830s. He clearly considered Isaacs' published account to be reliable and he did not see the necessity of using Fynn's supposed eye-witness material as Chase had done. He reiterated almost verbatim Isaacs' point that Shaka had been the individual responsible for the wholesale devastation of the region prior to European arrival. Barter noted that when the traders came to Port Natal in 1824, 'they found the whole country in the hands of the Zulus,

⁹⁷D. Moodie, Lecture on the Early Visits of Europeans to Natal, A.D. 1685-1690, Pietermaritzburg, Natal Society, 1852, pp. 1-4.

⁹⁸H. Cloete, Five Lectures on the Emigration of the Dutch Farmers from the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope and their Settlement in the District of Natal, Pretoria, State Library, 1970 (1st publ. Cape Town, 1856), pp. 42-3.

⁹⁹Wright, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane', pp. 276-277.

¹⁰⁰W.R. Guest, 'Colonists, Confederation and Constitutional Change', in Duminy and Guest, eds, Natal and Zululand, p. 149.

and scarcely a vestige remaining of the ancient inhabitants'.¹⁰¹ Barter saw no need, as Isaacs and Cloete had done, to utilise Fynn as a particular representative of civilisation or humanity as these qualities were constituted in Europeans. Instead, he singled out Farewell and King as the leaders of the trading parties who were responsible for bringing 'civilisation' to Natal.¹⁰²

This was primarily because, by the early 1850s, the images that Isaacs had invoked of Fynn, particularly the notion of his 'going native', were unacceptable to colonial society.¹⁰³ This abhorrence was not unique to colonial perceptions of the South African context, but was part of a broader trend in European writing on Africa.¹⁰⁴ Travellers who described the process of European assimilation into indigenous African society were usually eccentric exceptions rather than participants in a dominant discourse.¹⁰⁵ Writers like W. Bleek, who mentioned Fynn's assimilation to the indigenous lifestyle, pointed out that even if he did live 'completely as a native', this was 'probably more from necessity than choice'.¹⁰⁶ A possible reason for this was that Fynn himself had returned to Natal in 1852 as a colonial official, and from this time he was officially recognised as a member of colonial society, fit to be appointed as a responsible member of the Natal administrative structure.¹⁰⁷ From the 1840s, Fynn's significance was that of an informant on the indigenous people in Natal, and his earlier image as an isolated European modelled on the fictional Robinson Crusoe was no longer apt for writers on the provenance of Europeans in colonial Natal. Natal was, by the 1850s, no

¹⁰¹C. Barter, The Dorp and the Veld, London, William S. Orr, 1852, p. 190.

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 190-191.

¹⁰³D. Spurr, The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration, Durham, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 84.

¹⁰⁴Street, The Savage in Literature, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵Knox-Shaw, The Explorer in English Fiction, p. 146.

¹⁰⁶W.H.I. Bleek, The Natal Diaries of W.H.I. Bleek 1855-1856, ed. O.H. Spohr, Cape Town, Balkema, 1965, pp. 91-2.

¹⁰⁷See Chapter 3 above.

longer an unexplored territory inhabited by hostile savages and isolated Europeans. Fynn's value to the Natal government lay in his ability to provide accurate information on the indigenous communities which were administered by Europeans. His role as mediator between these two levels in colonial society was illustrated by his appointment as interpreter to the 1852 commission.¹⁰⁸

The 1852 commission aimed to investigate the geographical origins of African communities in the Natal region with the wider aim of establishing guidelines for the 'future government of the native tribes'.¹⁰⁹ Despite Fynn's reputation by the 1850s as an authority on indigenous communities, in Natal, Lieutenant Governor Pine did not acknowledge him as a source of evidence for these enquiries and did not appoint him to the commission. It is difficult to establish the reasons for Pine's lack of public recognition, though with hindsight it is possible to view this in the political framework of the 1850s when Fynn was engaged in a dispute with the Natal government over his claim to land at Port Natal. In 1843, at the time of the British annexation of the colony, Fynn had written to the Cape government requesting a grant of land at Natal on the basis that he had originally been given land by Shaka in 1824.¹¹⁰ The 1852 commission, which aimed to establish specific land rights in the region, serves to explain Pine's reluctance to recognise Fynn's earlier claim and his exclusion of him from the official enquiries.

Although Fynn was not a direct participant in the writing of the commission's final report, it was clear that he had indirectly influenced the contents of this document. Chase's Natal Papers had been based on material he had obtained from Fynn, and the historical narrative which prefaced the report was very similar in its wording, referring to the depopulation of the region in terms of the 'desolating scourge' caused by Shaka's

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 28 September 1852.

¹⁰⁹Proceedings and Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafirs in the District of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1853, p. 2.

¹¹⁰Natal Archives, CSO, vol. 120, no. 65: Fynn to Napier, 10 August 1843.

'immense slaughter'.¹¹¹ Fynn submitted his own evidence to the commission, though this was not included in the main report.¹¹² This material was later published in the Natal Government Gazette,¹¹³ and in the local newspaper, The Natal Mercury, the following year.¹¹⁴ Fynn's recognition by the Natal newspaper was similar to that which he had enjoyed two decades earlier in the Grahamstown Journal. The political circumstances were also similar in that the Mercury, under the editorship of George Robinson, was, like Godlonton's paper, reflective of settler opinion.¹¹⁵ Although essentially pro-government and in favour of the setting up of Pine's commission - in contrast to the editor of the Natal Witness, David Buchanan, who considered the establishment of the commission an instance of Pine's 'mental imbecility'.¹¹⁶ Robinson considered that Fynn's value as a source on indigenous communities had been overlooked by the Natal government.¹¹⁷

Robinson pointed out that Fynn's evidence, as printed in full in his paper, would open interesting lines of enquiry for both 'ethnologists' and politicians.¹¹⁸ 'Ethnology' was, at this time, a relatively new concept but was becoming increasingly important as a scientific term for what was effectively racial discrimination against African peoples.¹¹⁹

¹¹¹Proceedings and Report, p. 6.

¹¹²Natal Archives, SNA, vols. 2/1/1-2/1/3.

¹¹³Natal Government Gazette, no. 220 of 22 February 1853; no. 221 of 1 March 1853; no. 222 of 8 March 1853.

¹¹⁴The Natal Mercury, 14 April 1853; 21 April 1853; 28 April 1853; 5 May 1853; 12 May 1853.

¹¹⁵T. Wilks, For the Love of Natal: The Life and Times of the Natal Mercury, 1852-1977, Pinetown, Robinson and Hewitt, 1977, pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁶The Natal Witness, 1 October 1852; 22 October 1852; 23 November 1852.

¹¹⁷The Natal Mercury, 14 April 1853.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 5 May 1853.

¹¹⁹J and J. Comaroff, Ethnography and the Historical Imagination, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 181-184.

For Robinson, Fynn was a crucial source on the history, politics and customs of African society in Natal as he had 'a long personal involvement with the District of Natal' and thus 'intimate knowledge of the shifting political circumstances'.¹²⁰ As had been the case with the Grahamstown Journal, Fynn was, for the Mercury's editor, a crucial source on indigenous issues owing to what the editor perceived as an understanding of these communities.¹²¹ Through the Mercury editorials, Robinson succeeded in reinforcing the ideas generated by Godlonton and Chase, that Fynn's central role in the Natal past was that of a literate and accurate recorder of native history and custom.

Throughout his later Natal career in the 1850s, Fynn retained a reputation in colonial circles as an 'authority' on Africans. This image was particularly reflected in the press as represented by the Natal Mercury. In 1857, Fynn was sent by Shepstone to visit King Mpande in order to ascertain the Zulu king's policy towards Natal.¹²² For Robinson, this was another instance of Fynn's vital role as an interlocuter between Europeans and Africans in Natal, and in his paper he stressed Fynn's role as negotiator with the inherently savage and unpredictable Zulu population across the Thukela. Fynn was portrayed as the individual who had succeeded in maintaining peace between Natal and Zululand.¹²³ Not all Natal colonists shared Robinson's opinion, and the Mercury also published letters from individuals who disapproved of Fynn's expedition to the Zulu territory, pointing out that Fynn had only succeeded in demonstrating Natal's 'fear and weakness' to the Zulu leadership.¹²⁴ Buchanan, as editor of the Witness, did not even acknowledge Fynn's role in the negotiations with Mpande and Cetshwayo, and made derisive comments about the Natal government's

¹²⁰The Natal Mercury, 12 May 1853.

¹²¹The Natal Mercury, 9 August 1854; 10 October 1855.

¹²²See Chapter 3 above.

¹²³The Natal Mercury, 3 July 1857.

¹²⁴The Natal Mercury, 27 June 1857; 4 July 1857.

inability to influence either leader.¹²⁵ Thus, while Fynn was depicted by Robinson as a negotiator between European and African governments, this was not indicative of the general public attitude towards him. By omitting any mention of Fynn, Buchanan was downplaying Fynn's role in Natal politics and associating him with the Natal government, which the Witness editor vehemently opposed.¹²⁶

It was clear however, that Fynn was regarded in some circles as an authority on Africans. His perceived knowledge was of particular interest to missionaries who were anxious to gain access to Fynn's supposed expertise in order that they might be familiar with 'native custom' and thus better understand their prospective converts.¹²⁷ The number of missionaries in the Natal region increased rapidly during the 1850s, due in part to a growing anxiety to carry out conversions as the basis for the civilising of African peoples. Various missionary societies, and in particular Scandinavians, established centres in the region from the late 1840s.¹²⁸ In 1850, Bishop Gray, the Anglican Bishop of Cape Town, undertook a journey to Natal. Like Gardiner in the 1830s, Gray asked Fynn for information on the Natal interior, and was particularly concerned with the region as a possible sphere of Anglican influence.¹²⁹ In the publication that followed his journey to Natal, Bishop Gray adopted the idea propagated by Isaacs and Chase that Fynn was a 'chief' who had 'saved the lives of many refugees'.¹³⁰ For Gray, as for the earlier advocates of religious conversion of

¹²⁵The Natal Witness, 17 July 1857; 24 July 1857; 28 August 1857.

¹²⁶Wilks, For the Love of Natal, p. 8.

¹²⁷Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, vol. 3, no. 219: Lindley to Fynn, 27 October 1855.

¹²⁸A.H. Winquist, Scandinavians and South Africa: Their Impact on Cultural, Social and Economic Development Before 1900, Cape Town, Balkema, 1978, pp. 127-8.

¹²⁹Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 2, no. 119: Gray to Fynn, 26 March 1850; no. 122: Gray to Fynn, 27 May 1850.

¹³⁰R. Gray, Bishop of Cape Town's Visitation Journal 1850, Cape Town, Struik, 1964 (1st publ. London, 1850), pp. 88-102.

indigenous society, European control and settlement was an essential forerunner for church work. In this context, Fynn fulfilled a dual role for missionaries in that he provided not only valuable first-hand information of the indigenous societies who represented prospective converts, but also set a precedent as a European agent who initiated the work of subjugating these people to white rule, an essential step in the process of Christianising and thereby civilising the African communities in Natal.

Bishop Gray was sufficiently impressed with the settled state of colonial Natal to initiate the official presence of the Anglican Church, and his trip to Natal resulted in the Anglican Church appointing John William Colenso as Natal's first bishop in 1853.¹³¹ During an exploratory visit to Natal, Colenso, like Gray, sanctioned the idea of European control in the region and he initially accepted Shepstone's system of white administration of African communities.¹³² Colenso however, was greatly concerned with the importance of effective communication between settlers and Africans in Natal, and he noted that Fynn, as an official was as 'well acquainted with the natives' as Shepstone.¹³³ For Colenso, Fynn's value lay in his knowledge of indigenous language and custom, but he was particularly impressed by what he saw as Fynn's expertise on the pre-Shakan and Shakan period at Port Natal, and he borrowed written notes from Fynn in order to reconstruct his own account of these events.¹³⁴ Although both Godlonton and Chase had pieced together various items of information from Fynn on the Natal past, the account which appeared in Colenso's book Ten Weeks in Natal was the most comprehensive. It included a graphic and detailed description of the way in which 'the continual ravages of the great Zulu chief Chaka (had) utterly devastated and

¹³¹J. Guy, The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso. 1814-1883, Johannesburg, 1984, pp. 34-5.

¹³²*Ibid.*, pp. 47-8.

¹³³ Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, p. 216.

¹³⁴Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, file 6, no. 60: Colenso to Fynn junior, 23 March 1880.

depopulated' the region.¹³⁵

For Colenso, as for other Natal-based writers, Fynn's importance lay in the fact that he had been present during Shaka's reign and was thus a unique eye witness to 'the horror of those times'.¹³⁶ Also included in Colenso's book were supposed eye-witness accounts by Fynn of the death and burial of Shaka's mother Nandi in 1827. This narrative Colenso described as being an accurate report by an individual who had been present at the scene.¹³⁷ Colenso included Fynn's accounts of the Shakan period in his book Izindatyana zaBantu Kanye Nezindaba zas' eNatal, which was published in 1856.¹³⁸ This publication was the first history of Shakan and pre-Shakan Natal in the Zulu language, and the fact that Colenso based the narrative on Fynn's material indicated that he regarded Fynn, as a literate European, to be a valuable source on African history.¹³⁹

Although Fynn's image as a unique source was a dominant one in mid-nineteenth century histories of Natal, not all writers chose to elaborate on this idea. The Natal historians who began writing in the late 1850s selected images which would contribute towards their motives in justifying European land settlement in Natal. These points had already been stressed by authors like Isaacs and Godlonton from outside Natal and by settlers like Barter within the colony. There were thus, from the mid-1850s, a number of texts to draw on as a basis for this particular conceptualisation of Fynn and the European traders. W.C. Holden, who emigrated to Natal in 1850 and was later a resident magistrate, published his History of the Colony of Natal in 1855.

¹³⁵ Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, pp. ix-x.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 225-7.

¹³⁸ J.W. Colenso, Izindatyana zaBantu Kanye Nezindaba zas'eNatal, Pietermaritzburg, Bishopstowe Press, 1856, Section 12-24.

¹³⁹ M.M. Fuze, The Black People and Whence they Came (tr. by H. Lugg, ed. A.T. Cope), Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1979, p. 169.

His aim was to encourage European immigration into Natal.¹⁴⁰ His image of Fynn was in line with this motive and was a reiteration of Isaacs' notion that Fynn had adopted destitute African refugees at Port Natal and had then set himself up as a benevolent chief over these people. This was similar to Barter's point that the Europeans had provided guardianship over indigeneous societies through their civilised presence in the region. For Holden, as for Isaacs and Barter, Fynn played a central role as an individual responsible for setting a precedent as a European 'chief' who could administer African communities. This relationship between Europeans and Africans was reflected in the colonial structure which provided a suitable social and political environment for white immigration.¹⁴¹

While Holden had been concerned with attracting European immigrants to Natal, a trend which had been instigated by the Byrne emigration scheme of 1849, the colonial government intensified its attempts to encourage immigration, following Natal's acquisition of Crown Colony status in 1856.¹⁴² A second publication with a similar aim appeared in 1857, written by an employee of the Immigration Board, J.S. Shooter.¹⁴³ Shooter reiterated Holden's idea, originally conceptualised by Isaacs, of the civilising influence which had been brought to Natal under the 'chieftainship' of the English.¹⁴⁴ To illustrate his argument, Shooter drew on the earlier imagery of Fynn, which had originated in J.S. King's account, where he was depicted in a Crusoe-like context as a lone European 'in daily terror of being destroyed by wild animals or massacred by savage natives'.¹⁴⁵ This use of the juxtaposition of Fynn with the savages was an

¹⁴⁰Smith, The Changing Past, p. 22.

¹⁴¹W.C. Holden, History of the Colony of Natal, Cape Town, Struik, 1963 (1st publ. London, 1855), p. 60.

¹⁴²Natal Government Gazette, 11 November 1856.

¹⁴³J.S. Shooter, The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country, New York, 1969 (1st publ. London, 1857).

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 249-51.

interesting development in the narratives of the later 1850s, as this imagery had been largely dropped in the literature of colonial Natal. More important for the advocates of European settlement in the region was Fynn's image as a 'great chief' who had succeeded in domesticating the 'savages' to the extent that Port Natal was a suitable place for European rule, having been made safe for a whole community of settlers through an ongoing process of domination of indigenous society.¹⁴⁶

The conceptualisation of a lone European being at the mercy of savage and unpredictable natives was still a dominant image in fictional portrayals of Europeans in unknown and unexplored lands.¹⁴⁷ During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Robinson Crusoe theme was adapted by a number of English authors, and became an influential fictional genre, increasingly utilised as a fictional setting for the imperialism of the later nineteenth century.¹⁴⁸ A notable exception to this trend in the context of writing on Natal was Charles Maclean's account of the humanitarian treatment he received at the hands of the Zulu despite the fact that he was, like Crusoe, castaway in 'strange lands' and amongst 'wild people'.¹⁴⁹ Maclean, as 'John Ross' had been a young employee of J.S. King and had lived at Port Natal from 1825 to 1828. His narrative on the wreck of King's vessel the Mary had appeared in the British periodical The Nautical Magazine in 1853 and 1854, some twenty-five years after he left Port Natal.¹⁵⁰ As a writer based outside of the Natal colonial literary context, Maclean's views were somewhat different from those expressed by authors within Natal. He did not mention Fynn as a significant individual and he described the European settlers at Port Natal in 1825 as being a 'motley group of human beings... in

¹⁴⁶R.J. Mann, The Colony of Natal, London, 1859, p. 15.

¹⁴⁷Street, The Savage in Literature, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴⁸Loxley, Problematic Shores, pp. 73-4; M. Green, 'The Robinson Crusoe Story' in J. Richards, ed., Imperialism and Juvenile Literature, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989, pp. 77-78.

¹⁴⁹S. Gray, ed., Charles Maclean, The Natal Papers of 'John Ross', pp. 126-130.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

such a tattered condition' as to be unrecognisable as white men.¹⁵¹

By the time of his death in 1861, Fynn had to some extent retained his earliest image, as an agent of civilisation amongst people who were essentially savage. His obituary in the Natal Mercury, a paper which had always projected positive ideas of Fynn's achievements, gave a glowing account of his role amongst these people. Through his work as a 'pioneer', Fynn was seen as 'heralding the mighty work of civilisation'. John Robinson, who had taken over as editor of the Mercury in 1860, reiterated his father's earlier portrayal of Fynn as an invaluable source on pre-colonial society - describing his knowledge as 'most extensive' and 'of permanent value to statesmen and students for long years to come'.¹⁵²

Not all Natal colonial writers depicted Fynn in such a central role and it was evident that even prior to his death, Fynn's position as the ultimate authority on the black population was being challenged by Shepstone. For Donald Moodie, it was Shepstone, as a government official, not Fynn the pioneer, who was the most important 'civilising' influence on indigenous society.¹⁵³ In the political sphere, the Natal government had appointed Shepstone as their representative in dealing with the African people in the region. From the 1860s, Shepstone extended his sphere of influence into the Zulu kingdom and the colonial authorities accepted him as their negotiator with the Zulu monarchy.¹⁵⁴ It was not only in the political sphere that Fynn's importance was marginalised. Not all writers identified Fynn as a specific individual who was central to the process of European settlement at Port Natal. By the early 1860s, the idea of the traders as the first representatives of 'civilisation' in the region was fairly well established in literary accounts, and authors often repeated this notion without

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁵²The Natal Mercury, 26 September 1861: Obituary.

¹⁵³D. Moodie, On Our Domestic Relations with the Natives in Natal, Pietermaritzburg, The Natal Society, 1858, pp. 2-6.

¹⁵⁴Natal Government Gazette, 17 September 1861.

identifying particular individuals.¹⁵⁵ This was not a new development as Godlonton for example, had simply referred to the 'civilised' presence of the Europeans at Port Natal.¹⁵⁶ From the 1860s however, the ideas that had originated with Fynn concerning the Shakan period, which focused largely on Shaka's 'devastation' of the region, were becoming accepted as the given history of pre-colonial Natal and this version of the past was often quoted without acknowledgement of Fynn as a source.

In 1863, Theophilus Shepstone was requested by Lieutenant-Governor Scott to collect information on the provenance of African land claims in Natal.¹⁵⁷ Shepstone's research, which was based on interviews with African informants,¹⁵⁸ was initially written up in the form of a report to Scott.¹⁵⁹ Shepstone then re-wrote his report in the form of what he termed an 'Historical Sketch of the Tribes Inhabiting the Territory of Natal'.¹⁶⁰ Three years later, in 1867, Shepstone presented this material in the form of a lecture to the Natal Society.¹⁶¹ Shepstone's lecture served to establish him publicly as an authority on the African past in Natal. On closer examination, it is apparent that Shepstone's account of Shaka's 'devastation' of the region are remarkably similar to the evidence presented by Fynn to the 1852 commission.¹⁶² Although impossible to prove, it is likely that Shepstone had absorbed Fynn's version of the 'devastation'

¹⁵⁵L. Grout, Zulu-Land or Life Among the Zulu-Kafirs of Natal and Zululand, South Africa, Philadelphia, Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1864, pp. 69-73.

¹⁵⁶Godlonton, Irruption of the Kafir Hordes, p. 165.

¹⁵⁷Hamilton, 'Authoring Shaka', p. 252.

¹⁵⁸Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', p. 106.

¹⁵⁹Scott to Newcastle, 26 February 1864, cited in Hamilton, 'Authoring Shaka', p. 252.

¹⁶⁰Natal Archives, Shepstone Papers, File 90: 'Historical Sketch of the Tribes Inhabiting the Territory of Natal 1780-1840', 1864.

¹⁶¹Natal Archives, Shepstone Papers, File 91: Lecture delivered to the Natal Society on the 'History of Our Natives from 1790-1828', 21 May 1867.

¹⁶²Proceedings and Report, p. 6.

account, particularly given the fact that this had been reproduced by a number of Natal-focused authors from the 1830s. Shepstone's deliberate omission of Fynn as the originator of this material was part of his strategy in establishing himself as a unique source of information on Natal's African population. Shepstone used this idea of his own to stress his specific suitability as an administrator dealing with contemporary policy towards Africans in both Natal and Zululand.¹⁶³

During the 1870s, Shepstone's political role as a diplomatic representative to the Zulu kingdom became increasingly important. This was illustrated by his presence at the installation of Cetshwayo as Mpande's successor in 1873.¹⁶⁴ Shepstone sought further recognition as an authority on indigenous affairs and history by publishing in a British journal the information he had collected during the 1860s.¹⁶⁵ Historians accepted Shepstone's reputation as a diplomat, and in 1875 David Leslie described Shepstone as the person who could exercise his tact and diplomacy in order to avoid the conflict which a 'despotic' Zulu monarchy made inevitable. Leslie compared Shepstone's negotiations with Cetshwayo to Fynn's with Shaka, and pointed out that Fynn was a valuable forerunner of peaceful diplomacy.¹⁶⁶ In contrast, R.J. Mann, who had depicted Fynn as an agent of European 'civilisation' in 1859,¹⁶⁷ did not include Fynn in his second publication which he compiled with H. Brooks. In this book, which was essentially a new version of Mann's earlier volume written to encourage European immigration to Natal, both authors stressed the role of Shepstone, as an official, rather than Fynn, as a pioneer, as the person who had laid the foundations for a colony of

¹⁶³Wright, 'A.T. Bryant and the "Wars of Shaka"', p. 416.

¹⁶⁴R.C. Cope, 'Political Power Within the Zulu Kingdom and the "Coronation Laws" of 1873', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, vol. 8 (1985), pp. 13-20; Hamilton, 'Authoring Shaka', pp. 213-227.

¹⁶⁵T. Shepstone, 'The Early History of the Zulu Kafir Race of South-Eastern Africa', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 29 January 1875.

¹⁶⁶D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus and Amatongas*, Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1875, pp. 94-5.

¹⁶⁷Mann, *The Colony of Natal*, p. 15.

white settlers in Natal.¹⁶⁸ Brooks' and Mann's neglect of Fynn illustrated Shepstone's dominance in Natal politics by the 1870s, to the extent that he was depicted as the individual who had begun the process of white rule over Africans in the region. However, not all writers downplayed Fynn in favour of Shepstone. T.J. Lucas, a visitor to Natal immediately prior to the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, followed Leslie's idea of Fynn as a valuable forerunner to Shepstone. Fynn, said Lucas, had 'persuaded' Shaka not to attack the Cape colony in 1828. Shepstone could copy this example by similarly 'persuading' Cetshwayo not to invade Natal.¹⁶⁹

The conflict of 1879 was a major turning-point for Anglo-Zulu relations. These political events that paved the way for new types of literary portrayals of both the Zulu and the Natal colonists.¹⁷⁰ At the same time, the images of these societies in the specific Natal region have to be viewed against a wider framework of the 'new imperialism' in Africa and the implications of this for the entire southern African sub-continent. At the time of the Anglo-Zulu war, the literary and historical depictions of the role of Europeans in Africa were beginning to acquire new forms, heavily influenced by late Victorian romantic ideas of British penetration of the African continent.¹⁷¹ This imperial iconography has also to be viewed against the background of the European historical narrative, which was entering a new stage of development from the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸H. Brooks and R.J. Mann, Natal: A History and Description of the Colony, London, Kegan Paul, 1876, pp. 232-233.

¹⁶⁹T.J. Lucas, The Zulus and the British Frontiers, London, W.H. Allen, 1879, pp. 29-33.

¹⁷⁰Martin, 'British Images of the Zulu', pp. 332-333.

¹⁷¹J. Saville, 'Imperialism and the Victorians' in E.M. Sigsworth, ed., In Search of Victorian Values: Aspects of Nineteenth Century Thought and Society, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986, p. 169.

¹⁷²M. Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, London, Routledge, 1981 (1st publ. Paris, 1970), p. 219; H. White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, p. 38.

CHAPTER 5

FYNN, THE NATAL PAST, AND THE CHANGING EMPIRE
1880s-1930s

Following the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, the Natal-Zululand region acquired a new strategic position as an area of white settlement within the political sphere of British South Africa.¹ These changes influenced both historical and literary depictions of white and black in Natal. For some historians in the 1870s, Fynn had been replaced by Shepstone as a model negotiator with African communities in Natal. At the time of the war, writers like Lucas had pointed out the impossibility of negotiation with the Zulu monarchy which was "unreliable".² Similarly, Ludlow used Shaka's supposedly 'capricious' behaviour to Fynn to illustrate the difficulty of peaceful relations between black and white, and the inevitability of a war between the representatives of civilisation and savagery.³ British historians on the other hand, pointed out that the Natal colonists had been particularly irresponsible in their dealings with the Zulu people.⁴ Russell Martin explains this difference between colonial and imperial writing as a result of the immense popularity of the defeated Zulu amongst the British public, generated by the Zulu victory at Isandlwana in January 1879 and followed by Cetshwayo's visit to London in 1882.⁵ Martin also traced positive images of the Zulu to the fictional writing of Rider Haggard in the period following the Anglo-Zulu War. Haggard had worked with Shepstone and Bulwer, the Natal Lieutenant-Governor, during the 1870s, and although he wrote from a wider imperialist perspective, his ideas

¹J. Guy, The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The Civil War in Zululand, 1879-1884, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1982, p. xx.

² Lucas, The Zulus and the British Frontiers, pp. 29-33.

³W. Ludlow, Zululand and Cetewayo, Pretoria, Pretoria State Library, 1969 (1st publ. London, 1882), pp. 192-3.

⁴J.A. Froude, Two Lectures on South Africa, London, Longman, 1880, pp. 34,78.

⁵Martin, 'British Images of the Zulu c. 1820-1879', pp. 332-333.

were based on his colonial experiences. Thus, although he emphasised the progressive qualities of the Zulu, his accounts drew on Shepstone's notions of the Zulu monarchy as a focus for uncontrolled military expansion.⁶

Haggard's depictions of the Zulu were carefully juxtaposed with European heroes. In his immensely popular 1885 novel, King Solomon's Mines, he seems to have been influenced by Isaacs' writing. His hero, Allan Quatermain, bears a resemblance to Fynn as he was described by Isaacs. Haggard's Quatermain, like Fynn, was 'a poor travelling trader and hunter' who made his living mostly by hunting elephant in Natal.⁷ Like the Fynn depicted by Isaacs, Quatermain had a propensity to 'go native' and did not 'trouble ... with much beyond the facts of life and the ways of Kaffirs'.⁸ In the course of the narrative, Haggard's hero, like Isaacs' Fynn, acquired a disreputable appearance, becoming 'burned up' and grizzle-haired'.⁹

As Gail Low has recently noted, the Anglo-Zulu War provided writers like Haggard with an ideal framework for literary representations of colonialism and indigenous society.¹⁰ The 'noble savage' iconography, which had been used in many European-dominated political contexts to stress the differences which indigenous groups represented,¹¹ was increasingly used in literary depictions of the Zulu from the 1880s.¹² Promotion of

⁶N. Etherington, Rider Haggard, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1984, pp.1-3.

⁷R. Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, New York, Airmont Publishing, 1967 (1st publ. London, 1885), p. 14.

⁸Ibid., p. 22.

⁹Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰G. Low, White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 93.

¹¹H. White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, pp. 193-4.

¹²Low, White Skins/Black Masks, pp. 94-99.

white Natalians' own political consciousness and their awareness of the importance of their region as a colony of white settlement within the wider imperial context. By the 1880s, white settlers in Natal were thinking increasingly in terms of their potential new status as colonists with self-government,¹³ and were focusing on their own history in order to justify their presence as Europeans wielding political control over Africans.¹⁴ As part of their historical and political identity, white Natalians were also increasingly aware of what they considered their personal responsibility in administering colonial rule to the African population which, from 1887, included the people in 'Zululand'.¹⁵ It was in this political context that the Natal Legislative Council decided to sponsor further research on the provenance of colonial rule in the region. John Wright has suggested that the council's motives in undertaking such a project were based on white Natalians' need for a 'collective historical pedigree'.¹⁶ With the idea of constructing an official history of white settlement in the region in mind, the Natal government approached John Bird, a retired judge of the Native High Court, to compile a publication on the origins of European rule in Natal.¹⁷ Bird was required to collate a collection of documents and source material on the Natal past, a process he had already begun whilst employed as a magistrate during the early colonial period.¹⁸

Bird published his collection in two volumes as the Annals of Natal in 1888.¹⁹ He

¹³B.J. Kline, 'The Establishment of Responsible Government in Natal, 1887-1893', Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol. 9 (1986), pp. 55-70.

¹⁴W. Guest, 'Towards Responsible Government, 1879-1893' in Duminy and Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand, pp. 239-240.

¹⁵R. Haggard, Cetywayo and His White Neighbours, London, Trubner, 1882.

¹⁶Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, p. 321.

¹⁷A.F. Hattersley, More Annals of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1936, p. 11.

¹⁸J. Bird, 'Natal 1846-1851', reprinted in Natalia, vol. 1 (1971), pp. 5-6.

¹⁹J. Bird, The Annals of Natal, vols 1 and 2, Cape Town, Struik, 1965 (first publ. Pietermaritzburg, 1888).

commenced the first volume with a description of Fynn, whom he portrayed, along with the other members of Farewell's party, as the 'pioneers of colonisation' who provided benevolent rule over refugees from Shaka's atrocities by assuming the role of 'kafir chiefs'.²⁰ Although this idea had been used consistently since the 1840s to justify the presence of white settlers, in the late nineteenth century it was used to give new legitimacy to subjugation of indigenous societies on an unprecedented scale. For Bird, the depiction of Fynn and his companions as the forerunners of the process of 'civilisation' in a savage and hostile environment,²¹ had a deeper underlying meaning than similar depictions in earlier publications. The 'civilising' of indigenous society in Natal by the 1880s was a metaphor for the whole political conquest and economic dispossession of African societies.²²

Bird had originally intended to base his publications only on official sources, but he realised that there was a considerable volume of private material which could be used for this project. He considered Fynn to be an authority on the history of Natal and he wrote to Fynn's son, then a magistrate in Natal, asking for permission to utilise his father's unpublished manuscripts.²³ Bird viewed Fynn as having been in a unique position at Port Natal in the 1820s in that he had had 'access to Chaka, the Zulu king'. This accessibility made Fynn's material invaluable for a reconstruction of the pre-colonial past and Bird was able to use Fynn's account of Shaka as part of his narrative.²⁴ For his 1855 publication, Ten Weeks in Natal, Colenso had obtained Fynn's account describing the events following the death of Nandi in August 1827.²⁵ Bird however, borrowed the entire collection of the 'Fynn Papers' as left to Fynn junior

²⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 5.

²¹Ibid., p. 6.

²²D. Denoon, Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983, pp. 161-3.

²³Natal Archives, Bird Papers, File 3, p. 107; File 6, p. 59; File 11, pp. 31,42.

²⁴Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 5.

²⁵Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, pp. 225-227.

in 1861. In the first volume of the Annals, he included the material previously published by Colenso,²⁶ but also added information from the remainder of the manuscript collection. The additional material contained a biographical account of Dingiswayo, together with a record of events during Shaka's reign as supposedly witnessed by Fynn.²⁷ Fynn's writing on Dingiswayo presented a clear Eurocentric myth about this individual, specifically that he had acquired his knowledge of military tactics from Europeans in the late eighteenth century.²⁸ These ideas fitted in perfectly with Bird's plans for a history which stressed, from earliest times, the positive role of Europeans.

By publishing specific pieces from Fynn's papers, Bird was able to utilise Fynn's writing to illustrate his own ideas that the Europeans were the first official agents of civilisation in the Natal region.²⁹ Two passages in particular were useful for these purposes. The first was Fynn's description of his medical treatment of Shaka, following an assassination attempt in July 1824.³⁰ This was the first instance of this depiction of Fynn: earlier writers had referred only in general terms to Shaka's enthusiasm for 'English medicines'.³¹ Fynn himself had originally used this account during the 1850s as part of his attempt to try and persuade the colonial government that Shaka had given him a land-grant at Port Natal.³² Bird's utilisation of this theme however, has to be viewed against the background of late nineteenth-century Natal as it existed within the British Empire at that time. Foucault has examined the process by which the figure

²⁶Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. 91-3; 103-124.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 60-71, 76-85, 86-90.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 60-63; J. Argyle, 'Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of His Legendary Origins' in J. Argyle and E. Preston-Whyte, eds., Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 12-14.

²⁹Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. 5-6.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 76-85.

³¹Owen, Narrative of Voyages, p. 221.

³²Natal Archives, CSO, File 103, no. 171: Fynn to Allen, 15 February 1858.

of the doctor had, during the course of the nineteenth century, become 'the exclusive enunciator of medical discourse'.³³ More recently, David Arnold has examined the ways in which nineteenth-century European medical science was an integral part of the process of imperial expansion.³⁴ Similarly, Megan Vaughan has, within a Foucauldian framework, looked at the twentieth century entrenchment of colonial control over African societies, in which the medical discourse of European colonisers played a central role.³⁵ The juxtaposition of superior Western medicine with aboriginal ignorance was a common theme in both literary and historical accounts of European achievements in Africa during the colonial period.³⁶ By the end of the nineteenth century, this medical influence was associated with both not only the enlightenment, but also the conquest of indigenous peoples.³⁷ Western medicine also came to epitomise European progress in a continent which was seen as inherently backward.³⁸ Fynn, in the publication of Bird's Annals, was a symbol, not only of European civilisation, but of enlightened health care amongst a people that was not only savage but also in some way diseased.³⁹

³³M. Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception, London, Routledge, 1989 (1st publ. Paris, 1963), pp. 17-18; G. Gutting, Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason, Oxford, Basil Blackwell Press, 1989, p. 256.

³⁴D. Arnold, 'Introduction' in D. Arnold, ed., Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988, pp. 11-12.

³⁵M. Vaughan, Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness, Oxford, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 8-16.

³⁶Comaroff, Ethnography and the Historical Imagination, pp. 215-217.

³⁷E.H. Burrows, A History of Medicine in South Africa up to the End of the Nineteenth Century, Cape Town, Struik, 1958, p. 210.

³⁸R. McLeod and M. Lewis, eds., Disease, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Western Medicine and the Experience of European Expansion, London, Routledge, 1988, pp. 1-2.

³⁹Arnold, 'Introduction' in Arnold, ed., Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies, p. 7.

In Fynn's account, as included in Bird's Annals, he described his treatment as consisting of cleaning Shaka's wounds and providing a purgative.⁴⁰ These simple measures were illustrative of the extremely limited methods employed by European medicine in the early nineteenth century.⁴¹ Fynn had mentioned that Shaka's own medicine-man was present, and had used herbal remedies, but he did not describe these, preferring to depict himself in the central role as Shaka's doctor.⁴²

The second extract from Fynn's manuscripts which Bird included in his publication was Fynn's account of Shaka's conflict with the Ndwandwe forces in June 1826.⁴³ Like the medical material, this was written by Fynn in the 1850s in an attempt to convince the Natal government that Shaka had given him a land-grant as a reward for this assistance as a mercenary.⁴⁴ As with the medical example, this was useful for Bird in that it served to justify the European presence in the region. Fynn's narrative centered around a belief in the superiority of European military power, specifically the use of firearms to subdue primitive aboriginal armies. Fynn's variant on this theme could be effectively utilised to stress European military supremacy in the Natal region, an important focus for Natalians in the years following the defeat and eventual annexation of Zululand. According to Fynn, European firearms played a crucial role in the 1826 encounter with Zwide's forces.⁴⁵

Bird's inclusion of these extracts from Fynn was in line with the dominant themes in late Victorian historical literature which focused on the achievements of Europeans in an imperial setting. Within the Natal region, the publication of the Annals also set a

⁴⁰Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 86.

⁴¹ Youngson, The Scientific Revolution in Victorian Medicine, pp. 15-17.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴³Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. 86-90.

⁴⁴Natal Archives, CSO, File 120, no. 251: Fynn to Allen, 29 February 1860.

⁴⁵Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 88.

precedent for what could be termed 'official' histories of Natal, one of the earliest examples being Robert Russell's publication which first appeared in 1891.⁴⁶ This book, entitled Natal: The Land and Its Story, was soon adopted as a general school history textbook on Natal, influencing several generations of young readers and future historians. Russell's publication was indicative of the arrival of white Natal society at an historical stage where it required an educational discourse for the next generation of colonists. At the same time, the racist imagery contained in Russell's book was a reflection of the kinds of history text-books produced for school-children in England from the late nineteenth century.⁴⁷

Russell's image of Fynn and the other European traders was an adaptation of the earlier stereotypes of their role in Natal. He described Farewell's party as 'dauntless pioneers' in the face of tremendous odds in carrying out their work of civilising aboriginal societies.⁴⁸ This idea, originally used in earlier nineteenth-century histories of the Natal region and given official recognition by Bird, became universally accepted by colonial readers and writers in Natal, and provided the basis for an unquestioned version of the Natal past well into the twentieth century.⁴⁹ In 1904, Barnett and Sweeney published a second official history of Natal, and reiterated the earlier idea of the early Europeans at Port Natal as the 'pioneers of colonisation'.⁵⁰ A third official Natal history by Tatlow was published in 1911, and in this account Fynn was given a central position as one of these individuals who had risked his own safety in 'rescuing'

⁴⁶R. Russell, Natal: The Land and Its Story, Durban, Davis, 1903, (1st publ. London, 1891).

⁴⁷R. Aldrich, 'Imperialism in the Study and Teaching of History' in J.A. Mangan, ed., "Benefits Bestowed"? Education and British Imperialism, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988, pp. 24-26.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 198.

⁴⁹Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', p. 324.

⁵⁰P.A. Barnett and G.W. Sweeney, Natal: the State and the Citizen, London, Longman, 1904, p. 24.

people from Shaka's excesses.⁵¹

While Natal writers provided a clearly defined colonial setting for their own provenance in the region, British historians generally downplayed the role of Natal in nineteenth-century imperial expansion.⁵² Natal was seen by the colonial office to have failed politically in settling its own and Zululand's affairs.⁵³ In contrast, for local historians Natal was a crucial link in the process of imperial growth in South Africa. D.C.F. Moodie, son of Donald Moodie who, as a member of the Natal Legislative Council, had presented lectures on the Natal past during the 1850s, was commissioned by the Cape government to write a colonial-focused account of the Anglo-Zulu War.⁵⁴ Moodie aimed to demonstrate the important role played by the Cape and Natal in this imperial conflict and, like other authors writing on the war, he drew on existing literature to illustrate the origins of European dominance in Natal.⁵⁵ As far as depicting Fynn was concerned, he simply repeated the established idea of Fynn setting the precedent for European civilisation by using his 'chivalrous behaviour' in order to rescue refugees from Shaka's 'devastation'.⁵⁶ Cape-based historians like Moodie were not overly concerned with justifying white colonial presence in Natal, and thus did not give Fynn the same central role that he had been afforded by Bird. Charles Brownlee, ex-secretary for Native Affairs in the Cape Colony, and an unofficial adviser to Sir Garnet Wolseley during the

⁵¹A.H. Tatlow, ed., Natal Province: Descriptive Guide and Official Handbook, Durban, South African Railways, 1911, p. 4.

⁵²Froude, Two Lectures on South Africa, pp. 76-78.

⁵³J. Laband and P. Thompson, 'The Reduction of Zululand 1878-1904' in Duminy and Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand, pp. 202-3.

⁵⁴S. Mendelssohn, South African Bibliography, vol. II, pp. 48-9.

⁵⁵J. Laband, ed., Moodie's Zulu War, Cape Town, N and S Press, 1988, p. x.

⁵⁶D.C.F. Moodie, The History of the Battles and Adventures of the British, the Boers and the Zulus in Southern Africa, Cape Town, Murray, 1888, vol. I, pp. 387-392.

latter's 'settlement' of Zululand in September 1879,⁵⁷ published a book in 1889 which he entitled Fifty Years Ago. He intended this publication to be an examination of the earliest days of Natal's colonial identity. In it he used the stereotypical images of early European involvement in Natal, referring to Shaka's 'devastation' and the flight of homeless refugees. Brownlee however, did not consider Fynn to be a central individual in these events and did not refer to him, as earlier writers had, as a 'chief' over destitute people at Port Natal.⁵⁸ In his correspondence with Shepstone, Brownlee did not consider material written by either Fynn or Isaacs to be particularly useful or accurate.⁵⁹ For his later book, published in 1896, Brownlee used Shepstone rather than Fynn, as a reliable source on the Natal past.⁶⁰ It is possible that Brownlee, like Shepstone was, in his capacity as a native affairs official, somewhat distrustful of the 'settler' opinion expressed by individuals like Fynn.

The central images of civilising Europeans and a destructive or anarchical indigenous society characterised most accounts of the Natal past. These ideas were part of a broader historiography of South African societies which had emerged by the early twentieth century. This 'settlerist' trend in historical writing had developed from the settler-focused writing during the nineteenth century, and by the time of the Anglo-Boer War had acquired an imperialist framework. Colonial historians were, to some extent, beginning to reconstruct their own local versions of European expansion within this imperial scenario.⁶¹ Like Bird, these authors were influenced by developments in

⁵⁷J. Pridmore, 'The Reaction of Colonial Natal to Sir Garnet Wolseley's Settlement of Zululand, June-December 1879, unpubl. Hons Thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1983, p. 4.

⁵⁸C.P. Brownlee, Fifty Years Ago, Lovedale, Lovedale Press, 1889.

⁵⁹Natal Archives, Shepstone Papers, File 56, no. 33: Brownlee to Shepstone, 24 April 1889.

⁶⁰C.P. Brownlee, Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History, Lovedale, Lovedale Press, 1896, p. 96.

⁶¹C. Saunders, The Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class, Cape Town, David Philip, 1988, pp. 20-21.

European and British historiography, particularly the growing concern with documentary evidence which developed from the studies of von Ranke.⁶²

By the late nineteenth-century, British historians were increasingly concerned with collecting vast quantities of historical knowledge on the empire.⁶³ This process was also carried out within a firmly established racist view of conquered societies⁶⁴ and, in South Africa, this was mirrored by the activities of George McCall Theal, who initiated the first modern archival work in the Cape colony.⁶⁵ At the same time, Theal was an active historian and he had, by the late nineteenth century, begun to write his own narratives of the South African past.⁶⁶ Theal was committed to a settler approach which focused on the difficult and challenging work carried out by Europeans in their 'civilising mission' amongst indigenous peoples.⁶⁷ In his first book on Natal, entitled Records of South-Eastern Africa, published in 1898, Theal combined his archival work with historical narrative. In this volume, he followed Bird in giving Fynn prominence as one of the earliest literate recorders of the Natal past and reproduced whole sections of Fynn's writing on Shaka, as previously published in Bird's Annals of Natal.⁶⁸ Unlike

⁶²D.S. Goldstein, 'History at Oxford and Cambridge, Professionalisation and the Influence of Ranke', in G.G. Iggers, and J.M. Powell, eds., Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1990, p. 146.

⁶³T. Richards, The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire, London, Verso, 1993, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁴H.A. MacDougall, Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons, Montreal, Harvest House, 1982, pp. 89-94.

⁶⁵Smith, The Changing Past, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁶Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, pp. 10-12.

⁶⁷D. Schreuder, 'The Imperial Historian as "Colonial Nationalist": George McCall Theal and the Making of South African History', in G. Martel, ed., Studies in British Imperial History: Essays in Honour of A.P. Thornton, New York, St Martin's Press, 1986, pp. 95-7.

⁶⁸G.M. Theal, ed., Records of South Eastern Africa, vol. II, Cape Town, Struik, 1964 (1st publ. London, 1898), pp. 479-488.

Cape-focused historians, Theal did not neglect Fynn but quoted him to illustrate the established set of ideas about the historical role of Europeans. For Theal, Fynn was important not only as a source of valuable information but also as evidence of an individual who had become a 'white chief' over some three or four hundred 'refugees'. For Theal, Fynn's 'energy' in taking on this task was an example of the incentive shown by Europeans in 'civilising' indigenous peoples in the Natal region.⁶⁹

Although there was nothing innovative in Theal's depiction of Fynn, his use of Fynn's written accounts set a new precedent in South African historiography, as his Records of South Eastern Africa gave weight to the idea that Fynn's material was of value to the growing ranks of professional historians. Bird had entrenched the nineteenth-century images of Fynn as a literate recorder of the Natal past, with unique access to that past through his personal experiences at Shaka's court. Theal placed Fynn in the wider context of South African history as an important source on the origins of European settlement at Port Natal. This trend was not followed however, by the historian, George Cory, who did not view Fynn as an important source, preferring instead to rely on Isaacs' work for information, possibly because the latter's work was published much earlier in book form in Travels and Adventures.⁷⁰

Bird's and Theal's recognition of Fynn's writing was illustrated by the Africana collector S.M. Mendelssohn, who, in 1910, included in his South African Bibliography a list of Fynn's extracts as published in Bird and described them as being 'of the greatest value to students of the history of the Colony of Natal'.⁷¹ Mendelssohn's substantial two-volume work was the first attempt to provide a comprehensive catalogue of secondary

⁶⁹G.M. Theal, History of South Africa Since 1795, vol. II, London, Longman, 1908, pp. 297-300.

⁷⁰G.E. Cory, The Rise of South Africa, Cape Town, Struik, 1965 (1st publ. London, 1913), vol. II, pp. 207, 353-4.

⁷¹S.M. Mendelssohn, Mendelssohn's South African Bibliography: Being the Catalogue of the Mendelssohn Library of Works Relating to South Africa, vol. I, London, Kegan Paul and Company, 1910, p. 582.

source material.⁷² Mendelssohn's inclusion of Fynn's material served to further establish him as a recorder of events in early Natal.

However, not all writers considered Fynn a valuable source for serious history. I.D. Colvin, who, as a young man spent four years in South Africa from 1903 to 1907,⁷³ wrote an introduction to Mendelssohn's publication, pointing out that Fynn's writing provided a vivid description of early Natal and noting that 'even Defoe imagined nothing more wholly satisfying to the adventurous mind than Fynn'.⁷⁴ His motives in placing Fynn within a fictional rather than a strictly historical setting have to be viewed within the general literary context of this period. By the early twentieth century, romanticised imperialism, as originally conceptualised by Rider Haggard in the 1880s, had become a major feature of European literature set in Africa.⁷⁵ In the period since the publication of Haggard's work, the reading public in Britain had expanded considerably,⁷⁶ and by the early 1900's, children's fiction in particular emphasised the idea of imperial responsibility towards African societies.⁷⁷ In the early years of the twentieth century, the distinction in literature between real historical peoples and fictional creations had become somewhat blurred, and Haggard's 'Zulu', although

⁷² D. E. Smit, 'Sydney Mendelssohn' in C.J. Beyers, ed., Dictionary of South African Biography, vol. IV, Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council, 1981, pp. 529-530.

⁷³F.R. Bradlow, 'Ian Duncan Colvin, A Biographical Note' in I.D. Colvin, Introduction to Africana, Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1979, (first publ. In Mendelssohn, South African Bibliography, London, 1910), p. 3.

⁷⁴Colvin, 'Introduction to Africana, p. 65.

⁷⁵P. Rich, 'Romance and the Development of the South African Novel' in T. Couzens and L. White, eds., Literature and Society in South Africa, Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1984, pp. 122-125.

⁷⁶M.D. Biddiss, The Age of the Masses: Ideas and Society in Europe Since 1870, London, Hassocks, 1977, pp. 145-6.

⁷⁷J. Richards, 'With Henty to Africa' in Richards, ed., Imperialism and Juvenile Literature, pp. 73-4; J. Bristow, Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World, London, Routledge, 1990, pp. 127-32.

fictional characters, operated within defined historical contexts.⁷⁸ Similarly, in John Buchan's novel, Prester John, published in 1910, although the title referred to a mythical figure,⁷⁹ the hero's imperial outlook was clearly that of many immigrants in the early twentieth century. Buchan's use of the past is demonstrated by his plot which focused on the potential threat presented by a black military force in South Africa, originally initiated by Shaka's actions of 'slaughtering up to two million people'.⁸⁰ Colvin, writing in this genre, viewed European expansion in South Africa as an ongoing 'adventure', and utilised the language of romantic fiction in describing Fynn as 'chief over a considerable body of broken tribes and outlaws'.⁸¹ Colvin's association of Fynn with Defoe, although an image used by early nineteenth century writers, was also indicative of late nineteenth-century trends in children's fiction where the Robinson Crusoe story-line had become closely entwined with fictional accounts of the achievements of British imperialism.⁸²

If history and fiction were increasingly entangled in the narratives of both children's and adult literature, by the early twentieth century, both were also influenced by the developing science of anthropology. Although this discipline was becoming less influenced by evolutionary theory in its approach to non-European or 'primitive' societies, new ideas, as exemplified in Frank Boas' publication The Mind of Primitive

⁷⁸R. Haggard, Allan Quartermain, London, MacDonald, 1969 (1st publ. London, 1887); Nada the Lily, London, MacDonald, 1964 (1st publ. London, 1892); Child of Storm, London, MacDonald, 1958 (1st publ. London, 1913).

⁷⁹F.J. Nothling, Pre-Colonial Africa: Her Civilisations and Foreign Contacts, Johannesburg, Southern Books, 1989, p. 147.

⁸⁰J. Buchan, Prester John, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1985 (1st publ. London, 1910), p. 74.

⁸¹I.D. Colvin, The Cape of Adventure, London, Longman, 1912, p. 406.

⁸²M. Green, 'The Robinson Crusoe Story' in Richards, ed., Imperialism and Juvenile Fiction, pp. 37-48; B. Dixon, Catching Them Young: Political Ideas in Children's Fiction, London, Routledge, 1977, pp. 74-76.

Man,⁸³ were slow to influence fictional writers, and popular authors continued to depict non-Europeans as inferior and thus suitable for subjugation by European technology.⁸⁴ European anthropologists viewed South African, as they did other pre-colonial societies, as supposedly 'backward' or 'primitive', and saw aboriginal communities as material suitable for anthropological rather than historical, enquiry.⁸⁵ James Stuart, a Natal magistrate, began collecting Zulu oral evidence in the early twentieth century, with the opinion that 'the Zulu race is, I believe, a rich field for anthropological and ethnological research.' Stuart lumped 'history', along with 'folklore, tradition and custom,' as information that could be subjected to 'anthropological' research.⁸⁶ As an administrator of Africans in Natal, Stuart considered himself an expert on 'native affairs' and hoped, through his interviews, to obtain information on the Zulu past, as well as useful material for his role as a magistrate.

Stuart, like Bird and Theal, also needed documentary material to support his argument and, like the historians, he considered that recorded 'history' began in Natal with the arrival of the European traders in 1824. Only once literate Europeans had come 'into contact with native races' could history be recorded.⁸⁷ Stuart regarded Fynn as a crucial source on pre-colonial Natal, as he had been one of the first literate recorders to experience this 'contact'.⁸⁸ Realising that Bird had been in an unusual situation in

⁸³Stocking, Victorian Anthropology, p. 329.

⁸⁴A.C. Doyle, The Lost World, London, Longman, 1979, (1st publ. London, 1912), p. 24, 40-41.

⁸⁵T. Asad, 'Two European Images of Non-European Rule' in T. Asad, ed., Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter, London, Ithaca Press, 1973, p. 112.

⁸⁶K.C.A.L. Stuart Papers, File 42, KCM 23786, 'Memorandum on the Gathering of Information Respecting the Native Races of Natal and Zululand', July 1903.

⁸⁷K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 70, Notebook on the History of Zululand, 1901-1903.

⁸⁸K.C.A.L. Stuart Papers, File 30, KCM 23510, Interview with Mnguni, 28 March 1903.

having had access to the original Fynn manuscripts,⁸⁹ Stuart contacted Fynn's son and made arrangements to borrow the Fynn Papers, as Bird had done.⁹⁰

Despite his considerable efforts to collect information, Stuart did not immediately publish his interviews, although he had a potential 'Zulu History' in mind from the outset of his research.⁹¹ Stuart was pre-empted in this task by another Natal official, J.Y. Gibson, who had spent many years during the late nineteenth century as a magistrate in northern Natal. Gibson's magisterial district was formerly part of the Zulu kingdom as it had existed until the 1880s, and he had, like Stuart, collected both written and oral material on the region's past.⁹² Like Theal and Stuart, Gibson considered Fynn's accounts, as published by Bird, to be the 'chief resources' for 'Zulu history',⁹³ and he depicted Fynn as a vital 'eye witness' to the events of Shaka's reign.⁹⁴ Gibson was not an historian and he did not question the existing written sources in any way, regarding Isaacs' Travels and Adventures for example, as a document that would 'remain a lasting record ... in the course of some succeeding years'.⁹⁵ Fynn's self- portrayals, as printed in Bird's publication, were incorporated directly into Gibson's work and Fynn was presented as an individual with medical skills who had effectively treated Shaka. Gibson also used Fynn's narrative in Bird's Annals to emphasise his own view of Fynn

⁸⁹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 10, KCM 23451, Fynn junior to James Stuart, 27 October 1904.

⁹⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, File 29, Fynn junior to James Stuart, 8 October 1905.

⁹¹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 70, Notebook on the History of Zululand, 1901-1903.

⁹²B.J.T. Leverton, 'J.Y. Gibson', in Beyers, ed., Dictionary of South African Biography, vol. IV, p. 180.

⁹³J.Y. Gibson, The Story of the Zulus, London, Longman, 1911 (1st publ. London, 1903), p. 21.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 242.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 26.

as a valuable participant in the 1826 conflict with Zwide.⁹⁶

James Stuart, although more concerned in the early 1900's with the formulation of a suitable 'native policy' for Natal,⁹⁷ had, at the same time, maintained his personal interest in Fynn's career and writing, reinforced by his borrowing of the Fynn manuscripts in 1905. This interest was based on the view that Fynn, as the earliest literate European writer at Port Natal, could provide unique, first-hand information on the Shakan period. To this end, Stuart interviewed Fynn junior about his father's life and career in 1906.⁹⁸ This information was not used immediately but later formed the basis for an account published in the Natal newspaper The Natalian. The editor of this paper, A.J. Arthur, was running a series of articles entitled 'Men who made the Colony' and he wrote to Fynn junior requesting a biographical account of his father.⁹⁹ As Stuart had borrowed the Fynn Papers by this time, and had, in addition obtained a detailed account during his 1906 interview, it was logical for him to write this article, and neither Arthur nor Fynn junior had any objections.¹⁰⁰ Stuart's lengthy article was eventually published in book form. It focused on Fynn as a prominent individual who had been ultimately responsible for the colonial settlement in Natal.¹⁰¹ Using the established nineteenth-century image of Fynn as a 'pioneer', Stuart placed this role within the wider framework of European colonisation and imperial conquest, pointing out that Fynn had made Natal 'not only nominally, but actually and continuously a

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 24.

⁹⁷K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 44, KCM 23851, Lecture on the Zulu Tribal System, 30 June 1907.

⁹⁸K.C.A.L., Fynn Family Papers, File 30104, extract no. 4, Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn, dictated to James Stuart by H. Fynn, junior, 27 December 1906.

⁹⁹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 10, KCM 23450, A.J. Arthur to Fynn junior, 5 May 1908

¹⁰⁰K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 10, KCM 23450, A.J. Arthur to Fynn junior, 29 May 1908.

¹⁰¹J. Stuart, Men Who Have Made The Colony, Pietermaritzburg, The Natal Witness, 1908, p. 1.

portion of the British Empire'.¹⁰² Stuart did not, in this account, emphasise Fynn's written contribution to the history of the region, but instead highlighted his role as a colonist whose work in spreading the influence of civilised values 'was greater and more significant than Farewell's'.¹⁰³ Stuart's use of the term 'pioneer' in the context of early twentieth-century imperial expansion made Fynn a representative not only of European 'civilisation' but also of a specifically settler economic system.¹⁰⁴

Many white Natalians, although they participated in a developing and semi-independent economy, preferred to retain their links with the imperial political sphere and were reluctant to oppose the Act of Union in 1910.¹⁰⁵ Stuart however, did not share this attitude and in his longer work on the 1906 rebellion which was published in 1913, he aimed to demonstrate that Natal was an autonomous region of white settlement, with a legitimate history of European rule. For Stuart, this was justified by the fact that Fynn and his companions had arrived in a land that was 'largely uninhabited' in the 1820s.¹⁰⁶ Stuart's argument for an independent colony was partly in opposition to the attitude expressed by the British and Cape governments at the time of union that Natal was a weak link in the South African imperial ambit, due to its volatile 'native problem' which had been illustrated by the rebellion.¹⁰⁷ This publication also gave Stuart an opportunity to once again place Fynn in a prominent position as an

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁴L. Davis and R. Huttenback, Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860-1912, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 2-9.

¹⁰⁵W. Guest and J. Sellers, 'Introduction' in W. Guest and J. Sellers, eds., Receded Tides of Empire: Aspects of the Economic and Social History of Natal and Zululand Since 1910, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1994, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁶J. Stuart, A History of the Zulu Rebellion 1906 and of Dinuzulu's Arrest, Trial and Expatriation, London, Longman, 1913, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁷A. Duminy, 'Towards Union, 1900-1910' in Duminy and Guest, ed., Natal and Zululand, pp. 402-4.

individual indispensable to the colonisation of Natal, particularly given his great humanity in 'ministering unceasingly to the numerous sick, indigent and wounded' who had suffered from Shaka's military activities.¹⁰⁸ In both his early publications, Stuart clearly identified Fynn with the origins of colonial identity in Natal.

Stuart also had the idea of publishing Fynn's manuscripts as unique material which served to 'preserve Zulu past traditions'.¹⁰⁹ Fynn was a key source, commented Stuart, on the 'yet unknown spirit of Africa'.¹¹⁰ However, between the publication of his work on the rebellion in 1913 and his move to England in 1922, Stuart appears to have been too preoccupied to have made any progress in organising the Fynn manuscripts for publication, though he did work incessantly on the task of collating his collection of oral material.¹¹¹ Whilst in England from 1922, Stuart gave frequent public lectures to various learned societies, often under the umbrella definition of 'Anthropology' or 'Ethnology'. In many of these talks, Fynn appeared consistently as the representative of European civilisation juxtaposed against indigenous savagery.¹¹²

In the period between the publication of Stuart's Zulu Rebellion in 1913 and A.T. Bryant's Olden Times in 1929,¹¹³ no significant historical works were written on Natal. Outside of Stuart's public lectures, most of which were delivered in England, the portrayal of Fynn was restricted to already widely circulating works like Bird's Annals

¹⁰⁸Stuart, A History of the Zulu Rebellion, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 9, KCM 23428, Notes by J. Stuart, 4 July 1921.

¹¹⁰K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 9, KCM 233494, James Stuart to Harriet Colenso, 27 May 1920.

¹¹¹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 40, KCM 23755, Joseph Allen to Stuart, 8 January 1917.

¹¹²K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 63, KCM 24331, Lecture on 'Tshaka the Great Despot', 17 December 1923; File 30, KCM 23522, Lecture on 'European Civilisation from the Uncivilised Zulu Point of View', 5 March 1924.

¹¹³A.T. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, Cape Town, Struik, 1966 (1st publ. London, 1929).

of Natal, Russell's Natal, the Land and its Story and Gibson's The Story of the Zulus. An exception was Magema Fuze's book which appeared in Zulu in 1922 as Abantu Abamnyama (The Black People). This publication was one of the earliest major works in the Zulu language and had been written down at about the beginning of the century.¹¹⁴ On closer examination, it is evident that Fuze had in fact obtained much of his material from Bishop Colenso, having been raised and educated at Colenso's mission station during the later nineteenth century.¹¹⁵ A large section of Fuze's work was copied from Colenso's 1859 publication Izindatyana zaBantu kanye nezindaba zas' eNatal. This included material on Shaka and Nandi, originally obtained by Colenso from Fynn in the 1850s and subsequently published in Colenso's Ten Weeks in Natal in 1855.¹¹⁶ Fuze adopted Colenso's ideas about Fynn as an individual who played a fairly prominent part at Shaka's court and as a person who 'ruled' the area to the south of Port Natal.¹¹⁷ The major difference between this and historical accounts by white authors was in the timing of Fynn's introduction into the main narrative. As the title of the book implied, this was a history of African societies, and the white traders were incorporated about half way through the volume as relative latecomers on the historical scene.¹¹⁸ Fuze also reiterated the established image of Fynn as a crucial literate source, though he questioned his reliability as a white onlooker and commented that it was extremely unlikely that the 'Zulus would have revealed to him, a white man, the secret of what actually happened', during important events, like the circumstances surrounding Nandi's death and burial.¹¹⁹

Fuze's work was the first full-length written account of the Zulu past by an African

¹¹⁴ Fuze, The Black People, p.(ix).

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. (xvii).

¹¹⁶Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, pp.ix-xx; Fuze, The Black People, pp. 63-64.

¹¹⁷Fuze, The Black People, p. 52.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 50-51.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 60.

writer. Like contemporary accounts by mission-educated African writers, it remained outside the mainstream of historical writing, which continued to be controlled by European writers.¹²⁰ As such, it represented what might be termed a 'minority discourse'.¹²¹ European administrators like Stuart remained, for white colonists, the accepted authorities on the indigenous past, just as they were continually perceived by colonial government as the experts of contemporary 'native affairs'.¹²² The presumption that Stuart had specific knowledge of the South African past was demonstrated by the fact that he was asked to produce a pageant on Natal for the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924.¹²³ The imperial part of this exhibition focused on the idea of British responsibility towards colonial possessions,¹²⁴ despite the fact that by the 1920s, Natal, along with other colonies, was moving towards dominion status in the emerging 'commonwealth'.¹²⁵ The South African pageant, which took place on 26 July 1924, was in keeping with the overall imperial theme of European progress in 'uncivilised' lands, and it consisted of scenes which highlighted the arrival of white people in South Africa.¹²⁶ Stuart's short sketch fitted neatly into this broad historical sweep of European influence, with Fynn and Farewell in central

¹²⁰P.V. Shava, A People's Voice: Black South African Writing in the Twentieth Century, London, Zed Books, 1989, pp. 2-3, 6-7.

¹²¹A.R. JanMahomed and D. Lloyd, 'Towards a Theory of Minority Discourse. What is to be Done?' in A.R. JanMahomed and D.Lloyd, eds., The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 1-6.

¹²²S. Dubow, 'Holding a "Just Balance between White and Black": The Native Affairs Department in South Africa, c. 1920-1933', Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1986), p. 223.

¹²³K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 9, KCM 23411, 'First Meeting of the British Settlers with King Tshaka', Notes for the 1924 Exhibition.

¹²⁴M. Epstein, ed., The Annual Register: A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad, vol. 166, London, Longman, 1925, p. 119.

¹²⁵P.S. Thompson, "'We are British, First and All the time". The British Civic Culture of Natal, 1902-1931', unpubl. paper, Rhodes University, July 1995, pp. 29-31.

¹²⁶The Natal Mercury, 27 July 1924.

roles as the 'earliest British settlers of Natal'.¹²⁷ To emphasise Fynn's civilising influence as a progressive European, Stuart drew directly on the account in Bird's Annals in order to depict Fynn administering 'important medical services to the king (Shaka)'. In response to Fynn's kindness, Shaka then showed a 'natural liking for Englishmen (and) made Farewell and Fynn a grant of an extensive tract of land'.¹²⁸

The South African pageant was performed before an audience of about 50 000 people,¹²⁹ and was broadcast to a considerable listening public through the medium of radio.¹³⁰ This unprecedented reception of a public event was enthusiastically reported by the Natal press, though it was clear that white Natalians' attention was focused instead on preparations for public celebrations of their own 'centenary'.¹³¹ This event was a commemoration of the hundred years of white settlement in Natal, from 1824 to 1924. In honour of the occasion, The Natal Witness published a special book, whose title, A Century of Progress,¹³² aptly summed up the attitude of white Natalians towards their presence in the region. The writers who contributed to this volume continued to put forward the established notion of European arrival being synonymous with the advent of progress in Natal, and as marking the end of a long period of 'destruction' by Shaka.¹³³ Fynn appeared in these brief accounts in the role of a 'pioneer', in much the same way that he had been depicted in works like Bird's or

¹²⁷The Natal Witness, 28 July 1924.

¹²⁸The Natal Mercury, 15 July 1924.

¹²⁹Epstein, ed., The Annual Register, p. 11.

¹³⁰J. McKenzie, "'In Touch with the Infinite": The B.B.C. and the Empire, 1923-53' in J. McKenzie, ed., Imperialism and Popular Culture, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986, pp. 169-172.

¹³¹The Natal Witness, 26 June 1924; The Natal Mercury, 27 June 1924.

¹³²A Century of Progress in Natal: 1824-1924, Pietermaritzburg, The Natal Witness, 1924.

¹³³J.F.E. Barnes, 'Men Who Made Natal' in A Century of Progress in Natal: 1824-1924, pp. 77-80; J.W. Cross, 'The Wars of a Century', in A Century of Progress, pp. 95-6.

Russell's since the 1880s.¹³⁴ The Natal centenary of 1924 indicated white Natalians' concern with their role within the wider imperial sphere. In terms of portrayals of Fynn, these notions had changed very little since the late nineteenth century.

However, while white Natalians were deeply involved with their own specific version of a Eurocentric, colonial-focused past, Natal was not given much attention within wider South African historiographical trends. Theal's version of the Natal past, which he had adapted from Natal writers like Bird, became more widely accepted by South African historians.¹³⁵ From the 1920s, however, there were other important changes within the broad fabric of the 'settler' chronology of the South African past. Influenced by anthropologists of the emerging 'functionalist' school, historians began to examine white and black past actions as part of an integrated process.¹³⁶ This new 'liberal' approach focused on the process of interaction between European and indigenous groups during the colonial period, but tended to neglect the history of pre-colonial societies, a theme considered more relevant to the work of anthropologists.¹³⁷ Influential historians of this emerging liberal school, like E.A. Walker, wrote substantial histories which were used as general text-books at university level into the 1970s. In his widely-read A History of South Africa, which appeared in 1928, Walker included limited material on pre-colonial Natal and, like Theal, utilised Fynn's material as published in Bird's Annals. He did not question the established stereotype, based largely on Fynn's accounts, of Shaka's 'heavy slaughter and widespread destruction of tribes'.¹³⁸ W.M. Macmillan, in a similarly influential work, Bantu, Boer and Briton, which appeared the following year, completely omitted the history of Port Natal prior

¹³⁴Henderson, 'The Story of Durban' in A Century of Progress, pp. 2-4.

¹³⁵Wright, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane', p. 283.

¹³⁶P. Rich, White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism 1921-1960, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984, pp. 55-7.

¹³⁷Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, pp. 56-7.

¹³⁸E.A. Walker, A History of Southern Africa, London, Longman, 1967 (1st publ. as A History of South Africa, London, 1928), pp. 176-177.

to European arrival.¹³⁹ His history focused on the Cape, and although he included an account of the white traders' arrival in Natal, he did not mention any individuals by name.¹⁴⁰ Macmillan's emphasis was restricted to an analysis of the relationships between white and black South Africans from the later nineteenth century. He was concerned particularly with the nature of the 'race relations' that had developed between these groups by the 1920s.¹⁴¹ Within a rapidly developing academic South African historiography, the Natal past had become, by the late 1920s, a minor issue. For professional historians, its history was only significant from the time of European arrival in the 1820s, as these events had provided the basis for specific relationships between black and white communities.¹⁴²

From the 1920s, the study of the pre-colonial past came to be viewed as a separate subject, outside the realm of professional history. This trend was entrenched by the creation of academic departments under the broad category of 'African Studies' or 'Bantu Studies' at the University of Cape Town in 1920 and at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1923.¹⁴³ The pre-colonial Natal past was seen by A.T. Bryant, a specialist scholar in the 'Bantu Studies' department at the University of the

¹³⁹W.M. Macmillan, Bantu, Boer and Briton: The Making of the South African Native Problem, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1963 (1st publ. London, 1929), pp. 36-7.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 203-6.

¹⁴¹P. Rich, 'W.M. Macmillan, South African Segregation and Commonwealth Race Relations, 1919-1938', in H. Macmillan and S.Marks, eds., Africa and Empire: W.M. Macmillan, Historian and Social Critic, Aldershot, Temple Smith, 1989, p. 194.

¹⁴²W. Beinart, 'W.M. Macmillan's Analysis of Agrarian Change and African Rural Communities', in Macmillan and Marks, eds., Africa and Empire, p. 175.

¹⁴³J. Wright, 'Politics, Ideology and the Invention of the "Nguni"' in T. Lodge, ed., Resistance and Ideology in Settler Societies, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986, pp. 102-3.

Witwatersrand,¹⁴⁴ as being 'of more value to anthropologists than historians'.¹⁴⁵ Bryant's seminal work, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal was published in 1929 by Longman and Green, a firm which had set a precedent in establishing a separate 'Zulu past' with its publication of Gibson's Story of the Zulu in 1903. In 1924, while in England, Bryant had informed Stuart that he intended to collect material on the Zulu past, by 'going among the native kraals searching for information'.¹⁴⁶ Bryant clearly intended that his publication be presented as new material, supposedly authentic by virtue of this oral foundation.¹⁴⁷ It was on the basis of this idea that Bryant's work became an unrivalled source on the pre-literate Natal past for fifty years following its publication. Only in recent years have historians questioned the reliability of this presumed original oral collection.¹⁴⁸

In addition to his stated aim of publishing oral accounts, Bryant also wanted to promote 'a better understanding of the native case'.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Olden Times was clearly Eurocentric in its reiteration of the established images of Shaka as an agent of widespread devastation.¹⁵⁰ Bryant's depiction of the traders who came to Port Natal in the 1820s as 'fired with the ancient spirit of adventure and quest of fortune, which

¹⁴⁴H.C. Lugg, Introduction in A.T. Bryant, The Zulu People As they Were Before the White Man Came, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1949, p.x.

¹⁴⁵A.T. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, London, Longman, 1929, pp. viii-ix.

¹⁴⁶K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, KCM 23756, Conversation with A.T. Bryant, January 1924.

¹⁴⁷K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 40, KCM 23767, Bryant to Stuart, 7 April 1929.

¹⁴⁸J.Wright and C.Hamilton, 'Olden Times and Beyond: Conceptualising the Pre-Documentary History of Zululand-Natal', unpubl. Paper, University of Natal, Durban, 1985.

¹⁴⁹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 40, KCM 23767, Bryant to Stuart, 7 April 1929.

¹⁵⁰J. Wright, 'A.T. Bryant and the "Wars of Shaka"', History in Africa, vol. 19 (1991), pp. 409-425.

made the empire¹⁵¹ was similar in tone to the early twentieth-century descriptions which stressed romantic ideas of adventure within the imperial setting. Bryant placed Fynn within the same framework, describing him as a 'pioneer' and a 'chief' over destitute refugees.¹⁵² These ideas had been repeated in most accounts of Fynn which had appeared since the late nineteenth century, and had become the accepted version of Fynn's role for Natal writers who defined their imperial responsibility as leading indigenous societies towards a state of progress. Bryant depicted Fynn as a valuable recorder who had been an eye-witness to the events of the 1820s, and for this reason considered him to be a more reliable source than Shepstone.¹⁵³

Although Bryant seems, on initial investigation, to describe Fynn in terms of established images, a closer examination of Olden Times reveals discrepancies in his portrayals. While utilising Fynn's written accounts, as published by Bird, for instance Fynn's descriptions of the death and burial of Nandi in 1827, Bryant did not hesitate to point out that oral tradition contained no record of a European being present to witness these events.¹⁵⁴ A second important deviation from the standard ideas of Fynn and his fellow traders was Bryant's description of the manner in which the traders had 'gone native'. Fynn, stated Bryant, had, along with other individuals, taken 'native damsels' as common-law wives, and had left Vundlase, his 'great wife' in charge of his mixed-race family on his return to the Cape in 1834.¹⁵⁵ Since the publication of Isaacs' work in 1836, this theme had been deliberately omitted from accounts of Port Natal society in the 1820s and 1830s. Such an exposition was clearly an unacceptable issue for the settler histories of Natal which had developed from the 1850s. Increasingly strict codes of sexual behaviour had dominated colonial society into the beginning of the twentieth

¹⁵¹Bryant, Olden Times, p. 527.

¹⁵²Ibid., pp. 566, 655.

¹⁵³Ibid., pp. xviii-xix; 86-8; 611.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 658-665.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 373.

century.¹⁵⁶ By the 1920s, rigid notions of racial segregation provided the framework for society in Natal, but Bryant was an unmarried missionary outsider and thus his own attitudes were not defined by his membership of white Natal society. At the same time, his sympathy with particular aspects of 'Zulu' culture was more easily accepted in the 1920s than it would have been during the nineteenth century. There are other possible explanations for Bryant's inclusion of Fynn's 'going native'. The behaviour of Europeans during the 1820s was, by the 1920s, sufficiently removed in time from contemporary readers of Bryant's work. In addition, the mixed-race Fynn community in Natal, was, by the 1920s, an expanding group in southern Natal districts, and several 'coloured' men with the surname Fynn had inherited titles as chiefs under the Natal Native Affairs administrative structure.¹⁵⁷

Bryant's publication marked the end of an important new stage in academic work on the Natal region as it served to crystallise the idea, apparent since the beginning of the twentieth century, that the African past in Natal was relevant to anthropological research, though not to professional historical studies. From the 1930s, the indigenous past of Natal, was, like that of other regions in South Africa, dehistoricised in the sense that it became a topic for anthropologists rather than historians.¹⁵⁸ Fynn's accounts of the pre-colonial Natal past, which had gained recognition as valuable source material since the publication of Bird's work, were, from the 1930s, neglected by historians but utilised in new ways by anthropologists.

Recent studies of imperial iconography have identified the period from the 1880s to the late 1920s as a time of considerable entrenchment.¹⁵⁹ Images developed in historical,

¹⁵⁶R. Hyam, Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990, pp. 75-78.

¹⁵⁷S. Bramdeow, 'Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community', pp. 107-8.

¹⁵⁸J. Wright and C. Hamilton, 'Making Pre-Colonial Histories in South Africa: Past Trends and Present Debates', unpubl. paper, Rhodes University, July 1995, pp. 17-18.

¹⁵⁹R.H. MacDonald, The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1914, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994, pp. 4-7.

educational and medical discourse during the late nineteenth century. A similar trend is obvious in the development of images of Fynn during the same period. These images focused on Fynn as a representative of European progress, illustrated by his medical ability which enabled him to successfully negotiate a land-grant. James Stuart had used this image with particular effectiveness in his material for the Wembley Exhibition in 1924. The development of Natal historiography during this period was directly linked to white Natalians' ideas of their own significance in the region. The idea of Fynn as a 'rescuer' of African refugees was particularly useful as an example of the positive influences of European rule. In their construction of their own historical identity in the years from 1880, white Natal historians referred to their role as the colonisers of a previously anarchic society.

On one level, the Natal historical narrative was, by the early 1900s, reflective of what Anderson has described as a colonial need to identify with metropolitan values and outlook, for instance towards other races.¹⁶⁰ However, as the same time, it was increasingly evident that by the time of political union in 1910, whites in Natal had constructed the kind of historical metaphors which suited their ideology. Fynn, in his established role of pioneer, was the perfect icon of white colonisation in the region. During the course of the 1910s and 1920s, as Natal's status became established in the emerging dominion of white-ruled South Africa, this image, which had become crystallised during the period of late nineteenth-century imperialism, remained a static representation of white Natalian historical and political identity. During the decades from 1930, this historical narrative remained focused on the notion of black and white as binary opposites. This split was further entrenched by a growing academic trend which defined the historical activities of whites as history and those of blacks as suitable research material for anthropologists. It was against this background that the Natal historical narrative, as laid down by the beginning of the twentieth century by writers like Bird and Stuart, became entrenched as the given subject matter for the first generation of Natal academic historians.

¹⁶⁰B. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London, Verso, 1983, pp. 88-89.

CHAPTER 6
 FYNN AND THE NATAL PAST:
 HISTORY, ANTHROPOLOGY, LITERATURE
 1930s-1950

The publication of A.T. Bryant's Olden Times in Zululand and Natal in 1929 marked the beginning of a new period in Natal historiography. Prior to this publication, the only comprehensive work on the 'Zulu' past as a distinct subject had been Gibson's 1903 publication The Story of the Zulus. This book had contained accounts written by Fynn and published in Bird, but Gibson, like Bryant, had added to this his own collection of oral material which he had acquired while working as an administrator in northern Natal.¹ By the early 1900s, some colonial officials such as magistrates, like Gibson and Stuart, had acquired the label of 'expert' in connection with the black communities under their immediate control. This definition was used in conjunction with developments in the evolving science of anthropology which viewed pre-colonial societies in an 'ethnic' setting which was both timeless and unchanging.² Thus, administrators who had knowledge of contemporary black communities under their jurisdiction were also deemed to have intimate access to the history of these people.³ Bryant, as a missionary was also seen as having knowledge of the indigenous past, and his work Olden Times became recognised as a definitive and authoritative account of the 'Zulu past'.⁴ By the time of Bryant's publication, this past had become not only

¹Gibson, The Story of the Zulus, pp. v-vi.

²J. Fabian, Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object, New York, Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 80.

³S. Dubow, Illicit Union: Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 130.

⁴J. Wright, 'Beyond the Concept of the "Zulu Explosion": Comments on the Current Debate' in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, p. 111.

separate from the European experience in Natal, but also dehistoricised in that it was considered to fall under the research category of anthropology rather than history. Fynn's writing on early Natal, had become, in terms of these categories a source for research by anthropologists rather than historians.

Longman, Green and Company, the publishing firm that had produced both Gibson's Story of the Zulus and Bryant's Olden Times, released G.M. Mackeurtan's The Cradle Days of Natal in 1930, a year after Bryant's work had been published.⁵ The author of this work was a Natal lawyer, and had done no field research on Natal history, relying instead on his detailed knowledge of secondary works, for example the material published in Bird's Annals and Mendelssohn's bibliography of Africana.⁶ For Mackeurtan, as for Bird and Mendelssohn, Natal's 'history' began with the first literary accounts of the region, and the 'cradle days' of the title of his book referred to the period of the earliest European writing on the region. Fynn, as one of the first recorders of this information, most of it originally published in Bird's Annals, was given a central role in Cradle Days as an unquestionable authority on Natal's pre-colonial and early European past.⁷

Mackeurtan's depictions of the provenance of Europeans at Port Natal did not differ markedly from those used by nineteenth-century writers. In his 1888 publication, Moodie had described the early white traders in the romantic language of the late nineteenth century when he described Farewell's party as 'knights' and contrasted their 'chivalry' against the savage disposition of indigenous people.⁸ In Cradle Days, Fynn

⁵G.M. Mackeurtan, The Cradle Days of Natal, Durban, Longman, 1972 (1st publ. London, 1930).

⁶A.F. Hattersley, 'G.M. Mackeurtan', in D.W. Kruger, ed., Dictionary of South African Biography, Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council, 1972, vol. II, pp. 422-3; The Natal Who's Who, Durban, Davis, 1906, p. 122.

⁷Mackeurtan, The Cradle Days of Natal, p. 123.

⁸Moodie, The History of the Battles, vol. 1, pp. 387-392.

and the other individuals of the trading expedition were given the same setting of 'knight errantry' in their quest for the introduction of civilised values at Port Natal.⁹ The kinds of positive fictionalised images of Europeans used by Victorian writers on Africa¹⁰ were utilised by Mackeurtan in his depiction of Fynn, who was given the qualities of 'courage, good temper and capability' alongside 'resource, efficiency and humour', all juxtaposed against the caprice and savagery of Shaka.¹¹ In this portrayal of Fynn, Mackeurtan's writing had not developed beyond the style of late Victorian novelists.

Like Gibson and Bryant, Mackeurtan also drew on the idea of Fynn's supposed medical expertise, as described in Bird's publication, to illustrate the civilised values brought to Natal by the European traders. Fynn's use of medicine enabled him to gain the respect of the Zulu for European progress. In Cradle Days, as in the Annals of Natal, the medical skills demonstrated by Fynn allowed him to negotiate with Shaka for Farewell's 'land grant', as well as adopt 'refugees' from Shaka's depredations, these people 'attaching themselves (to Fynn) ... by way of gratitude for the exercise of his medical skill.'¹² Mackeurtan's reiteration of these ideas also serves to show that the notion of imperial medical influence as indistinguishable from the progress of 'civilised' values was still a dominant thread in European perceptions of their presence in Africa, even as late as the 1930s.¹³

Mackeurtan's book was the most detailed history of the Natal settler community which

⁹Mackeurtan, The Cradle Days of Natal, pp. 124-6.

¹⁰F.M. Mannsaker, 'The Dog that didn't Bark: The Subject Races in Imperial Fiction at the Turn of the Century' in Dabydeen, ed., The Black Presence in English Literature, pp. 117-8.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 113-7.

¹²Mackeurtan, The Cradle Days of Natal, , pp. 101-104; 128-9.

¹³ D. Denoon, 'Temperate Medicine and Settler Capitalism: On the Reception of Western Medical Ideas', in Macleod and Lewis, Disease, Medicine and Empire, pp. 121-5.

had been published and, alongside Bryant's Olden Times, it served to further separate the 'Zulu' and 'Natal' past, both regionally and ethnically.¹⁴ Cradle Days also illustrated the way in which popular history remained outside the mainstream of the developing South African academic historiography where liberal historians were reconstructing the past in terms of black-white interaction.¹⁵

The academic trend in regarding pre-colonial societies as fit material for study under the discipline of anthropology and ethnology was not however, unique to studies of the 'Zulu'. By the early 1930s, 'Bantu' or 'tribal' societies, in terms of both their present and past, were categorised in universities like the Witwatersrand and Natal as 'African Studies' and researched by anthropologists, linguists, ethnologists and archaeologists, and increasingly neglected by historians. The journal Bantu Studies was specifically established by the University of the Witwatersrand to publish the results of this broad-based research.¹⁶

The Natal past, as defined in both popular and academic works, consisted of a narrative of European activity, initiated by Fynn. This idea dominated Natal history for the two decades following the publication of Mackeurtan's Cradle Days. Pre-colonial Natal, when not categorised as the field of anthropologists, was only glanced at in passing by historians, who continued to view the Shakan period in terms of the settler historiography of 'devastation' and chaos. The proper history of the region began with the arrival of literate Europeans.¹⁷ The pre-literate Zulu past, already separate and distinct as a result of Gibson's and Bryant's work, became increasingly the focus of an anthropological approach to the pre-colonial past, wherein societies existed in a

¹⁴Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, pp. 320-321; A.D. Smith, The Ethnic Origins of Nations, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 177-9.

¹⁵Wright, 'Politics, Ideology and the Invention of the "Nguni"', pp. 101-3.

¹⁶ E.H. Brookes, A History of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1966, p. 148; Rich, White Power and the Liberal Conscience, p. 54.

¹⁷A.F. Hattersley, South Africa 1652-1933, London, Longman, 1933, p. 75.

timeless ethnographic present.¹⁸

James Stuart suggested that anthropology was a suitable discipline for an assessment of the 'native problem' in colonial Natal.¹⁹ In provincial Natal under the South African union government, 'native administration' was a continuation of the process of segregation between African and white communities, begun in the 1840s. The administrators of this system were, by the 1930s, actively involved in a programme of 'retribalisation', which in its broadest sense, aimed to prevent the growth of a black urban population.²⁰ In this context, 'tribal' meant rural or traditional and, in an increasingly industrial society, it was necessary to draw on the work of anthropologists for clearer definitions of this particular notion of 'tribal' society.²¹ Within such a setting, knowledge of indigenous societies, both past and present, was viewed as essential for the smooth running of what had become the Native Affairs Department.²² In Natal, a knowledge of 'Zulu' society was considered essential for officials employed within this structure.²³ By virtue of this supposed knowledge, administrators within this system were viewed as 'experts' on both the past and the present dynamics of 'tribal' society, just as, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, individuals within the colonial structure like Fynn, Shepstone and Stuart, were perceived as people who had access to the native past and present.²⁴

¹⁸Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu History', pp. 61-62.

¹⁹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 31, KCM 23531, Lecture on the Native Problem in South Africa, 4 January 1933.

²⁰Dubow, 'Holding "a just balance between white and black": The Native Affairs Department in South Africa c. 1920-1933', pp. 219-220.

²¹ Dubow, Illicit Union pp. 202-203.

²² Ashforth, The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa, Chapter 2.

²³Marks, 'Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness', pp. 218-9.

²⁴A. Koopman, 'Dingiswayo Rides Again', Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol. 2 (1979), pp. 1-4.

During the two decades following the publication of Bryant's Olden Times in 1929, there were no historical accounts, outside the work of anthropologists, on the communities which had been broadly defined as 'Zulu' by the 1920s. Anthropologists in general did not distinguish between the past and present of 'Bantu' societies,²⁵ although there were specific attempts, such as Monica Hunter's, to examine the effects of change over time in terms of European contact since the nineteenth century.²⁶

E.J. Krige, whose influential anthropological work The Social System of the Zulus first appeared in 1936, attempted to present 'Zulu culture' as it had existed in its 'traditional' state, undisturbed by European 'culture contact' and the 'disintegration caused by European standards'. Krige was keenly aware of the considerable influences on this 'traditional' society by the 1930s, and stated that this accounted for many of the discrepancies provided by different accounts of similar customs. She also acknowledged that there were different cultural groups within the widely-defined 'Zulu' people in the south-east African region.²⁷ Nevertheless, Krige's work became a significant source on the 'Zulu' as a group with a specific ethnic identity which existed in a context which was essentially timeless.²⁸

Krige, as an anthropologist had carried out field research elsewhere in South Africa,²⁹ but she stated that her book on the societies of the Natal region was based largely on secondary works and documentary sources. In particular, she acknowledged both

²⁵For example I. Schapera, 'The Old Bantu Culture' in I. Schapera, ed., Western Civilisation and the Natives of South Africa, London, Routledge, 1967 (1st publ. London, 1934), p.6.

²⁶M. Hunter, Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa, Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1969 (1st publ. London, 1936), pp. 8-13.

²⁷E.J. Krige, The Social System of the Zulus, London, Longman, Green and Co., 1965 (1st publ. London, Longman, 1936), p. vi.

²⁸J. Argyle and E. Preston-Whyte, eds., Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa: Essays in Honour of Eileen Krige, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. i-vi.

²⁹Argyle and Preston-Whyte, eds., Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa, pp. x-xi.

Isaacs and Fynn as important 'sources of information' to whom she was indebted for much of the material which appeared in her book, while at the same time stressing that these works were by no means 'scientific' and were not concerned with the 'life and customs of the Zulus'.³⁰ Despite these shortcomings in the writings of Isaacs and Fynn, Krige clearly considered these authors as essential sources for the reconstruction of the Zulu past during the Shakan period, even if they did not deal with social structures in sufficient detail. In her introduction on Zulu history, she drew directly on Fynn's accounts of Shaka's reign, as published in Bird's Annals, and included Fynn's descriptions of the 'devastation' by Shaka.³¹ Krige did attempt to compare different secondary accounts on Shaka and she drew on recently published works, such as Bryant's Olden Times as well as the established sources like Bird.³² Although she did not highlight Fynn's individual role, she utilised Fynn's writing in her depiction of the positive reception given by Shaka to the traders and his 'special interest in European medicines'.³³

Krige's influential and repeatedly re-printed book was concerned primarily with Zulu society and did not contain any particular image of Fynn along the lines of works like Bird's Annals or Bryant's Olden Times. It did however, stress the crucial importance of Fynn as a source on what by the 1930s was clearly identified as a separate and distinct 'Zulu past'. Krige's work served to establish both Isaacs and Fynn as acknowledged authorities on an academically recognised Zulu 'history', even though this was within the discipline of anthropology. This was the first publication to provide Fynn's writing the status of 'evidence' in a professional academic study. This contextualisation of Fynn as a source for anthropologists was to remain a dominant idea in academic writing at least until the 1950s.

³⁰Krige, The Social System of the Zulus, p. v.

³¹Ibid., pp. 9-16. This is taken from Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. 60-72.

³²Ibid., p. 8.

³³Ibid., p. 15.

During the two decades from 1930 to 1950, anthropologists, like historians, accepted without question the settler historiography of the Natal past which had developed from Isaacs and Fynn's writing and which centered around the idea of the 'devastation' of the region by Shaka in the early nineteenth century.³⁴ These ideas, which had been given the vague label 'mfecane' by the historian Walker in the 1920s,³⁵ were reiterated even in ground-breaking research by the anthropologist Max Gluckman. Gluckman's material, which was a result of field work in northern Natal in the 1930s, was initially published in article form in the newly established academic journal Bantu Studies.³⁶

Gluckman then published a chapter on the 'Zulu Kingdom' in the work edited by the anthropologists Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systems.³⁷ Like the other chapters in this book, Gluckman's account of the Zulu placed this society in a timeless setting and only distinguished between two main historical periods, pre-European and post-European, the Zulu kingdom existing in one broadly defined 'situation' up to 1824 and in a another 'state of affairs' after that date. Gluckman, like Krige, used Fynn as a reliable source on the pre-European state of the 'Zulu Kingdom'.³⁸ Gluckman's research was influential for scholars writing in the decades after the publication of African Political Systems in that he provided valuable new starting-points for research on the Shakan period, specifically an alternative environmental and material context.³⁹

³⁴Wright, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane', pp. 280-281.

³⁵Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo', Journal of African History, vol. 29 (1988), p. 504.

³⁶H. Macmillan, 'Return to the Malungwana Drift - Max Gluckman, the Zulu Nation and the Common Society', African Affairs: The Journal of the Royal African Society, vol. 94, no. 374 (January 1995), p. 40.

³⁷M. Gluckman, 'The Kingdom of the Zulu in South Africa' in M. Fortes and E. Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systems, London, 1969 (1st publ. London, 1940), pp. 25-49.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 25-6.

³⁹D. Handelman, 'Some Contributions of Anthropological Thought' in M.J. Arnoff, ed., Freedom and Constraint: A Memorial Tribute to Max Gluckman, Assen, Van Gorcum Press, 1976, pp. 7-8; D. Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu History - Max Gluckman and Shaka's Sexual Preferences', unpublished paper, University of Natal,

However, he also entrenched the idea that the study of pre-colonial Natal was the sphere of anthropologists rather than historians, and that academic research in this field need look no further than Fynn's nineteenth-century writing for an explanation of the events of the Shakan period.⁴⁰

While anthropologists relied on Fynn and Isaacs for their reconstructions of the pre-colonial past, historians followed the same trend. Scholars of the liberal school, like Walker and Macmillan, who had started publishing in the late 1920s, had to use nineteenth-century material to illustrate their arguments. These historians continued to examine the interactions between white and black in South Africa, and were joined by other writers like C.W. de Kiewiet and I.D. MacCrone who offered new analyses of race relations.⁴¹ The liberal historians of this period met with recognition in Britain when they were asked to write chapters for The Cambridge History of the British Empire, the eighth volume of which dealt with Southern African issues.⁴² Walker and Macmillan, in their contributions to this volume, stressed the interaction between white and black communities in the South African region but paid very little attention to pre-colonial societies experiencing historical change.⁴³ Writing on pre-colonial societies was clearly regarded as the task of anthropologists. This was illustrated by the chapter by Schapera, entitled 'The Native Inhabitants', in which indigenous communities were

Pietermaritzburg, 1992, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁰Wright, 'Politics, Ideology and the Invention of the "Nguni"', p. 107.

⁴¹C.W. de Kiewiet, The Imperial Factor in South Africa: A Study in Politics and Economics, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1937, pp. 38-40; I.D. MacCrone, Race Attitudes in South Africa: Historical, Experimental and Psychological Studies, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1957 (1st publ. Johannesburg, 1937).

⁴²E.A. Benians and A.P. Newton, eds., The Cambridge History of the British Empire, vol. 8, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1936.

⁴³W. Macmillan, 'Political Development, 1822-1834', in Benians and Newton, eds, Cambridge History, pp. 249-260; W.M. Macmillan, 'The Frontier and the Kaffir Wars, 1792-1836', in Benians and Newton, eds, Cambridge History, pp. 301-324; E.A. Walker, 'The Formation of New States, 1835-1854', in Benians and Newton, eds, Cambridge History, pp. 325-345.

described in terms of custom and tradition, but not in the context of dynamic historical change.⁴⁴ The role of Farewell's trading party was described within the setting of European expansion into the interior of South Africa, rather than as part of the process of white-black interaction, and was written by the settlerist historian, Cory, rather than any of the new liberal writers.⁴⁵ Cory's account of the trading expedition to Port Natal was taken from Theal's work and was in no way an original explanation for the presence of Europeans in Natal. These chapters in The Cambridge History served to reinforce two central sets of ideas about the Natal past: firstly in relegating the Zulu to the field of anthropology; and secondly in reiterating the existing portrayals of Fynn's role as contained in the writings of Bird and Theal at the turn of the century.

Within Natal, however, the region's European past was being shaped for the first time by professional academic historians. The main initiator of an academic history of Natal was A.F. Hattersley, who was professor of history at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg from 1916 to 1953.⁴⁶ From the mid-1930s Hattersley produced numerous publications on the European history of Natal, commencing with a volume entitled More Annals of Natal which he intended to follow on directly from Bird's Annals of Natal.⁴⁷ A third volume of 'Annals' appeared as Later Annals of Natal 1938.⁴⁸ The Natalians was published by Shuter and Shooter in 1940 as an educational history text and reflected Hattersley's view that the 'history' of Natal began with its status as a colony in the 1840s.⁴⁹ This volume contained Hattersley's only comment on the period

⁴⁴I. Schapera, 'The Native Inhabitants', in Benians and Newton, eds, Cambridge History of the British Empire, vol. 8, pp. 21-50.

⁴⁵G. Cory, 'The British Settlers of 1820', in Benians and Newton, eds, Cambridge History of the British Empire, p. 247.

⁴⁶Brookes, A History of the University of Natal, p. 64.

⁴⁷A.F. Hattersley, More Annals of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1936, pp. 11-14.

⁴⁸A.F. Hattersley, Later Annals of Natal, London, Longman, 1938.

⁴⁹A.F. Hattersley, The Natalians: Further Annals of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1940, p. 13.

before 1840 and demonstrated his emphasis on the European colonial role in the Natal past. For Hattersley, the 'colonisation process in Natal owed little to the efforts of the traders of the 1820s, although he did describe them as 'intrepid pioneers', an image which had been present in historical literature since the 1820s.⁵⁰ In a second volume published in 1940, entitled Portrait of a Colony, Hattersley reinforced his neglect of the early white settlers by once again commencing his narrative in the 1840s.⁵¹ Hattersley considered that Bird's Annals had covered the period prior to annexation and that there was little if anything to add to Bird's material. This approach meant that the images of Fynn and his fellow traders which had originated in the early nineteenth century and were entrenched in Bird's work, remained unchallenged. Hattersley, as the dominant professional historian of the inter-war period, and the first academic historian to write on the Natal past, sanctioned the existing ideas of Fynn. Thus, the depiction of Fynn's role which appeared in Bird's Annals and which had been reiterated in works like Mackeurtan's Cradle Days, was, through Hattersley's tacit approval, further entrenched in academic historiography as an accurate portrayal, a trend which continued for several decades.

Hattersley's works on Natal were important in that they were the first detailed academic histories of the region.⁵² At the same time however, they entrenched the academic split between the Natal past and the 'Zulu' past. The use of Fynn's writing as vital evidence by academics demonstrated their belief in literate sources by Europeans. Fynn's early image as a recorder of events became increasingly important for the reconstruction of the Natal past by both historians and anthropologists. At the same time, however, different views of this past were also being created by African writers. This trend had been started by Magema Fuze's publication in 1922, and by the early 1930s black South African authors were producing their own accounts of the Natal region's past. Although this was in part, a response to the formation of the Zulu cultural organisation

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 15.

⁵¹A.F. Hattersley, Portrait of a Colony, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1940, pp. 2-12.

⁵²Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, Preface.

Inkatha, in 1924,⁵³ it can also be seen as an instance of general developments in African literature during the first half of the twentieth century, where African writers reinterpreted historical accounts as a front for nationalist mobilization.⁵⁴ Paul la Hausse has recently provided an assessment of two African writers in the Natal region: Petros Lamula and Lymon Malinga. These authors, in attempting to conceptualise a Zulu-focused set of ideas of the past, which could then be used to promote Zulu nationalism in the present through political and cultural discourse.⁵⁵ To this end, both writers constructed narratives of the Zulu past which specifically downplayed the role of Europeans. Lamula's book uZulu kaMalandela, published in 1924, stressed Shaka's role as a hero who deserved to be honoured by Europeans as he had granted them land-rights.⁵⁶ Malinga attempted to write a popular history of the Zulu people and he, like Lamula, presented Shakan Zululand as a positive society, in contrast to traditional European devastation arguments.⁵⁷ Neither author included Fynn in their accounts as they were attempting to escape European influence and create their own nationalist literary tradition. Production by omission was the method they used to illustrate their commitment to Zulu-centric rather than Eurocentric history.

African writing on the history of Natal was not limited to a closely-defined 'historical' discipline, and was produced in a variety of languages and genres, including transcriptions of oral poetry, fiction, drama and epic poetry.⁵⁸ The Sotho author Thomas

⁵³N. Cope, To Bind the Nation: Solomon kaDinuzulu and Zulu Nationalism, 1913-1933, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1993, pp. 102-103.

⁵⁴E. Boehmer, Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 100-101.

⁵⁵P. La Hausse, 'Ethnicity and History in the Careers of two Zulu Nationalists: Petros Lamula (c.1881-1948) and Lymon Malinga (1889-c.1936)', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1992, p. 128.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 143.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 315.

⁵⁸A. Gerard, African Language Literatures: An Introduction to the Literary History of Sub-Saharan Africa, London, Longman, 1981, pp. 196-199.

Mofolo deliberately set out to challenge the negative European portrayals of Shaka,⁵⁹ and in his novel Chaka, eventually published in 1931, he drew on accounts written in the Sotho newspaper Leselinyana la Lesotho in the 1890s.⁶⁰ Mofolo not only avoided using Fynn as a source, but did not even mention him, or any of the Europeans in Farewell's party by name.⁶¹ The novel Chaka was not intended to be an historical work and was a combination of various literary genres, including folktale, fantasy and epic.⁶² Mofolo aimed to stress Shaka's achievements and to centre him as a heroic figure. To include Europeans would have defeated this object by downplaying the role of Africans in the story.

Fynn was also conspicuously absent, both as a source and as an important figure in R.R. Dhlomo's work uShaka published in Zulu in 1937.⁶³ This work was a biographical novel and Dhlomo aimed to challenge the European ideas of Shaka by drawing on oral tradition.⁶⁴ To introduce Fynn would be an acknowledgement of the European presence in Shaka's historical setting. This would have undermined Dhlomo's objectives in attempting to provide an African version of Shaka's life. Dhlomo's brother, H.I.E. Dhlomo, had a similar approach in his poetical depictions of Shaka. Although his contribution to the literature of Shaka was limited, his description of Fynn and the other traders as the 'foreign white swallows' was an example of his contempt for the Europeans' contribution to events at Port Natal in the 1820s.⁶⁵

⁵⁹T. Mofolo, Chaka: An Historical Romance, London, Heinemann, 1981 (1st publ. Oxford, 1931), p. xi; D.P. Kunene, Thomas Mofolo and the Emergence of Written Sesotho Prose, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989, p. 174-5.

⁶⁰Kunene, Thomas Mofolo and the Emergence of Written Sesotho Prose, p. 160.

⁶¹Mofolo, Chaka. An Historical Romance, p. 101.

⁶²D. B. Ntuli and C.F. Swanepoel, Southern African Literature in African Languages: A Concise Historical Perspective, Pretoria, Acacia Books, 1993, pp. 36-7.

⁶³R.R. Dhlomo, uShaka, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1937.

⁶⁴Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction', p. 120.

⁶⁵N. Visser and T. Couzens, eds., H.I.E. Dhlomo: Collected Works, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985, pp. xii; 70.

A contrasting attitude towards Fynn was evinced by Dhlomo's contemporary, B.W. Vilakazi. Vilakazi's Zulu poetry on Shaka was published in 1935 and 1944 and in his verse he referred to Fynn as 'Mbuyazi of Durban, venerated'.⁶⁶ Vilakazi chose to elevate both Farewell and Shaka to the status of equal heroes.⁶⁷ These depictions were conciliatory towards Europeans in that although the poet tried to obliterate the negative images of Shaka, he did not replace these with equally damaging portrayals of Europeans.⁶⁸ For Vilakazi, Fynn and Shaka are equally worthy of 'veneration'. This can be partially explained by Vilakazi's reluctance to take up a conscious political stance against European domination.⁶⁹

The black literature which developed in the 1930s and 1940s has, until very recently, been viewed by researchers as fiction rather than attempts at the reconstruction of history from an African perspective. Daniel Kunene, in his assessment of Mofolo's work, stated that this was a merging of 'history, legend and fiction' as it was based on oral tradition rather than written evidence. He suggested that Mofolo's writing was best defined as 'faction', a term coined by the African American writer, Alex Hailey.⁷⁰ Detailed research into the kind of historical account which emerged from the works of African writers prior to 1950 is a very recent academic research topic.⁷¹

The written history of Natal remained, at the end of the 1940s, under the control of white authors. Publications on the white history of the region were largely produced by academics like Hattersley and were categorised as 'history'. The past of African

⁶⁶D. Malcolm and F.L. Friedman, translators, Zulu Horizons: The Vilakazi Poems, Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1962, p. 69.

⁶⁷Ibid., p.62.

⁶⁸D. Ntuli, The Poetry of B.W. Vilakazi, Pretoria, Acacia Books, 1984, pp. 58-60.

⁶⁹C. Nyembezi, 'B.W. Vilakazi: A Biographical Note' in Malcolm and Friedman, Zulu Horizons, p. 8.

⁷⁰Kunene, Thomas Mofolo and the Emergence of Written Sesotho Prose, pp. 174-5.

⁷¹Hamilton and Wright, 'Making PreColonial Histories in South Africa', pp. 13-14.

societies in Natal and Zululand was still considered by professional researchers to be the realm of anthropologists. However, by 1950, the variety of literature published on the Natal region marked the beginning of a less rigid division between 'history' and 'anthropology'. In 1949, H.C. Lugg, a former official in the Natal Native Affairs Department, published his Historic Natal and Zululand. Lugg's experience in Natal was, like James Stuart's work as a magistrate, considered by both government officials and academics to be relevant to studies in anthropology rather than history. As a native administrator, he was supposedly able to bridge the gap between white and black societies in the region. As a result, he was seen as an individual with knowledge of African custom and also African history. Lugg combined the Natal and Zululand past and ignored the division between white history and black anthropology. He used both Fynn and Isaacs as sources on the history of all communities in the Natal region.⁷² As a non-academic, he saw no need to adhere to the academically imposed distinction between the African and European past, or between history and anthropology. For Lugg, Fynn's accounts, as written material, served to link the history of both groups in the Natal region.

During the period from the 1930s to 1950, Fynn's writing, as originally published in Bird's Annals, had been used as valuable source material by both historians and anthropologists. By 1950, these disciplines had developed as distinct professional categories of academic research, specialising in the past of the different racial groups in Natal. Fynn's narratives were crucial for scholars in both fields, as he was viewed by the leading writers as an individual who had been an eye witness of events during the early European period. Fynn was also seen as someone who had, through his contact with African societies, particular access to information on the 'Zulu' past. White professional historians like A.F. Hattersley also accepted the well established nineteenth-century images of Fynn and were reluctant to move beyond these ideas of Fynn. Thus, although Fynn's reputation as a recorder was enhanced by the development of academic research in history and anthropology, the portrayals of him

⁷²H.C. Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1949, pp. 3-4.

in the Eurocentric histories of the region were based on the same ideas as those which had appeared in the earliest white writing on Natal.

As Jack Goody has noted, the decades from 1930 to 1950 were a period in which anthropology was the dominant academic discipline for European policy towards African people.⁷³ In the Natal historiographical context, this meant, in broad terms, a relegation of the black past to researchers in anthropology, while historians concentrated on the established narrative of European achievement. At the same time, this Natalian historical discourse, which focused on the process of white colonisation, was neglected by South African historians who were, in the 1940s, beginning to examine social and economic issues such as urbanisation and segregation.⁷⁴ Historians writing within this emerging 'liberal' framework did not study the Natal region until the 1960s, by which stage they had a new textual source to draw on in the form of The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, published in 1950.

⁷³J. Goody, The Expansive Movement: Anthropology in Britain and Africa, 1918-1970, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 10.

⁷⁴C. Saunders, Writing History: South Africa's Urban Past and Other Essays, Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council, 1992, pp. 109-112.

CHAPTER 7

THE PUBLICATION AND RECEPTION OF
THE DIARY OF HENRY FRANCIS FYNN

1940s-1970s

Scholars in the research fields of both history and anthropology were, by the 1940s, using Fynn extensively as a source for their work on the Natal past. However, the only published extracts of Fynn's writing prior to 1950 were the narratives included in Chase's The Natal Papers, Colenso's Ten Weeks in Natal and Bird's Annals of Natal. In 1942, James Stuart had died in England before he was able to complete his task of preparing the Fynn Papers for publication. These manuscripts, were, for him, the most significant written source on the early Natal past.¹ Stuart had had possession of the Fynn manuscripts since 1905 and had used them as source material for his writing from that time². Following his move to England in 1922, Stuart had continued to utilise this collection for his public lectures on the relationship between settlers and Africans in Natal.³ The Fynn Papers, as they existed at the time of Stuart's death, consisted of the original manuscripts together

¹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 9, KCM 23428, List of proposed publications, 4 July 1921.

²Examples of Stuart's use of the Fynn manuscripts include: K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 31, KCM 23540, Native Policy in Natal from 1824 to 1853, December 1905; File 44, KCM 23848, Lecture on the Zulu Tribal System, June 1907; File 68, and KCM 24382, Notes on the Natives, September 1911.

³K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 25, KCM 23522, Notes by James Stuart, 5 March 1924; File 31, KCM 23531, Lecture on the Native Problem in South Africa, 4 January 1933; File 30, KCM 23531, Lecture on the Zulu, 9 March 1935.

with Stuart's annotated typescripts.⁴ Stuart's widow, Ellen undertook, on her

husband's behalf, to return the collection to South Africa and to find a suitable replacement as editor so that the Fynn Papers could be prepared for publication. Once the collection had arrived in Cape Town in late 1945, it was placed under the provisional care of the Van Riebeeck Society in the South African Library. The following year, Ellen Stuart had it moved to Durban, at the request of Fynn's white descendants and handed over the original manuscripts to Fynn's grandson, H.F. Fynn.⁵ The Fynn family retained the manuscript collection until the centenary of Fynn's death in 1961, when the executors of Fynn's grandson's estate, with the consent of the surviving members of his family, donated it to the Natal Archives.⁶ The collection was later catalogued as the Fynn Papers.⁷

Prior to the return of the Fynn Papers to South Africa, Ellen Stuart had considered her husband's brother Phillip, as the ideal person to take over the editing task.⁸ Ellen's perception of his editing capacity was based on what she perceived as his considerable knowledge of 'native lore', a topic which she presumed formed the

⁴The manuscripts are presently among the Fynn Papers in the Natal Archives. Stuart's typescripts are contained in K.C.A.L., Fynn Papers, File 22895, 'Diary of H.F. Fynn'.

⁵Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, Killie Campbell to Mr Krynauw, Natal Archivist, 16 July 1946.

⁶B.J.T. Leverton, 'The Papers of Henry Francis Fynn', *Historia*, (1964), pp. 32-33.

⁷Natal Archives, A1382, Index to Fynn Papers, Description by archivist, B.J.T. Leverton.

⁸Killie Campbell Africana Library, File 44, MS 1053, Proposal for the Fynn Papers by Ellen Stuart, 26 April 1944.

main theme in most of Fynn's manuscripts.⁹ Phillip's reputation as an expert on African people had followed the publication of his fictionalised biography of Shaka in 1927.¹⁰ Unfortunately for Ellen's plan for the papers, Phillip Stuart died shortly before taking possession of his brother's typescripts in late 1945.¹¹ Ellen then approached the Durban Africana collector, Killie Campbell, to take possession of Stuart's typescripts and to find an appropriate editor for the project.¹²

Ellen Stuart had categorised her husband's project as relevant to 'native' custom and history, and this was illustrated by her selection of Phillip, a 'native' expert, as possible editor. By contrast, Killie Campbell viewed the publication of Fynn's material as an historical project. She therefore sought professional advice from A.F. Hattersley, head of the history department at the University of Natal. Hattersley, like Ellen Stuart family, regarded the Fynn Papers as dealing with 'Bantu' issues such as 'religion, folklore and native lore'. In line with the prevailing academic outlook, Hattersley considered that such a collection was suitable subject matter for anthropologists rather than historians, and he suggested that someone like A.T. Bryant, a recognised expert on 'Bantu institutions,' would be a more 'relevant scholar' than any professional historian.¹³ Killie Campbell did not immediately accept Hattersley's recommendation and she asked for a second opinion from E.G. Malherbe, an educationist by training, who was at that time vice-principal of the

⁹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, Ellen Stuart to Phillip Stuart, 8 December 1945.

¹⁰P.A. Stuart, An African Attila: Tales of the Zulu Reign of Terror, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1938 (first publ. London, 1927).

¹¹The Natal Mercury, 16 July 1946.

¹²Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, Ellen Stuart to Killie Campbell, 4 February 1946.

¹³Killie Campbell Africana Library, Killie Campbell Correspondence, File 15, Hattersley to Killie Campbell, 1 July 1946.

University of Natal.¹⁴ Malherbe, however, shared Hattersley's notions of what was anthropology and what was history, and in reply to Killie Campbell he suggested that the Fynn Papers be passed on to J.D. Krige, the newly appointed professor of Social Anthropology as he was 'a recognised authority in ... (the) particular field ... (of) ethnology'.¹⁵

Faced with such advice, Killie Campbell started to look outside the history department for an editor for the Fynn Papers and, as Ellen Stuart had originally suggested, looked for a person who had knowledge of the Zulu language and culture. She did not take up Malherbe's advice to look for a scholar in the anthropological sciences but instead turned her attention to the Zulu Department and approached the newly-appointed head of department, Douglas Malcolm. Killie Campbell told Malcolm that he would be the ideal editor as 'there are so few people who understand the Zulu as you do'.¹⁶ Malcolm agreed to undertake the editing work, and the Stuart family, now represented by James's sister, Beatrice Marx, approved of Killie Campbell's decision, noting that Malcolm was particularly well fitted for this task due to his 'knowledge of the natives'.¹⁷

Malcolm, who had been appointed to an academic post in 1946, had previously been an official in the Department of Native Education, a division of the Natal Native Affairs Department.¹⁸ Like Stuart, he had acquired a reputation in anthropological circles as an expert on native matters, as well as the indigenous

¹⁴Killie Campbell Africana Library, Killie Campbell Correspondence, File 15, K. Campbell to E.G. Malherbe, 12 July 1946.

¹⁵Killie Campbell Africana Library, Killie Campbell Correspondence, File 15, Malherbe to Killie Campbell, 12 July 1946

¹⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23887, Campbell to Malcolm, 15 July 1946.

¹⁷Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23878, Beatrice Marx to Killie Campbell, 31 July 1946.

¹⁸Brookes, A History of the University of Natal, p. 148.

past. In 1938 the anthropologist Duggan-Cronin had asked him to contribute information on the Zulu to the anthropological series of photographic plates, entitled The Bantu Tribes of South Africa.¹⁹ Since the time of Shepstone, individual officials in the Native Affairs Department had often had a reputation as authorities on the Zulu. H.C. Lugg, who was Chief Native Commissioner in the Natal Native Affairs Department during the 1930s, had also acquired a certain standing in government circles as an individual with considerable knowledge of the history of the Natal-Zululand region.²⁰ Lugg, like Malcolm, was not an academic historian and yet published in 1949 a widely recognised historical publication, entitled Historic Natal and Zululand.²¹ This volume, together with Lugg's introduction to Bryant's new publication The Zulu People, a book which appeared the same year,²² served to entrench the idea of native affairs officials as experts on the Zulu past. Killie Campbell did not approach Lugg as a possible editor for the Fynn Papers, possibly due to his already heavy involvement with his own and Bryant's publication during the late 1940s.

Malcolm spent the two years from 1946 to 1948 editing Stuart's typescript copies of the Fynn Papers, though there is no evidence to suggest that he compared these with the original manuscripts.²³ Stuart's typescripts consisted of four separate sections entitled 'The Diary of Henry Fynn', 'Notes and Memoranda on Early Natal',

¹⁹D. Malcolm, 'The Zulu' in A.M. Duggan-Cronin, ed., The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: Reproduction of Photographic Studies, vol. 3, London, 1938, plates i-xi.

²⁰S.Dubow, 'Holding 'A Just Balance Between Black and White': The Native Affairs Department in South Africa, c. 1920-1933', p. 235.

²¹D. Malcolm, 'The Zulu' in A.M. Duggan-Cronin, ed., The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: Reproduction of Photographic Studies, vol. 3, London, 1938, plates i-xi.

²²A.T. Bryant, The Zulu People as they were before the White Man Came, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1967 (first publ. London, 1949), pp. ix-x.

²³Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23880, Killie Campbell to C.J. Uys, 31 July 1946; KCM 23920, Killie Campbell to Beatrice Marx, 31 January 1948; KCM 23928, Leo Marquard to Douglas Malcolm, 25 November 1948.

'Notes on Native Customs' and 'Miscellaneous Papers'.²⁴ Stuart had originally intended to produce a two-volume work, with the 'Diary' being published separately from a volume containing the material on customs.²⁵ Malcolm decided however to publish one book consisting of three sections entitled 'Historical Introduction', 'The Diary of Henry Fynn' and 'Notes on Customs'. The 'Historical Introduction' would include Fynn's writing on the pre-Shakan and early Shakan period which Stuart had labelled 'Notes and Memoranda on Early Natal'²⁶.

As a non-historian, Malcolm did not attempt any external historical criticism of the Fynn texts. Fynn's account of Shaka's campaign against the Ndwandwe in 1826 was transcribed by Stuart with a note to the effect that this manuscript was watermarked 1827.²⁷ Malcolm accepted this without question and commented that Fynn had probably written this record during the 1830s.²⁸ Apart from this, Malcolm did not attempt any analysis of the possible historical context of Fynn's writing. Stuart's original preface was adopted intact by Malcolm for the publication. In this, Stuart stated that Fynn had probably written some of his manuscripts during the 1830s, but that the bulk of his writing had taken place during the 1850s.²⁹ Malcolm did not, however, explore the implications of this later date and did not question the established idea of Fynn writing his narratives during Shaka's reign.

In terms of internal criticism of the text, Malcolm did not, in his editing, attempt to assess the validity of Fynn's accounts, even though some of the material had been

²⁴Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, File 22895, pp. 1-212; Fynn Diary Folder, MSS 1230 a-r.

²⁵Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23931, 'Proposed Contents of the Fynn Papers', p. 3.

²⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Diary Folder, Miscellaneous Manuscripts.

²⁷Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, File 22895, pp. 77-78.

²⁸Stuart and Malcolm, eds., *Diary*, p. 131, fn 1.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.

scrutinised by various scholars since its first appearance in Bird's Annals. In his Olden Times, Bryant had questioned the nature of Dingiswayo's contact with Europeans as recorded by Fynn.³⁰ Malcolm did not take up this argument and, apart from using Bryant to verify Fynn's chronology,³¹ he left Fynn's material on Dingiswayo as an unquestioned historical source.³² Like Stuart, Malcolm accepted Fynn's descriptions of the 'devastation' of the Natal region by Shaka and did not provide, as footnotes, any cross- references to new explanations, such as Gluckman's environmental contextualisation of Shaka, for the nature of change in pre-colonial south- east Africa.³³ The 'historical introduction' which Malcolm prepared from Stuart's typescripts, and which constituted the first part of the published Diary of H.F Fynn, was largely a reprint of the material published in Bird's Annals. Stuart had provided very little indication of the twentieth century contributions to Natal historiography, such as Bryant's Olden Times or the work carried out by anthropologists like Krige and Gluckman.

Malcolm's edited version of Stuart's typescript entitled 'Diary of Henry Fynn' eventually constituted the bulk of the published Diary. This contained Fynn's reminiscences from 1823 to 1834, sections of which had already been published in Bird's Annals.³⁴ Malcolm tidied Stuart's typescript for publication without attempting any serious examination of its contents beyond limited interpolations, for instance his comment that Fynn's description of '80 000 natives in their war dresses' at KwaBulawayo in 1824 was exaggerated and probably referred to the entire population rather than the regimental forces.³⁵ Two of the most important episodes

³⁰Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 83-4.

³¹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, File 22895, 'Diary of H. Fynn', pp. 3-4; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 4-8.

³²Koopman, 'Dingiswayo Rides Again', pp. 4-5.

³³Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 18-21.

³⁴Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. Pp. 73-92.

³⁵Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 71.

in Fynn's career at Port Natal, as described in his manuscripts and previously printed in Bird, were edited by Malcolm but included little interpolations. The first of these was Fynn's description of his medical treatment of Shaka in July 1824,³⁶ an account which had been published in Bird's Annals in 1888, and particularly developed by other writers during the twentieth century in the continued portrayal of Fynn as a representative of European enlightenment in the form of medical progress.³⁷ Malcolm had clearly read some of the literature which developed this particular image of Fynn, and he did not comment on Fynn's remark that he had in fact 'the smallest particle of knowledge of medicine'.³⁸ Instead, in one of his few remarks on the text, Malcolm stated that 'Fynn was known for his prowess as a pioneer doctor'.³⁹ The second passage which had already been published in Bird was Fynn's description of the assassination of Shaka in 1828.⁴⁰ In Olden Times, Bryant had clearly stated that there was no evidence of any European being present at this event, and had provided a different version of Shaka's supposed dying statement from that reported by Fynn in Bird's Annals.⁴¹ Malcolm, however, in his capacity as editor did not see the necessity of including annotating this passage and he simply included Fynn's account, together with Shaka's last words, as it appeared in Stuart's typescript copy of Fynn's manuscript.

Like most officials who purportedly had knowledge of indigenous societies, Malcolm had very little real knowledge of the history of the Zulu. For him, as for many Natal officials, 'the Zulu' existed in a timeless state with past and present traditions being

³⁶Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, pp. 82-86; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 61-66.

³⁷Gibson, The Story of the Zulus, pp. 23-4; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 578-9; Mackeurtan, The Cradle Days of Natal, pp. 102-104.

³⁸Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, File 22895, 'Diary of Fynn', p. 190; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 66, fn 1.

³⁹Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 72, fn 1.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 157-8.

⁴¹Bryant, Olden Times, p. 662.

merged. As a literate European, Fynn was, for Malcolm, a reliable source on the unknown pre-literate past and, as a non-historian, he saw no reason to edit Stuart's typescripts in any way, as these already contained detailed cross-references to the earlier nineteenth-century texts, such as Isaacs' Travels and Adventures and Steedman's Wanderings and Adventures.⁴² Malcolm, like other researchers of the 1940s, passively accepted these sources as authoritative. He referred to Isaacs' work as a valuable account and worth quoting from, as it had 'for many years been out of print and had a reliability that nowadays is rarely to be met with'.⁴³ Malcolm's regard for Isaacs was common at the time among popular writers, historians and anthropologists. At this stage, Isaacs' Travels and Adventures was still seen as an unproblematic source on the Natal past.⁴⁴

Malcolm was concerned with preparing the typescript of Fynn's writing for publication with a minimum of interpolations. His own depictions of Fynn in line with existing images was an effort to illustrate Fynn's career in conjunction with the original text, rather than an attempt at projecting his own ideas about Fynn. His comment in a footnote on Fynn's 'prowess as a pioneer doctor' was an example of his acceptance of the idea of Fynn's medical skills, an idea which had no basis in the evidence in Fynn's writing.⁴⁵ Similarly, the notion of Fynn as a reliable source had been constantly reiterated by writers following Bird, and Malcolm kept this imagery intact in his preface when he equated Fynn with Isaacs as an early contemporary recorder and left unedited Stuart's comment that Fynn had been 'a close and competent observer ... had travelled and lived among natives more than any of his companions, and was far the best informed as to the conditions of the

⁴²Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Papers, Fynn Diary Folder, File 22895, 'The Diary of Fynn', pp. 60,66,100-101,168-177; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., The Diary of H.F. Fynn, pp. 35,45,51,53,122,130.

⁴³Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 185.

⁴⁴Tracey, Zulu Paradox, p. 14; Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, pp.3-4; Bryant, The Zulu People, pp. 494-495.

⁴⁵Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 72, fn 1.

country and its inhabitants'.⁴⁶ Malcolm also retained Stuart's footnote from J.S. King's 1826 account of Fynn as 'a pioneer enduring numerous hardships'.⁴⁷ This early description clearly showed Fynn as a singular European coping with a hostile and savage environment. Malcolm added his own comment to the effect that this was an admirable picture of Fynn as it drew parallels with the fictional Robinson Crusoe. Fynn, stated Malcolm, was the South African equivalent of this hero, being 'equally affable ... courageous and large-hearted'.⁴⁸

Malcolm's use of the Crusoe analogy was, in a sense, part of the set of images of Defoe's hero which had developed in English literature by the late nineteenth-century. By that time, Crusoe had become the epitome of the lone European pitted against the evils and hazards of an indigenous landscape.⁴⁹ Late Victorian and Edwardian childrens' literature contained numerous images of Crusoe-like heroes.⁵⁰ Malcolm's 'Robinson Crusoe', in the person of Fynn, was a representative of the advance of Europeans in Africa, in accordance with these late-nineteenth century ideals as they were expressed in juvenile literature.⁵¹ This simple notion of European imperialism as a symbol of progress and enlightenment against African backwardness and savagery, had to some extent faded from imperial literature by the 1930s, and during the period from the First World War, imperial responsibility had taken on new meaning in the writings of authors like Kipling and Forster.⁵²

⁴⁶Ibid., p. xii.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 115.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Knox-Shaw, The Explorer in English Fiction, pp. 143-4.

⁵⁰J.S. Bratton, The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction, Beckeham, Croom Helm, 1981, pp. 115-117; M. Green, 'The Robinson Crusoe Story' in Richards, ed., Imperialism and Juvenile Fiction, pp. 98-99.

⁵¹K. Boyd, 'Exemplars and Ingrates: Imperialism and the Boys' Story Paper, 1880-1930', Historical Research, vol. 67, no. 163, (June 1994), pp. 143-144.

⁵²D. Hewitt, English Fiction of the Early Modern Period 1890-1940, Harlow, Longman, 1988, Chapters 4 and 5.

Nevertheless, the popular imagery of the Victorian and Edwardian period had had a marked influence on children and young people of Malcolm's generation⁵³ and, further entrenched by the medium of cinema from the 1920s,⁵⁴ was still dominant in popular culture in the 1950s.⁵⁵ Working and writing in a colonial, rather than a metropolitan, context, Malcolm preferred the older stereotypes of imperial activity, and chose to retain the Victorian imperial images in order to illustrate Fynn's qualities of courage when faced with the challenge of domesticating an alien environment inhabited by 'savage' peoples. Hugh Tracey, another colonial writer, contemporary with Malcolm, depicted Fynn as the individual personally responsible for putting an end to Shaka's unrivalled 'tyranny',⁵⁶ while Lugg depicted Fynn in similar terms as the person who had through his medical knowledge, successfully pacified Shaka in order to obtain a land concession.⁵⁷

Malcolm's area of academic expertise was Zulu language and custom,⁵⁸ and in these spheres he interpolated extensively in Fynn's texts by means of footnotes. His interest in the Zulu language was demonstrated by his inclusion at the beginning of the published text of a praise poem about Fynn.⁵⁹ It is possible that Malcolm had come across this poem whilst translating Stuart's collection of praise-

⁵³J.A. Mangan, 'Images for Confident Control: Stereotypes in Imperial Discourse' in Mangan, ed., The Imperial Curriculum, pp. 9-12.

⁵⁴J. Richards, 'Boys Own Empire: Feature Films and Imperialism in the 1930s' in . Mckenzie, ed., Imperialism and Popular Culture, pp. 141-144.

⁵⁵J. Mckenzie, Propoganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984, pp. 220-223.

⁵⁶Tracey, Zulu Paradox, p. 22.

⁵⁷Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, p. 16.

⁵⁸I am grateful to Charles Beard, a former student of Malcolm's, for discussing his linguistic knowledge with me: Interview, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, September 1995.

⁵⁹Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, Frontispiece, 'Izibongo Zikambuyazi', 'The Praises of Mbuyazi'.

poetry,⁶⁰ a project he started working on at about this time.⁶¹ Malcolm did not reproduce the poem in its entirety, nor did he question its authorship or the kinds of images of Fynn which the verse suggested.⁶² Given the positive depiction of Fynn in this poem, there is a possibility that Stuart created this poetry himself, as part of his vindication of Fynn, whom he viewed as the hero of European settlement in Natal.⁶³ For Stuart and Malcolm, who were acquainted with the izibongo genre, Fynn's praise poem indicated that he was not only remembered but also revered by African people.⁶⁴ Fynn's praises were, like other izibongo, a statement of his heroic qualities,⁶⁵ and words like 'traveller' and 'sprinting' contained the characteristic references to travel and restless movement which suggested dynamic activity.⁶⁶ On the other hand, recent research has clearly demonstrated that praise-poetry is never less than highly subjective in its portrayal of particular individuals.⁶⁷ Malcolm's inclusion of Fynn's praise-poem was motivated not only by linguistic but also by historical and biographical interest.

Malcolm carried out linguistic editing throughout Stuart's typescripts, using modern Zulu orthography to replace Stuart's nineteenth-century versions of Zulu words.

⁶⁰K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 75. The typed version is in File 28.

⁶¹T. Cope, ed., Zulu Praise Poems, compiled by J. Stuart and translated by D. Malcolm, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. viii.

⁶²J. Opland, Words That Circle Words, Johannesburg, A.D. Donker, 1992, p. 132-3.

⁶³Wylie, "'Proprietor of Natal": Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka', p. 8.

⁶⁴E. Gunner, 'Ukubonga nezibongo: Zulu Praising and Praises', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1984, p. 68.

⁶⁵J. Opland, Xhosa Oral Poetry: Aspects of a Black South African Tradition, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983, pp. 127-9.

⁶⁶E. Gunner and M. Gwala, eds., Musho! Zulu Popular Praises, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1991, pp. 55-60.

⁶⁷L. Vail and L. White, Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History, London, James Currey, 1991, p. 84.

Malcolm translated Fynn's Zulu name Mbuyazi as the 'long tailed finch of the ridge', based on the idea that the Zulu saw Fynn as a finch, a bird that moved about very quickly, due to his continued rapid journeys to the Mpondo territory.⁶⁸ Lugg, also a Zulu linguist, had offered a similar explanation in his Historic Natal and Zululand.⁶⁹ Stuart, in his notes, had given Fynn's Zulu name as Sifile, but Malcolm did not add this information to his footnotes, preferring to retain Mbuyazi as Fynn's name. In a footnote, Malcolm corrected Fynn's Europeanised description of the Zulu head-rings as 'turbans' to the Zulu term isicoco,⁷⁰ and made other changes in vocabulary where he considered this necessary, for instance in explaining the meaning of the word yenda as applied to the 'Iziyendane' ibutho.⁷¹ Malcolm also utilised his geographical knowledge of the Natal region to provide explanatory footnotes for specific regions, and matched places with more recent events for instance the place known as 'Inqaba ka Hawana' which was the site of the Battle of Hlobane in 1879.⁷² He also identified sites in contemporary Zululand like the Ngome forest⁷³ in order to explain to readers the exact location of places referred to in Fynn's description of Shaka's reign.

By the end of 1948 Malcolm had completed his editorial work on Stuart's typescripts. The text, when ready for publication, included the contents of two sections of the manuscript collection of the Fynn Papers, 'Notes and Memoranda on Early Natal' and 'The Diary of Henry Fynn'.⁷⁴ Fynn's brief description of Shaka in Chase's 1843 publication, The Natal Papers, was included in the section 'Notes

⁶⁸Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 74, fn 1.

⁶⁹Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁰Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 74, fn 2.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 124, fn 1.

⁷²Ibid., p. 125, fn 1.

⁷³Ibid., p. 130, fn 1.

⁷⁴These are in the Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, files 9 and 16.

on Early Natal' which formed the 'Historical Introduction' in Stuart's typescripts.⁷⁵ A section of this narrative had also been previously published in Bird's Annals in 1888.⁷⁶ Fynn's descriptions of his medical treatment of Shaka, the engagement with the Ndwande and the death of Nandi, had also been included in Bird's publication.⁷⁷ These were included in the manuscript entitled 'Diary of Henry Fynn', which made up the larger section of Stuart's typescripts. This narrative eventually formed the bulk of the work which Malcolm prepared for publication and was entitled 'The Diary'.

Together with Killie Campbell, who had overseen the entire project, Malcolm approached various publishers. At this time, most British publishing firms were experiencing severe financial constraints as a result of the Second World War, and even well established academic publishers, such as the Oxford University Press, were reluctant to accept any manuscript that would not immediately generate substantial sales.⁷⁸ Longman, Green and Company, who had published several works on the Zulu since Gibson's The Story of the Zulu, also rejected Malcolm's manuscript on the grounds that it would not necessarily be popular.⁷⁹ Longman had, by early 1949, already committed themselves to publishing Bryant's work, entitled The Zulu People, and, in the context of post-war austerity, did not have the funds to print a second work on Zululand.⁸⁰ The Fynn Diary, as a specialised text

⁷⁵Chase, The Natal Papers, p. 20.

⁷⁶Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I., pp. 60-70.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 76-94.

⁷⁸Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23938, Leo Marquard to Malcolm, 25 November 1948.

⁷⁹K.C.A.L., Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23972, Douglas Malcolm to Beatrice Marx, 13 April 1949.

⁸⁰Bryant's work was eventually published by Shuter and Shooter. See A.T. Bryant, The Zulu People As They Were Before the White Man Came, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1949.

on Natal, was unlikely to bring in substantial profits.⁸¹ In the face of these rejections from overseas, and, as the subject matter was particularly relevant to a Natal readership, Killie Campbell and Malcolm decided to approach local publishers.⁸² Eventually, after a year of negotiations, the Pietermaritzburg firm Shuter and Shooter agreed to accept the Fynn manuscript and an agreement was drawn up to divide the royalties from the book between Douglas Malcolm, Ellen Stuart and the Fynn family.⁸³

In 1949, a year before the Diary was published, Shuter and Shooter had printed Bryant's substantial work, The Zulu People. This work served to further entrench the idea of a Zulu past that was entirely separate from that of European Natal. In line with the current ideas of anthropologists, Bryant presented the Zulu in a relatively unchanging context, where the influence of Europeans was minimal until the twentieth century.⁸⁴ As he had done in Olden Times, Bryant acknowledged Fynn as a crucial source on the pre-European history of Natal.⁸⁵ The Zulu past, as presented by Bryant, was based on the supposedly authoritative accounts of people like Fynn and later Shepstone. The Zulu People was significant in that it served to highlight Fynn's role as a literate source, thus setting the scene for the reception of the first published volume of Fynn's writing .

With the publication of The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn in 1950, the well-established image of Fynn as a unique literate recorder of events in the Natal region was even further entrenched. Malcolm, who had taken over the editing work

⁸¹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23973, Malcolm to Beatrice Marx, 13 April 1949.

⁸²Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23975, Killie Campbell to Ellen Stuart, 23 April 1949.

⁸³Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 47, KCM 24016, Killie Campbell to Beatrice Marx, 17 December 1950.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

⁸⁵Bryant, The Zulu People, pp. 501-502.

of James Stuart, had left unaltered Stuart's original preface which stated that:

'Fynn stood and still stands in a category of his own, and it is this freely and unanimously accorded precedence which straightaway invests almost everything from him about the earliest days ... with a distinction and quality of its own'.⁸⁶

Stuart's comment served to further imbue Fynn's text with integrity and value as a narrative written by an eye-witness to events in early Natal. This was by no means a new depiction of the significance of Fynn's writing and had been present at least since the publication of Bird's volumes.⁸⁷ However, the Diary provided researchers with a one-volume journal by a supposed eye-witness to early nineteenth-century events, edited by individuals who were supposedly experts in 'native' matters, the editors having both been employed as officials in the Natal colonial system. This combination of factors gave credibility to the idea of the Diary as an authoritative source. Within three months of publication, the volume was being described by historians like Kirby as 'a basic source book for the history of Natal'.⁸⁸

Kirby, a Cape historian, had, in the 1940s, begun editorial work on Andrew Smith's papers relating to Port Natal in the early 1830s, and he regarded the Diary as a similar example of documentary source material⁸⁹. Following the publication of the Diary, Kirby used this text as a crucial source in his identification of the geographical location of the eighteenth-century East Indiaman wreck, the Grosvenor, drawing on Fynn's account of his own discovery of these remains in 1825.⁹⁰ Kirby's description of Fynn's work was highly significant in that it

⁸⁶Killie Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Diary Folder, MS 1054 b; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. xii.

⁸⁷Bird, Annals of Natal, vol. I, p. 5.

⁸⁸P.R. Kirby, 'South African Books of 1950', Africana Notes and News, vol. 8 no. 2 (March 1951), p. 137.

⁸⁹P.R. Kirby, Andrew Smith and Natal, Cape Town, van Riebeeck Society, 1955.

⁹⁰ P.R. Kirby, 'Where was Port Grosvenor?', Africana Notes and News, vol. 11, no. 5 (December 1954), p. 147; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 99-102.

categorised Fynn's writing as a contribution to historical research on Natal, rather than only to anthropological research, as Hattersley had done when asked to edit the Fynn Papers.⁹¹

In line with his earlier opinion, Hattersley, in a review of the Diary which appeared in The Daily News in December 1950, took a negative view of the newly-published Diary, pointing out that neither Stuart nor Malcolm had indicated which of Fynn's original manuscripts were included in the published book. Hattersley's criticism was restricted to textual analysis, and in his review he made no effort to comment on the contents of Fynn's narratives as edited by Stuart and Malcolm, merely pointing out that substantial portions of the Diary were reprints of the accounts already contained in Bird's work. While critical of Malcolm's fairly limited editing work on the Fynn manuscripts, Hattersley made no attempt to provide his own criticism of the contents of the Fynn papers.⁹²

Killie Campbell, who had invited Malcolm to edit Stuart's typescripts, described Hattersley's opinion as 'niggardly criticism'. In her reply to his review in the Daily News, she pointed out that Fynn's narrative, based on his vantage point as an eye-witness, was 'fascinating' for historians but also of interest to the general public in that the Diary provided an account of the 'glamour and romance of the thrilling adventures of Fynn'.⁹³ In a private letter to Malcolm, Killie Campbell wrote that she thought Hattersley's comments to be the 'work of a disgruntled old dried up professor' who was resentful of the fact that he had not taken up the opportunity of editing the Fynn papers himself. She also told Malcolm that she considered

⁹¹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Killie Campbell Correspondence, File 15: Hattersley to Killie Campbell, 1 July 1945.

⁹²The Daily News, 28 December 1950: Review by A.F. Hattersley.

⁹³The Daily News, 4 January 1951: Reply from Killie Campbell to Professor Hattersley.

Hattersley, despite his 'great historical knowledge', to have become 'very boring'.⁹⁴ Stuart's son, R.C. Stuart, then resident in London, took Hattersley's criticism far more seriously than Killie Campbell, and in a substantial reply to Hattersley's review he pointed out that Bird had not published all the Fynn manuscript material and that Hattersley had 'ignored the great service done by the editors'. In defence of his father's work, R.C. Stuart added that Hattersley, as a 'responsible historian', should give fairer appraisals of 'Africana' publications in order to 'advance the interest of the South African public' in such work.⁹⁵ 'Africana' in this context had a narrow definition and referred to locally produced works which dealt with pre-colonial societies.

Hattersley's failure to recognise the potential significance of the published Diary for Natal historians, was a product of his focus on the European history of Natal. In his own works, Hattersley had consistently begun his narrative with the establishment of Natal as a formal British colony in 1845, and he paid no attention to the earlier period and very little to the events following the arrival of the traders in 1824.⁹⁶ Hattersley's book, The British Settlement of Natal, which was published in the same year as the Diary, was no exception to this pattern. This account commenced with the traders' arrival, but allocated only one chapter to events from 1824 to 1845.⁹⁷ The two volumes, Hattersley's British Settlement and Fynn's Diary, represented the division in South African academic studies between 'history' which dealt with European- dominated events, and the pre-colonial past, which fell under the

⁹⁴Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 47, KCM 24018, Campbell to Malcolm, 30 December 1950.

⁹⁵The Daily News, 30 January 1951: Letter from R.C. Stuart to Professor Hattersley.

⁹⁶Hattersley, More Annals of Natal, pp. 15 ff; Later Annals of Natal, p. vii; The Natalians. Further Annals of Natal, p. 13.

⁹⁷A.F. Hattersley, The British Settlement of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1950, pp. 1-32.

professional umbrella of anthropology.⁹⁸ The Diary, edited by ex-native administrators and covering aspects of the Zulu past, was considered by historians like Hattersley to be relevant to anthropological-based research. In The British Settlement of Natal Hattersley did not look beyond established ideas as narrated by Bird and Mackeurtan, for example the portrayal of Fynn as a doctor, an image which had developed at the turn of the century when Natal was part of the Victorian British Empire. Hattersley reiterated the earlier depictions of Fynn, and at no stage did he examine any sources except for the much-quoted secondary publications. He clearly did not consider Fynn or his context to be suitable material for further research.⁹⁹ For Hattersley, the formal 'British settlement' in Natal after annexation in 1843 was the crucial starting-point for a history of the region.

Leo Marquard, an historian who was researching the Natal past during the early 1950s, had commenced working on his wider history of South Africa prior to the publication of the Diary, and continued to use earlier secondary works such as Bryant's Olden Times as source material.¹⁰⁰ Marquard, an editor for Oxford University Press, had not considered the Diary as suitable for publication by the press and, like Hattersley, he did not consider a published version of Fynn's writing to be particularly relevant to historians, preferring to use the existing accounts in Bird's Annals and the reconstruction of this material by established 'native' authorities like Bryant.¹⁰¹

For several years, liberal historians generally followed Hattersley's lead in neglecting the Diary as a source on the pre-colonial Natal past. This was in part a

⁹⁸S. Marks, 'South African Studies Since World War Two' in C. Fyfe, ed., African Studies Since 1945: A Tribute to Basil Davidson, London, Longman, 1976, p. 186.

⁹⁹Hattersley, The British Settlement of Natal, pp. 13-16.

¹⁰⁰L. Marquard, The Story of South Africa, London, Faber, 1966 (1st publ. London 1954), pp. 120-122.

¹⁰¹Killie Campbell Africana Library, Stuart Papers, File 45, KCM 23938, Marquard to Malcolm, 25 November 1948.

result of the continuing academic trend in regarding indigenous societies, both past and present, as the research field of anthropologists or 'native' experts like Bryant.¹⁰² Bryant's conceptualisation of the "wars of Shaka" remained a dominant theme in reconstructions of pre-colonial Natal.¹⁰³ Another reason for the academic historians' omission not only of Fynn's writing but also of a detailed analysis of the Natal past prior to the 1820s was the predominance of Hattersley's detailed work since the 1930s. Hattersley's successor at the University of Natal, Arthur Keppel-Jones, wrote history on wider South African issues and his inclusion of material on Natal was limited. He did however, mention that the Europeans had given Shaka 'effective medical attention' though he did not name Fynn specifically.¹⁰⁴ No other Natal academic historians were writing in the decade from 1950, and it was not until the 1960s that a new generation of historians began work on the Natal region.¹⁰⁵

However, if Fynn's role in early Natal, and his written narrative of events in the region were largely overlooked in the academic sphere, he was adopted, both as a personality and as an author, by writers in the genre of popular history. In the 1950s, the kind of popular history that had developed for the reading public in the English-speaking world still had a strong imperial focus. British historians, both academic and popular, still emphasised the idea of 'wider Britain' and the British origins of colonial societies.¹⁰⁶ In Natal, the English-speaking reading public was a clearly defined community, increasingly anxious to retain their identity in the period

¹⁰²Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', p. 83.

¹⁰³Wright, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's Mfecane', p. 281.

¹⁰⁴A. Keppel-Jones, South Africa: A Short History, London, Hutchinson University Library, 1968 (first publ. London, 1949), p. 68.

¹⁰⁵J. Wright and C. Hamilton, 'Making Pre-Colonial Histories in South Africa: Past Trends and Present Debates', unpubl. Paper, Rhodes University, July 1995, p. 19.

¹⁰⁶C. Carrington, The British Overseas: Exploits of a Nation of Shopkeepers, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968 (1st publ. London, 1950), p. 319.

following the Afrikaner Nationalist political victory in 1948.¹⁰⁷ The popular histories which appeared from the 1950s, like the nineteenth-century accounts, started their narratives with the arrival of the English traders in the 1820s, rather than with the annexation of Natal as a British colony in the 1840s, as Hattersley had done. This earlier beginning in the reconstruction of the Natal past aimed to stress the provenance of English-speakers in the region and reflected the concerns not only of Natalians, but of all English-speaking South Africans in the 1950s.¹⁰⁸

The publication of the Diary provided the authors of popular history with what they perceived as an authoritative text for a specifically Natalian, English-speaking past. T.V. Bulpin, a popular historian and geographer, started this trend with his book To the Shores of Natal in 1953, in which he described Fynn's Diary as a 'detailed written source of information' on the arrival of English settlers in Natal in the 1820s.¹⁰⁹ Bulpin's concern with the role of the English at Port Natal was demonstrated by his depiction of Fynn as an individual who showed the initiative of the English traders. Authors writing during the 1930s such as Mackeurtan and Bryant had followed the late nineteenth-century imperialist contextualisation of Fynn as a European and therefore civilising influence on the savage inhabitants of Port Natal and its immediate vicinity. By the time that Bulpin was writing, European dominance in the South African region was no longer illustrated as clearly British. While he reiterated the qualities used by nineteenth-century authors, for example Fynn's supposed humanity in providing Shaka with medical treatment, he also stressed that these virtues were specifically 'English' and instances of the English achievement in exploration and pioneering.¹¹⁰ In the published Diary, Stuart had inserted the text of Farewell's purported land-grant from Shaka directly after Fynn's

¹⁰⁷P.S. Thompson, Natalians First: Separatism in South Africa 1909-1961, Pretoria, Southern Books, 1990, pp. 123-4.

¹⁰⁸Thompson, Natalians First, p. 124.

¹⁰⁹T.V. Bulpin, To the Shores of Natal, Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1953, p. 7.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 51,54.

description of his doctoring of Shaka.¹¹¹ This clearly linked the two events in the minds of authors who used the Diary as a source, and hence writers like Bulpin reiterated the idea that Fynn, through his doctoring, had incurred the gratitude of Shaka.¹¹² Further on in his book, Bulpin gave Fynn, the role of 'judge, chief and doctor to the (indigenous) people'.¹¹³ Although he had used images of Fynn which had been prominent in published accounts since the nineteenth century, Bulpin recognised later research on Fynn's activities at Port Natal, for example Bryant's information that Fynn had several 'coloured' children, whom he left behind when he returned to the Cape in 1834.¹¹⁴ While earlier writers, including Mackeurtan, had avoided this sensitive issue for the sake of colonial ideas of propriety, the presence of the 'coloured' Fynn family was, by the 1950s, even more evident to Natalians than had been the case at the time of Olden Times.¹¹⁵ Clearly Bulpin considered that it was no longer necessary to conform to what were essentially Victorian norms, which had viewed the coloured Fynns as a blemish on the record of European achievement in Natal.

Until the publication of Bulpin's To the Shores of Natal, knowledge of what was viewed as a separate and distinct 'Zulu' past was considered by both academic and popular writers to be the particular prerogative of officials and missionaries who had direct contact with the broadly defined sphere of 'native affairs'. Fynn's Diary in one sense, did provide indirect access to indigenous society through the published text of material recorded by an individual seen as an eye-witness to the past of the Zulu.¹¹⁶ With the publication of the Diary, popular writers were able to gain further

¹¹¹Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 86-7.

¹¹²Bulpin, To the Shores of Natal, p.55.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 68.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 70-71; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 373.

¹¹⁵Bramdeow, 'Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community, 1824-1988', unpubl. M.A. thesis, pp. 109-111.

¹¹⁶Bulpin, To the Shores of Natal, p. 7.

insight into the pre-colonial and early colonial period, as it provided a much broader picture than the short passages printed in Bird's Annals. Nevertheless, the belief in the authoritative expertise of officials who had been employed in 'native affairs' still persisted for the majority of readers and critics.

Although Bryant's Olden Times, Samuelson's Long Long Ago and Lugg's Historic Natal and Zululand had enjoyed some success among the reading public prior to 1950,¹¹⁷ E.A. Ritter's book Shaka Zulu, published in 1955,¹¹⁸ was one of the first works on the region to reach a substantial public readership.¹¹⁹ In his foreword to what turned out to be an immensely popular book, Ritter, the son of a Zululand magistrate, explained to his readers that he had been able to view Shaka's life from an advantageous position and to 'see Shaka as the Zulus saw him', due to his childhood contact with Zulu people and his participation in the clash with Bhambatha in Natal in 1906.¹²⁰ Dan Wylie has recently pointed out that Ritter was poorly educated and had in fact had little contact with Zulu-speakers during his adult life, having been employed in the Native Affairs Department in Southern Rhodesia and not in Natal.¹²¹ Wylie noted that, despite his claims to access to the Zulu past through oral tradition and personal contact, Ritter's work was in fact based directly on the published texts of Isaacs, Fynn and Bryant.¹²² Ritter considered Fynn's Diary as a central source document, and he depicted Fynn as a valuable contemporary writer who 'was constantly and frequently in Shaka's company' and therefore of 'much value to the historian'¹²³ Ritter did not always use

¹¹⁷See Chapter 6 above.

¹¹⁸E.A. Ritter, Shaka Zulu: The Rise of the Zulu Empire, London, Allen Lane, 1955.

¹¹⁹D. Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration: E.A. Ritter's Shaka Zulu', South African Historical Journal, vol. 28 (May 1993), p. 98.

¹²⁰Ritter, Shaka Zulu, pp. xi-xii.

¹²¹Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration: E.A. Ritter's Shaka Zulu', p. 101.

¹²²*Ibid.*, pp. 106-111.

¹²³Ritter, Shaka Zulu, p. 377.

Fynn's accounts directly, either from Bird's Annals or from the published Diary, and instead frequently extracted Fynn's material from Bryant's Olden Times.¹²⁴

Ritter's prime aim was to endow Shaka with the characteristics and qualities of a hero, possibly as a 'Zulu-centric' alternative to the traditionally negative portrayal, originally put forward by Isaacs.¹²⁵ In line with this aim, the first two-thirds of Shaka Zulu were devoted entirely to Shaka's individual achievements, and Europeans were only introduced in the twentieth chapter.¹²⁶ For this section of his book, Ritter relied heavily on Fynn's account of the traders' interactions with Shaka and with indigenous people, and quoted substantial sections from the Diary, using Fynn as the narrator of this material.¹²⁷ Although the Europeans had been absent from the bulk of Ritter's narrative, once they were introduced, through their literate commentator in the person of Fynn, they were immediately shown in positions of leadership and were depicted as having superior knowledge and technology. Ritter stated this quite clearly: 'the white men had some dominant quality even when in rags which compelled the black men to regard them as superior'. This was stressed even further by Ritter's imbuing the Europeans with the Zulu quality of ubukhosi or 'quality and air of chieftainship'.¹²⁸ In this context, Shaka became the curious and uninitiated savage who was 'afire with curiosity' and had 'an everlasting thirst' for knowledge of European technology.¹²⁹

Ritter's treatment of the Europeans and their initial contact with Shaka was based directly on the Diary text in which Fynn had reported Shaka's respect for firearms

¹²⁴Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration: E.A. Ritter's Shaka Zulu', p. 109.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.

¹²⁶Ritter, Shaka Zulu, pp. 255 ff.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 256-266.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 268.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 259, 269.

and his desire to learn more about European technology.¹³⁰ The traders' role as 'chiefs' at Port Natal was also taken from Fynn's writing.¹³¹ Ritter followed his depiction of the traders in general with a specific portrayal of Fynn as an individual 'highly loved by the natives' whom he had rescued when they were little more than 'refugees' from Shaka's atrocities.¹³² This image of Fynn was not original and had been used by other popular writers, like Mckeurtan, to stress Fynn's role as a caring and ministering person.¹³³ In the Diary text, this depiction was connected to Fynn's supposed medical care of Shaka as well as the text of the document containing Farewell's 1824 'land grant' from Shaka.¹³⁴ This created the idea that the land-grant was a direct result of Fynn's kindness to Shaka. Ritter used the same strategy in Shaka Zulu where the grant to Farewell was viewed as a direct result of Fynn's diplomatic efforts with Shaka.¹³⁵ Ritter's Eurocentric approach to this idea was reinforced by his attitude to Bryant's assessment of the land-grant. Bryant had described Farewell, Fynn and party as 'self-righteous' in their attempts to 'defraud the natives'¹³⁶ though Ritter stated that he thought this view 'rather harsh'.¹³⁷

By relying on the Fynn text and reiterating established images of Fynn as the rational and civilised European, Ritter unconsciously downplayed the positive role which he had tried to give Shaka in the first chapters of Shaka Zulu. As a whole, the book failed to change the established imagery of Shaka as a savage despot and, through the juxtaposition of Shaka and the Europeans, epitomised by Fynn,

¹³⁰Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary,

¹³¹Ibid., p. 87.

¹³²Ritter, Shaka Zulu, p. 255.

¹³³Mackeurtan, Cradle Days, pp. 101-103.

¹³⁴Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 86-90.

¹³⁵Ritter, Shaka Zulu, pp. 329-30.

¹³⁶Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 580-581.

¹³⁷Ritter, Shaka Zulu, pp. 266-7.

tended to entrench the negative portrayal of the Zulu, though it did contextualise Shaka as a military hero as opposed to a pathological killer.¹³⁸ Prior to the publication of Shaka Zulu, this imagery had reached a limited readership, but with Ritter's development of the existing images on a broad popular level, the qualities applied to Shaka and Fynn as representatives of preliterate Zulu savagery and literate European civilisation reached a much wider reading public. Ritter's book provided this public with set ideas of Fynn as the representative of civilised values, just as much as it did of Shaka as an innovative yet innately savage personality.

Since the publication of Bird's Annals, Fynn had been portrayed both by historians and by anthropologists as the earliest literate recorder of the Shakan period. Ritter however, was the first popular writer to give Fynn this particular role. From the time of the publication of Shaka Zulu, the depiction of Fynn as an expert source of information on the Zulu became increasingly prominent in popular literature. This theme remained central in both academic and popular historical literature for several decades. The image of Fynn the recorder, as clearly defined in Ritter's publication was, even in the 1980s, still accorded a place in popular works,¹³⁹ and it was not until very recently that scholars began to question Fynn's popular image as an eye-witness reporter, with unique access to the Shakan period.¹⁴⁰

Bulpin had identified Fynn as not only a European, but a specifically English contributor to civilising process carried out by whites in Natal. This idea was followed up in J. Bond's 1956 publication They Were South Africans, in which he described the traders in Farewell's party as 'trekkers' in South Africa, in much the same way that Afrikaner historians stressed Voortrekker achievements in the

¹³⁸Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration', p.118.

¹³⁹Du Buisson, The White Man Cometh, p. 44.

¹⁴⁰J.B. Gewald, "A faithful circumstantial and unvarnished detail of incidents". A Critical Reassessment of the Accounts Relating to the Shaka in The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn', unpublished paper, State University, Leiden, 1989.

interior regions.¹⁴¹ In this context, Fynn and his fellow-traders were the vanguard of European influence at Port Natal in that they were the 'sea-Voortrekkers' who preceded the Afrikaner Voortrekkers of the 1830s. Fynn was given particular attention as the 'supreme representative' of this pioneering English spirit.¹⁴² Bond, like Bulpin, drew on the Diary to illustrate Fynn's 'unrivalled' friendship with Shaka which, he said, 'ensured the safety of the tiny white settlement'.¹⁴³ Using ideas which had been entrenched by the Diary, Bond gave Fynn the role of a humane individual who had 'rescued thousands of refugees from summary execution' by offering them protection from Shaka.¹⁴⁴ Bond's publication, like Bulpin's presented no new portrayals of Fynn except to stress his humane qualities as specifically English in origin.

Although authors like Bulpin, Ritter and Bond can be categorised as popular rather than academic, their depiction of Fynn as the original English influence in Natal was a significant historiographical development. By the 1950s, academic Afrikaner historiography had become closely linked to the heightened sense of Afrikaner nationalism which was dominant in the political sphere from 1948. Voortrekker activities in Natal were given a central role in the development of Afrikaner national consciousness, and this group was depicted as having had a formative influence on what Van Jaarsveld termed 'group consciousness and solidarity'.¹⁴⁵ Bulpin's and Bond's portrayal of Fynn as the English representative of white settlement at Port Natal, can be viewed in juxtaposition to the Afrikaner historians' notions of their own contribution to the European presence in Natal.

¹⁴¹J. Bond, They Were South Africans, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1956, Chapter 10; F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, Cape Town, Simondium Press, 1964, pp. 55-6.

¹⁴²Bond, They Were South Africans, p. 92.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Awakening of Afrikaner Nationalism, Cape Town, Human and Rousseau, 1961, pp. 22-3.

By the mid-1950s images of Fynn were being received by a much wider reading public than before. At the same time, he was, both as an individual and as a source, almost entirely neglected by academic historians who, following the trends set by liberal historians in the 1930s and 1940s, either overlooked the Natal past prior to the 1840s, or accepted as given the notion that Shaka had systematically 'devastated' the region.¹⁴⁶ There were few academics like Kirby who utilised Fynn's Diary for further empirical research in the historical field, at the same time making a preliminary examination of the Diary as a source,¹⁴⁷ and in the early 1960s Hattersley was still making statements in line with images established thirty years before by writers like Bryant and Mackeurtan - for instance that the traders were 'young men with a passion for action and adventure'.¹⁴⁸ Hattersley's comments on the trading party, were however, indicative of new developments in Natal historiography. Prior to this, Hattersley had restricted his assessment of the Natal past to the period from annexation in the 1840s. His recognition of the contribution of Farewell's party to English merchant activity at Port Natal was at least an acknowledgement that there had been European involvement in the Natal region from an earlier date.

By the 1960s, this established historiography was being challenged at one level by a new generation of 'Africanist' historians, most of whom were writing from outside South Africa. These writers were influenced by Ritter's publication to depict Shaka as a military strategist and nation-builder in contrast to the earlier depictions of him simply as an agent of destruction.¹⁴⁹ At the same time, liberal historians within South Africa, and particularly in Natal, began to question the established history of

¹⁴⁶J. Wright and C. Hamilton, 'Making Pre-Colonial Histories in South Africa: Past Trends and Present Debates', unpubl. paper, Rhodes University, July 1995, pp. 14-16.

¹⁴⁷P.R. Kirby, Letter to the Editor, Africana Notes and News, vol. 12, no. 5 (March 1957), p. 182; Kirby, The True Story of the Grosvenor East Indiaman, pp. 150-151.

¹⁴⁸A.F. Hattersley, 'Francis George Farewell and the Earliest Natal Settlers', Africana Notes and News, vol. 14, no. 7 (September 1961), p. 320.

¹⁴⁹Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration', p. 118.

the Natal region and to suggest alternative explanations for change over substantial periods of time. For the first time, historians began to consider the work of anthropologists, for example Gluckman,¹⁵⁰ as having a direct contribution to make to their research, while simultaneously examining the impact of European rule in a more empirical manner. Liberal historians viewed the South African past as a process of interaction between black and white communities¹⁵¹ and, in line with this approach, they saw the Port Natal of the 1820s and 1830s as a multi-racial society. By the 1960s, the definition 'liberal' had taken on a specific political meaning, as it referred to the opponents of segregation and apartheid.¹⁵² Historians in the English-speaking universities were part of a political as well as an historiographical tradition.¹⁵³

In Natal, historians made their researches available to a wider audience through the John Bird Historical Society, which consisted of professional academics as well as interested amateurs under the auspices of the Natal Society.¹⁵⁴ Historians teaching at the University of Natal, who could be broadly defined as belonging to the liberal school, had emerged, by the early 1960s, as the successors to Hattersley and were starting to develop alternative lines of enquiry from his essentially European-focused approach to the Natal past.¹⁵⁵ In 1961, M.W. Swanson

¹⁵⁰M. Gluckman, Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1958.

¹⁵¹J. Butler and D. Schreuder, 'Liberal Historiography Since 1945' in J. Butler, et.al., eds., Democratic Liberalism in South Africa: Its History and Prospect, Cape Town, David Philip, 1987, p.150.

¹⁵²D.V. Cowen, The Foundations of Freedom: With Special Reference to Southern Africa, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 25.

¹⁵³W. Beinart, Twentieth-Century South Africa, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 172; A. Jeeves, 'Arthur Keppel-Jones: Scholar, Teacher, Liberal Intellectual', South African Historical Journal, vol. 32 (May 1995), pp. 26-28.

¹⁵⁴Natal Society Public Library, Minutes of the John Bird Historical Society, 1960-1962.

¹⁵⁵Duminy and Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand, p.xviii.

presented an early example of this new outlook in his lecture to the John Bird Society on what he perceived as the 'multi racial' community at Port Natal from the 1820s. He reiterated descriptions of Farewell's party gleaned from well-known secondary sources such as the accounts of Bird, Bryant and Mackeurtan, thus describing the traders as exhibiting 'a spirit of bumptiousness and independence, living as semi-feudal lordlings ... among their native retainers who gathered at the port for protection'.¹⁵⁶ Despite these depictions, which seem on initial inspection to be pedestrian and reiterations of established images, the bulk of Swanson's lecture demonstrated that he aimed to illustrate the complex relationships between Europeans and indigenous groups at early Port Natal. In contrast to earlier writers, at no stage did he refer to issues like the civilising influence of Europeans or their importance as agents of imperialism. Swanson deliberately played down the significance of individual Europeans and thus did not accord Fynn any particular role. In omitting to identify Fynn or any other person, Swanson achieved his aim in assessing the European traders as a group, interacting with other communities, but in no way superior to the latter. He later adopted the same approach in a scholarly article.¹⁵⁷ As Paul Maylam has noted, Swanson's work on the urban past was unprecedented in South African historiography.¹⁵⁸ Other academics who addressed the John Bird Society were not taking this initiatives and some, like the Zulu linguist Trevor Cope, preferred to retain the accepted versions of the 1820s, in which the Europeans, Fynn in particular, 'rescued' refugees from Shaka's excesses.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶M.W. Swanson, 'The City in History: The Rise of Multi-Racial Durban', Lecture to the John Bird Historical Society, 20 October 1961, p. 6.

¹⁵⁷M.W. Swanson, "'The Durban System": Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal', *African Studies*, vol. 35 (1976), pp. 159-76.

¹⁵⁸P. Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1 (March 1995), pp. 19-20.

¹⁵⁹T. Cope, 'From Shaka to Cetshwayo: The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation', Lecture to the John Bird Historical Society, undated.

It was against this background, in 1962, that Fynn's original manuscripts were donated to the Natal Archives. These papers had been returned to the Fynn family by Ellen Stuart in 1945 and had, during the intervening period, remained inaccessible for general historical research.¹⁶⁰ The archivist at the Natal Archives Depot, B.J. Leverton, stressed the importance of the Fynn manuscript collection for Natal historians researching the pre-colonial and early colonial periods. At the same time, however, he did not venture beyond the well established images of Fynn and simply repeated these ideas, for example, the depiction of Fynn as Shaka's confidant which led to the 'land grant' to Farewell and the notion that Fynn had saved 'many starving and homeless natives ... from the wrath of the Zulu king'.¹⁶¹ While emphasising the value of the Fynn manuscripts for historians, Leverton did not himself reconstruct an alternative historical context for Fynn beyond that offered by published secondary sources. Although it was possible, from the early 1960s, to use the original Fynn accounts, as contained in the Fynn Papers in the Natal Archives, most historians followed earlier trends in relying on the material published in Bird's Annals and the Diary. Despite the availability of Fynn's narratives, in the form of the Diary, no full-length academic account of the Natal past appeared before the mid-1960s.

In keeping with the general literary trend from the early 1950s, popular histories continued to dominate published work on Natal. Following the success of Ritter's book, two further biographies set in the Shakan period appeared in the early 1960s. The first of these, E. P. Watt's Febana, published in 1962, was a fictionalised account of F.G. Farewell's career in South Africa during the 1820s.¹⁶² Watt attempted to provide a more Zulu-centric context for Farewell's experiences, hence her use of his Zulu name Febana kaMjoji. However, like other writers she relied heavily on European sources like Isaacs' Travels and Adventures and the

¹⁶⁰Natal Archives, Fynn Papers, Index: Archivist's Notes.

¹⁶¹B.J. Leverton, 'The Papers of Henry Francis Fynn', Historia, vol. 4 (1964), pp. 28-29.

¹⁶²E.P. Watt, Febana, London, Davies, 1962.

published Diary for information on Farewell's relationship with Shaka. Thus her narrative was heavily focused on European individuals like Farewell and Fynn who were given roles as heroes.¹⁶³ However, in contrast to the juxtaposition of Fynn and Shaka found in the earlier works, Watt's central theme in Febana was the peaceful co-existence between black and white at Port Natal, notwithstanding the ever-present threat of black violence against the white traders. This concern with the possibilities of co-operation between the two communities illustrates her own political outlook of a multi-racial society, based on mutual understanding and tolerance.

Watt's dependence on the Diary is illustrated by her insertion of verbatim extracts into her book, for example Fynn's description of Shaka's forces passing him on the beach.¹⁶⁴ Watt used this passage to demonstrate that Europeans were able to exist at Port Natal with no danger from Shaka's army, despite the fact that this same force was capable of 'unspeakable barbarity' in its implementation of 'tribal warfare'.¹⁶⁵ She utilised material from Fynn's Diary which showed the positive relationship between Farewell's party and Shaka, while at the same time she used Isaacs' descriptions of Shaka to demonstrate the extreme aggression carried out by Shaka. Fynn's descriptions in the Diary text of his own intermediary role with Shaka, for instance his medical treatment, were perfect illustrations for Watt in her attempts to show the positive role of the Europeans in Farewell's party.¹⁶⁶ She also ascribed specific positive characteristics to Fynn, describing him as 'a modest and likeable fellow' whose liking for adventure made him 'the wonder of this strange and savage world'.¹⁶⁷ In contrast, Watt portrayed Shaka as the embodiment of

¹⁶³D. Wylie, 'Utilising Isaacs: One Thread in the Development of Shaka', in Edgecombe et.al. eds., The Debate on Zulu Origins, p. 14.

¹⁶⁴Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 61-3; Watt, Febana, pp. 42-3.

¹⁶⁵Watt, Febana, pp. 128-30.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-7, 66-7, 74-7.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 44-5.

'unrestrained ferocity'¹⁶⁸ an image deliberately juxtaposed with the civilised values embodied in Fynn in his role as a 'gifted doctor', from whom Shaka was anxious to obtain service.¹⁶⁹ Watt not only drew on Fynn's descriptions of his role at Port Natal, but drew on Isaacs for favourable accounts of Fynn's behaviour, so that, while Fynn appeared in Febana as an eccentric individual, based on Isaacs' description, 'a weird apparition clad only in a torn blanket', he also 'gathered around him a string of human derelicts in the hope of succour'.¹⁷⁰

In her use of the images contained in the Isaacs and Fynn texts, Watt did not develop the characterisation of Fynn much beyond the accounts provided in Mackeurtan's Cradle Days or Hattersley's The British Settlement of Natal, both of which had simply repeated the nineteenth century imperial images of Fynn as civilised European, existing within a context of indigenous savagery. Wylie has argued that Febana was, like Ritter's Shaka Zulu, another example of a modern popular version of Isaacs' exaggerated biography of Shaka.¹⁷¹ As such, the positive characteristics attributed to Fynn are present in order to indicate the differences between progressive European individuals and a backward, savage Shaka, both of whom were representative of the wider European or indigenous society. However, Watt placed the older, traditional images within a new social context, that of a multi-racial society and her use of this concept was in marked contrast to earlier narratives.

The juxtaposition of white and black as the embodiments of the civilised and the savage had been dominant in English literature, both historical and popular, since the beginning of the eighteenth century with the publication of Defoe's novel

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 145-6; Isaacs, Travels and Adventures, vol. I, p. 95.

¹⁷¹Wylie, 'Utilising Isaacs', pp. 16-18.

Robinson Crusoe.¹⁷² Although this theme had been used in the literary context of late nineteenth-century British imperialism, it had all but disappeared from the literary scene by the time novels like Ritter's Shaka Zulu and Watt's Febana were published. In the post-war period it had in fact been utilised as an anti-imperialist theme in novels like William Golding's Lord of the Flies, which was published in 1954.¹⁷³ There seems to be no satisfactory explanation for the continued popularity of the 'Robinson Crusoe' theme, as represented in popular accounts of European individuals like Fynn, stranded if not exactly shipwrecked, in an alien environment, inhabited only by the worst kind of savage - Shaka. Ritter's Shaka Zulu had, to some extent, modified the traditionally, Isaacs-inspired view of Shaka, placing the emphasis more on Shaka's military achievements,¹⁷⁴ and showing a certain kind of admiration for Shaka's success in nation-building. A possible contributory factor to this continued popularity of imperial-focused issues was the wide appeal of cinema, which, during the 1950s and early 1960s, released several productions on these themes.¹⁷⁵ A locally made film on the Anglo-Zulu War, entitled Untamed had appeared in 1952, and this marked the beginning of a reawakened white public interest in the 'Zulu' of South Africa.¹⁷⁶

Apart from popular history and the cinema, another field of increasing interest to the general public was anthropology, particularly following the publication of Levi-

¹⁷²Green, Dreams of Adventure, p. 88.

¹⁷³Green, 'The Robinson Crusoe Story' in Richards, ed., Imperialism and Juvenile Fiction, p. 55; R.N. Stromberg, An Intellectual History of Modern Europe, London, Prentice-Hall, 1976, p. 484.

¹⁷⁴Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration: E.A. Ritter's Shaka Zulu', p. 120.

¹⁷⁵G.M. Fraser, The Hollywood History of the World, London, Michael Joseph, 1988, pp.142-145.

¹⁷⁶H.C. Lugg, Life Under a Zulu Shield, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1974, p. 9; I. Knight and I. Castle, The Zulu War Then and Now, London, Battle of Britain Prints International, 1993, p. 253.

Strauss' influential work, The Savage Mind in 1963.¹⁷⁷ In the period after 1950, English-speaking anthropologists in South Africa, who had previously been viewed as experts on 'native affairs', were now replaced as government advisers by Afrikaners.¹⁷⁸ Popular anthropology thus became an alternative form of expression for these scholars. Peter Becker was an anthropologist who held professional academic qualifications from the University of the Witwatersrand. He also had a knowledge of several African languages.¹⁷⁹ This enabled him to carry out detailed field work among both rural and urban black communities in Southern Africa.¹⁸⁰ Through this research, Becker was viewed both by fellow academics and by a wider public as someone who had detailed knowledge, not only of the contemporary plight of black people, but also of their pasts.¹⁸¹ Becker followed Ritter's lead in writing the biographies of prominent African leaders, though he deliberately avoided repeating the work of Shaka Zulu by omitting Shaka from his research, concentrating instead on the lives of Mzilikazi, Dingane and Moshoeshe.¹⁸²

Like Ritter, Becker claimed, through his contact with black people, to have access to the oral traditions which circulated in these communities. However, in Rule of Fear, his biography of Dingane, he relied for secondary source material almost entirely on Fynn's Diary, which he acknowledged as an accurate eye-witness account of the

¹⁷⁷C. Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays, London, Fontana Press, 1993 (1st publ. New York, 1973), pp. 342-359.

¹⁷⁸A. Kuper, 'Anthropology and Apartheid' in J. Lonsdale, ed., South Africa in Question, London, James Currey, 1988, pp. 42-43; Dubow, Illicit Union, pp. 277-278.

¹⁷⁹P. Becker, The Pathfinders: A Saga of Exploration in Southern Africa, Harmondsworth, Viking Books, 1985, pp. 15-17.

¹⁸⁰P. Becker, Tribe to Township. London, Panther Books, 1974.

¹⁸¹P. Becker, Path of Blood: The Rise and Conquests of Mzilikazi, Founder of the Matabele, Johannesburg, Panther, 1962, Introduction, pp. 15-16.

¹⁸²P. Becker, Path of Blood; Rule of Fear: The Life and Times of Dingane, King of Zulu, Johannesburg, Panther Books, 1964; Hill of Destiny: The Life and Times of Moshesh, Founder of the Basotho, London, Panther Books, 1966.

events of the first part of Dingane's reign.¹⁸³ As in Shaka Zulu, he depicted Fynn as a protector of refugees from Shaka, but also projected this image into the later time period of Dingane's reign from 1828.¹⁸⁴ Like Ritter and Watt, Becker depended on Isaacs for information about Fynn, and repeated Isaacs' statement that Fynn refused to accept a chieftaincy Port Natal from Dingane.¹⁸⁵ Becker's own explanation for Fynn's refusal was that he was 'unwilling to descend to the level of the scores of Zulu vassal chiefs whose lack of standing he had long deplored'.¹⁸⁶

On closer inspection, however, this portrayal of Fynn turns out to be another instance of the kind of juxtaposition of white and black individuals, as represented by the persons of Fynn and Shaka. Earlier authors, like Ritter, had placed Fynn's positive European qualities in contrast to Shaka's supposed character flaws. Becker used the same construct, but exchanged Shaka for Dingane. In opposition to the 'tyranny' encapsulated in Dingane's character, Fynn represented the voice of reason who expressed disgust at a decision to carry out executions, following which he 'refused to be implicated in an act of murder or to permit further shedding of blood at Port Natal'.¹⁸⁷ Becker even tried to excuse seemingly unscrupulous behaviour on Fynn's part, the shooting of his retainer Lukilimba, by pointing out that Fynn had been 'furious' following a restless night.¹⁸⁸ In earlier accounts, Fynn had been seen as a mediator with Shaka, a role which resulted in Shaka's 'land grant' to Farewell in September 1824. In Rule of Fear, although Becker repeated this idea by emphasising Fynn's efforts to placate Dingane, the negotiations failed and

¹⁸³Becker, Rule of Fear, pp. 38-40; 43-44.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 98-99.

¹⁸⁵Isaacs, Travels and Adventures, vol. 2, p. 35; Becker, Rule of Fear, p. 100.

¹⁸⁶Becker, Rule of Fear, p. 101.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁸⁸Becker, Rule of Fear, p. 140.

Dingane attempted to 'annihilate' the Port Natal settlement.¹⁸⁹ Despite these developments, Fynn was still portrayed in a positive role and the failure to reach an agreement was blamed on Dingane's 'treachery' rather than the weakness of European diplomacy.¹⁹⁰

Becker's publications, like Ritter's Shaka Zulu, received a positive public response, and by the mid- 1960s, the popular images of Shaka and Fynn as the representatives of African militancy and western technology were reaching a wide readership. The South African and overseas interest in Natal was intensified after 1964 with the release of J.E. Levine's film Zulu,¹⁹¹ based like an earlier movie Untamed on the Anglo-Zulu War, but specifically on the battle of Rorke's Drift.¹⁹² Zulu served to generate both popular and academic interest in the Zulu people, particularly in the United States, a region which had not previously shown much interest in the history of the Natal region.¹⁹³

During the 1960s, there was an increasing focus in the United States on the situation in African countries, particularly in the period of newly-acquired independence from the colonial powers.¹⁹⁴ At the same time, South Africa was, in the context of the events at Sharpeville in 1961, receiving international attention,

¹⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 101, 163.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 96-7.

¹⁹¹Zulu, Paramount Pictures, 1964, Directed by Cy Endfield and Stanley Baker, Screenplay by Cy Endfield and John Prebble; T. Thomas, The Great Adventure Films, Toronto, Toronto Press, 1976, pp. 260-266.

¹⁹² Knight and Castle, The Zulu War Then and Now, pp. 255-257; I. Knight, Nothing Remains But to Fight: The Defence of Rorke's Drift, 1879 London, Greenhill Books, 1993, pp. 154-158.

¹⁹³Guy, The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom, pp. xix-xx.

¹⁹⁴Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, p. 144.

particularly in terms of racial conflict.¹⁹⁵ Zulu focused the attention of both the public and the film industry on the central issue in South African society, namely the conflict between white and black.¹⁹⁶ Although Zulu was produced within a broadly defined 'imperial' setting,¹⁹⁷ the film also reflected the cynicism of the 1960s.¹⁹⁸ Levine's production marked the beginning of a new genre, the visual medium, for the depiction of black-white relations in South Africa.¹⁹⁹

A year after Zulu was released, the American amateur historian Donald Morris published his lengthy work The Washing of the Spears, aimed at providing an overall popular history of the 'Zulu Nation' from the time of Shaka to the mid-twentieth century.²⁰⁰ The local and overseas reading public had become receptive to this theme through the publication of Ritter's Shaka Zulu and the showing of Paramount Pictures' Zulu. In a review article, Shula Marks commented that at the time of the publication of Morris' book in 1965, popular interest in the Zulu in the United States had reached a new level even surpassing the British public interest which followed the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵N. Worden, The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1994, p. 107.

¹⁹⁶P. Louw and J. Botha, 'Film: The Captivating Power of Fleeting Images' in A.S. de Beer, ed., Mass Media for the Nineties: The South African Handbook of Mass Communication, Pretoria, J.L. van Schaik, 1993, p. 164.

¹⁹⁷ Mckenzie, Propaganda and Empire, p. 90.

¹⁹⁸ Fraser, The Hollywood History of the World, pp. 142-6.

¹⁹⁹K. Tomaselli, The Cinema of Apartheid: Race and Class in South African Film, New York, Lake View Press, 1988, p. 161.

²⁰⁰D.R. Morris, The Washing of the Spears: The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation, London, Cardinal Books, 1973 (1st publ. London, 1965), pp. 13-14.

²⁰¹S. Marks, 'The Nguni, the Natalians and their History', Journal of African History, vol. 8, no. 3 (1967), pp. 535-539.

Morris was able to draw on a substantial collection of primary source material in the form of documents for the second part of his book, which dealt with the events leading up to the Anglo-Zulu War and the British invasion of Zululand in 1879.²⁰² However for the bulk of the narrative, which dealt with the period up to the 1870s, Morris relied on secondary accounts, particularly the recently published works of popular writers like Ritter and Becker.²⁰³ The use of these works resulted in The Washing of the Spears presenting the existing view of Shaka, as the leader who unleashed the Zulu military machine, hence causing untold destruction in the region.²⁰⁴ Morris' dependence on these versions of the established images of pre-colonial indigenous society in Natal also influenced his portrayal of Fynn. As he had been for Ritter, Fynn became Morris' central narrator due to his supposed role as a literate recorder on the pre-Shakan and Shakan period. For Morris, it was Fynn who enabled the Zulu to 'pass from the realm of sporadic reporting into the pages of continual recorded history'.²⁰⁵ Both Ritter and Becker had quoted extensively from Isaacs' Travels and Adventures and Fynn's Diary, and Morris' accounts of Dingiswayo and Shaka were similarly based on sections from these sources.²⁰⁶

The accounts of Fynn's role at Port Natal in the 1820s which appeared in The Washing of the Spears were virtually the same as those in the Diary and had already been utilised in Ritter's Shaka Zulu. Morris, like other popular writers of the 1950s and early 1960s, was still concerned with 'civilisation against savagery' images, as was quite clear from his preface where he referred to 'European

²⁰²Morris, The Washing of the Spears, pp.215-574.

²⁰³Ibid., pp. 68-109.

²⁰⁴J. Wright, 'Beyond the Washing of the Spears', Reality, (1979), pp. 3-4.

²⁰⁵Morris, The Washing of the Spears, p. 77.

²⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 77-81.

civilisation' and the 'native population' as two distinct entities.²⁰⁷ Hence the much over-used depictions of Fynn appeared once again, namely, Fynn's medical assistance to Shaka, his contribution to the Ndwandwe campaign and his protection of 'refugees'.²⁰⁸ As in several other publications, Fynn's role in The Washing of the Spears was as negotiator between the traders and Shaka, and as the white confidant of Shaka, a part made possible through his medical skills.²⁰⁹ In these depictions, Morris' images of Fynn and of Shaka were no different from the established juxtaposition of Fynn and Shaka as the representatives of civilisation and savagery.

However, Morris was the first author to attempt an original portrayal of Fynn, and instead of pointing out his 'adventurous' qualities as earlier authors had done, he suggested that Fynn was a young 'freebooter', on the lookout for financial opportunity.²¹⁰ Morris stood outside the British imperial and colonial approaches to his subject and this made for a more objective view of Fynn. He gave Isaacs similar treatment and did not view him as a reliable recorder - given the fact that he was only seventeen and more or less uneducated.²¹¹ In contrast, Morris considered Fynn's education at Christ's Hospital School and his four years seniority to Isaacs sufficient criteria to enable him to provide an accurate written account of events.²¹² In one sense, Morris was entrenching the notion that the Diary was a sound textual source, but his explanations for Fynn's reliability were the first which did not link this only with the fact that Fynn was European. In terms of analysis of the early European texts, Morris was the earliest researcher to suggest that nineteenth-

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 13.

²⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 76-91.

²⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 80, 630.

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 77.

²¹¹Ibid., p. 616.

²¹²Ibid., p. 77.

century accounts like Isaacs' might not be the most accurate sources on the Shakan period, though this point was not fully taken up by historians until the 1990s. The Washing of the Spears was, by virtue of its unprecedented use of primary and secondary source material, a significant milestone in the historiography of the Zulu and their relations with Europeans. It was also the first account of the Zulu past written by an author outside Natal or Britain. Although Morris focused on the theme of the conflict of 1879, his detailed examination of Isaacs' and Fynn's roles as potential eye-witnesses of the events of the 1820s and 1830s marked the beginning of a reassessment of the social, economic and political context of black-white interaction at Port Natal during that period.²¹³

During the 1960s, African historiography was being rewritten in ways which centralised the role of African leaders.²¹⁴ While Morris' book was, in its reassessment of the emergence and history of the 'Zulu empire', indicative of this trend, the conceptualisation of black nation-building was not given a prominent place in South African histories during this period.²¹⁵ The ongoing dependence on Fynn's Diary by historians both within Southern Africa, and abroad, ensured that the images of the pre-colonial Natal past remained static, centered around the idea of Shaka's 'devastation' of the region. Ritter's and Morris' popular histories, while they did attempt a reconstruction of Shaka's actions, nevertheless reproduced this stereotype. The 'Africanisation' of Shaka's destructive military campaigns was merely a new version of the existing pre-colonial past which was ultimately based on the work of Isaacs and Fynn and reiterated in the widely used texts of Bird and Bryant.²¹⁶ In effect, the only innovation in Ritter's and Morris' creation of the 'nation building' Shaka since the 1950s was the use of a different version of the Fynn text -

²¹³Marks, 'The Nguni, the Natalians and their History', p. 535.

²¹⁴Freund, The Making of Contemporary Africa, pp. 7-8.

²¹⁵Marks, 'South African Studies Since World War Two', in Fyfe, ed., African Studies Since 1945, pp.186-188.

²¹⁶Wright, 'A.T. Bryant and the "wars of Shaka"', p. 419.

the Diary instead of Bird's Annals.

In the years after 1950, when Hattersley published his last full-length work on Natal, The British Settlement of Natal, there was no substantial published academic work on the region. The only reassessment of the pre-colonial and early colonial past had been carried out entirely by popular writers. It was against this literary background that Brookes and Webb's A History of Natal was published in 1965.²¹⁷ This book was the first full-length publication on the history of the region written by professional academic historians, educated at tertiary institutions within South Africa. Hattersley's works which had appeared from the 1930s to 1950, dealt with specific themes and periods and could not be categorised as general histories.²¹⁸

The political background for Brookes' and Webb's text was in a sense a reflection of the circumstances in English-speaking South African academic circles which had existed from the 1950s. During the decade from the 1950s to the 1960s, liberal historians, like Brookes and Webb,²¹⁹ found themselves increasingly challenged by a dominant Afrikaner ideology in both the political and historiographical sphere. By the mid-1960s, Afrikaner historians like Van Jaarsveld²²⁰ had adopted a specific view of the Natal region as the geographical and political setting for the development of the Afrikaners' nineteenth-century national identity.²²¹ In contrast to these ideas, Brookes and Webb were concerned with an emphasis on the role of Natalians and Natal historians as 'liberal', English-speaking South Africans, though at the same time they aimed to provide a history of the different communities in the Natal region - European,

²¹⁷E.H. Brookes and C.de B. Webb, A History of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1965.

²¹⁸Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, p. xvii.

²¹⁹J. Benyon, 'Colin Webb 1930-1992: An Appreciation', South African Historical Journal, vol. 27 (November 1992), p. 268.

²²⁰Smith, The Changing Past, p. 84.

²²¹Van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner Interpretation of South African History, p. 75.

African, and Indian.²²² Drawing directly on Bond's 1956 book, They Were South Africans, Brookes and Webb placed Farewell's party, including individuals like Fynn, in a prominent position as the first English settlers in the region, pre-dating the Voortrekker residents and thus firmly establishing the initial European presence in Natal as English rather than Dutch or Afrikaans.²²³

Despite this concern with the pre-Voortrekker period, A History of Natal, contained only two out of a total of twenty-five chapters which dealt with the period up to the British annexation in 1843. This was probably due to a lack of academic research on the early period and in this, the work mirrored that of Hattersley, who almost totally neglected events prior to the 1840s.²²⁴ Shula Marks who was conducting post-graduate research at the University of London,²²⁵ saw this as a fatal flaw in Brookes' and Webb's work and criticised the book as 'simply a rehash of the social vignettes of white Natal written by ... Hattersley'.²²⁶ Although Brookes and Webb has been praised retrospectively as 'an ambitious attempt to explore a field which had been greatly neglected',²²⁷ Marks' assessment was accurate in that A History of Natal, like all previous works on Natal, drew on nineteenth-century sources for the bulk of the chapters on the period prior to formal British annexation in 1843. As had been the trend since the publication of Bird's Annals, Fynn once again emerged as a dominant source, the only notable difference being that the authors were able to use the published Diary instead of relying on Bird's volumes. Brookes' and Webb's publication was the first full length academic history of Natal to make substantial use of the Fynn Diary. This was a culmination of the many references to Fynn as a reliable source

²²²Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, Preface.

²²³Ibid., pp. 18-19.

²²⁴Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, pp. 1-24; Hattersley, More Annals of Natal, pp. 11-14; The Natalians, p. 13.

²²⁵Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, pp. 158-9.

²²⁶Marks, 'The Nguni, the Natalians and their History', p. 529.

²²⁷Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, p. xvii.

which had been included in texts since the publication of Bird's Annals. For Brookes and Webb, Fynn was 'responsible for providing much of the evidence of the earliest days' of white settlement at Port Natal'.²²⁸

Fynn's Diary was crucial for the underlying aims of the second chapter of A History of Natal, which were to firmly establish the idea that white settlement in Natal was an English-speaking initiative. For Brookes and Webb, the Diary provided an English trader's eye-witness account of this early settlement and its interactions with indigenous society, relations which, they were quick to stress, were far more relaxed than those experienced by Africans and Dutch settlers from the 1830s. In keeping with the liberal historians' argument for a multi-racial society, Fynn as an individual in the English party, had a crucial role as a mediator between white and black, thus ensuring the continuance of cordial relations. Using the Diary and earlier sources on Fynn, for example McKeurtan's Cradle Days, Brookes and Webb presented the established images in their own political and historical liberal setting. Fynn's 'pioneering' efforts were no longer, as they had been since the late nineteenth century, a simple example of European initiative and courage juxtaposed with indigenous savagery and depredations. In the framework of A History of Natal, these actions were emphasised as a specifically English, and by implication, humane form of race relations at Port Natal.²²⁹ Fynn's rescue of 'desperate refugees' is placed within the same framework,²³⁰ as is his medical treatment of Shaka which Brookes and Webb viewed as leading to 'a real friendship' between Fynn and Shaka.²³¹ At the same time, Fynn is imbued with qualities of 'humanity and integrity' and depicted as 'young, resourceful and efficient', portrayals which served to further promote the idea of the positive contribution of the English settlers.²³² Brookes' and Webb's clear identification of integrity with

²²⁸Ibid., p. 17.

²²⁹Ibid., p. 23.

²³⁰Ibid., p. 19.

²³¹Ibid.

²³²Ibid., p.17.

Englishness was clearly demonstrated by their statement that Fynn was able to convince the Zulu of Farewell's peaceful intentions as 'the word of an Englishman was to be trusted'.²³³

A History of Natal was criticised by scholars outside South Africa as a traditional, 'settlerist' history, indicative of the increasing isolation and hence backwardness, of South African historiography.²³⁴ In a wider international historiographical arena, researchers were rapidly following the 'africanisation' trends of the post-colonial period, in which efforts were made to provide pre-colonial African societies with a history of constructive achievement.²³⁵ By the mid-1960s, historians outside of South Africa were attempting reconstructions of the pre-colonial past, concentrating on themes like nation or state-building in order to promote alternative African histories, untainted by the bias of Eurocentric influences.²³⁶ In a sense, Ritter's Shaka Zulu and Morris' The Washing of the Spears had been popular versions of these themes in that they tried to elevate Shaka to the status of an empire-builder, though they had simultaneously retained the biased imagery of Shaka as an individual who wreaked 'devastation'.²³⁷ In both instances, Shaka's negative qualities were highlighted by his juxtaposition with Fynn. No historian had, by the mid-1960s, been able to offer an alternative to this well established set of images represented by these two particular individuals.

²³³Ibid., p. 23.

²³⁴Marks, 'The Nguni, the Natalians and their History', p. 529.

²³⁵C. Neale, Writing 'Independent' History: African Historiography 1960-1980, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1985, pp. 14-15; R.A. Austen, "'Africanist" historiography and its critics: can there be an autonomous African history?', in T. Falola, ed., African Historiography: Essays in Honour of Jacob Ade Ajayi, London, Longman, 1993, pp. 207-208.

²³⁶R. Oliver, ed., The Middle Age of African History, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1970 (1st publ. London, 1967); T. Ranger, ed., Emerging Themes in African History, London, Heinemann, 1969.

²³⁷Wright, 'Beyond the Washing of the Spears', pp. 3-4; Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration: E.A. Ritter's Shaka Zulu', pp. 120-21.

In 1966, J.D. Omer-Cooper's The Zulu Aftermath was published as the first academic attempt to confirm Shaka's new status as an empire-builder.²³⁸ Omer-Cooper, who had originally studied in South Africa, had moved to Nigeria by the 1960s, and was inspired by the innovations in African historiography following independence in West Africa.²³⁹ The Zulu Aftermath provided an original thesis for the context of Shaka's career in that it was the first scholarly account to follow up the materialist ideas of the anthropologist Gluckman in reconstructing the historical circumstances in the Natal region.²⁴⁰ However, Omer-Cooper was unable to escape from the 'devastation' stereotype²⁴¹ and, like all writers since Isaacs, resorted to graphic descriptions of Natal as a region 'devastated from end to end by bands of refugees flying from the wrath of Shaka'.²⁴²

Omer-Cooper, like Brookes and Webb, had to rely on Fynn's Diary for his information on Shaka's career. He stated that he considered established secondary sources like Bryant's Olden Times and Fynn's Diary to be essential for his research.²⁴³ He also drew directly on popular interpretations of these sources, such as Ritter's Shaka Zulu, and with a complete disregard for the subjective nature of this work, pointed out that this was an improvement of the Diary text as it was 'more imaginative and dramatic'.²⁴⁴

In this sense, The Zulu Aftermath did not present a new departure on the life and career of Shaka, as it contained large sections from the Fynn text, often taken straight

²³⁸J.D. Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth Century Revolution in South Africa, London, Heinemann, 1969 (1st publ. London, 1966).

²³⁹Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, pp. 150-51.

²⁴⁰D.Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu History', unpubl. P.hD. thesis, Hebrew University, 1988, pp. 109-110.

²⁴¹J. Wright, 'Beyond the Concept of the "Zulu Explosion": Comments on the Current Debate' in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, p.119.

²⁴²Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath, pp. 174-5.

²⁴³Ibid., p. 30.

²⁴⁴Ibid.

from Ritter's book with a minimum of editing.²⁴⁵ Omer-Cooper's historical criticism was limited to superficial assessments, for example, that the material in the Fynn Diary was 'more accurate' than that in Bryant's Olden Times, without any explanation as to why he considered this to be the case.²⁴⁶ One explanation for Omer-Cooper's preference for the Diary over Olden Times was the continuing belief of historians that 'oral tradition', as collected by field-researchers was of less value than literate records supposedly kept by eye-witnesses.²⁴⁷

As a result of his dependence on Fynn's Diary and Ritter's Shaka Zulu, Omer-Cooper's depictions of Fynn were, like his depictions of Shaka, in no way original. Although his approach to Shaka as a state-builder was revolutionary,²⁴⁸ within this new setting, Omer-Cooper simply gave Fynn the same parts as he had been allocated since the publication of Bird's Annals. Once again, and in almost the same phrasing as Ritter, Fynn was presented as the person who, through his medical ability was able to obtain a 'land grant' from Shaka.²⁴⁹ In similar vein, Omer-Cooper described Fynn as the individual who had gathered refugees at Port Natal, where they received 'immunity' from Shaka.²⁵⁰ By placing Fynn in these constructive roles, The Zulu Aftermath was following the same pattern as had developed since the nineteenth century, where Fynn's positive qualities were offset against Shaka's negative traits. The result of such a process was to entrench further the biased images of Shaka. At no stage did Omer-Cooper attempt to deconstruct the Eurocentric version of the history of the 'Zulu state'

²⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 38-9; Ritter, Shaka Zulu, pp. 252-271.

²⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 28, 157.

²⁴⁷H. Moniot, 'Profile of a Historiography. Oral Tradition and Historical Research in Africa', in B. Jewsiewicki and D. Newbury, eds., African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa?, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1986, pp. 50-51.

²⁴⁸C. Saunders, 'Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography' in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 27-29.

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 38.

²⁵⁰Ibid., p. 174; Ritter, Shaka Zulu, pp. 263-5.

which had emerged since the early nineteenth century. In effect, The Zulu Aftermath, by relying on Fynn and Ritter, served to further entrench the stereotypes of the pre-colonial Natal past.

The attempts by popular writers like Ritter and Morris, and by academic historians like Omer-Cooper to reconceptualise the Zulu past as a process of nation or empire-building under the leadership of a dynamic individual, Shaka, were a major innovation in the historiography of the Natal region. At the same time, these authors retained the main elements of the nineteenth-century histories, albeit in a new, Afro-centric historical context. All three writers mentioned above consistently utilised Fynn's Diary to emphasise the peaceful influence of Europeans in an area afflicted by chaos and destruction. The anarchical nature of pre-1824 Natal had, by the time The Zulu Aftermath was published, begun to evolve into a distinctive theme, that of the 'mfecane' - a term originally defined by Walker in 1928²⁵¹ and which had, by the 1960s, become a central thread in the africanised, nation-building analyses of the 'Zulu state'.²⁵² The historians dealing with this theme followed Omer-Cooper in their dependence on Fynn's Diary for material on the pre-European indigenous communities in Natal, even if these now existed within the political context of a 'military revolution'.²⁵³

The new international academic emphasis on the pre-colonial South African past, as initiated by Omer-Cooper, was followed up three years later in the first volume of The Oxford History of South Africa.²⁵⁴ This was the first publication which acknowledged

²⁵¹ Saunders, 'Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography' in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 23-24.

²⁵² S. Marks, 'The Rise of the Zulu Kingdom' in Oliver, ed., The Middle Age of African History, pp. 85-91; W.F. Lye, 'The Difaqane: the Mfecane in the Southern Sotho Area, 1822-1824', Journal of African History, vol. 8 (1967), pp. 107-131.

²⁵³ Marks, 'The Rise of the Zulu Kingdom', pp. 86-89.

²⁵⁴ M. Wilson and L. Thompson, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. I, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969.

the contribution of anthropological science to pre-literate history.²⁵⁵ Prior to the appearance of the Oxford History, there had been a clear division in academic research on South Africa between the indigenous past as the realm of anthropologists, and the colonial past, as the field of historians. The editors of the Oxford History aimed not only to emphasise the importance of anthropological work, but also to dispel some of the main myths in South African historiography.²⁵⁶ Leonard Thompson, a South African historian who had left for the United States in the early 1960s, contributed a chapter on the 'Zulu kingdom'.²⁵⁷ This section like other chapters, contained some of the existing stereotypes,²⁵⁸ in particular the idea of Shaka's destructive military campaigns, through which 'he devastated ... most of the country'.²⁵⁹ However, these old ideas were now presented from the perspective of Omer-Cooper's new historiographical framework which stressed the Zulu initiative in instigating a military revolution.

Thompson, influenced by the efforts of other overseas scholars, notably Omer-Cooper and Shula Marks, reflected contemporary research by liberal historians in his presentation of Natal as an arena of interaction between black and white.²⁶⁰ This was an alternative view to the traditional approach which had stressed the impact of Europeans, with little regard for the response of indigenous society. The notion of Port Natal as an area of interaction had been put forward by Morris, a source which

²⁵⁵Smith, The Changing Past, p. 139; Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, p. 154.

²⁵⁶Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, pp. 155-9.

²⁵⁷L. Thompson, 'Co-operation and Conflict: the Zulu Kingdom and Natal' in Wilson and Thompsom, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. I, pp. 336-351.

²⁵⁸Marks, 'South African Studies Since World War Two', in Fyfe, ed., African Studies Since 1945, p. 188.

²⁵⁹Thompson, 'Co-operation and Conflict: The Zulu Kingdom and Natal', p. 338.

²⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 336-340; Marks, 'The Rise of the Zulu Kingdom', pp. 93-4.

Thompson considered 'scholarly', despite its lack of footnotes.²⁶¹ Like all earlier writers, Thompson relied on Fynn's Diary for most of his information on Natal's pre-colonial past, and he criticised other standard accounts, describing Isaacs as 'distorted and sensational', Bryant as 'coloured by the assumptions of his generation', and Ritter as 'highly romanticised'.²⁶² In similar vein to Ritter and Morris, Thompson stated that Fynn 'knew far more about Northern Nguni society than any other trader'.²⁶³ However, Thompson was the first historian to note the significance of Malcolm's editorial comment that Fynn's Diary was an 1850s reconstruction of earlier events.²⁶⁴ Thompson's chapter in the Oxford History was the first scholarly account to acknowledge that the historical context for the writing of the Fynn text was not the Shakan period, and this set a crucial precedent in the historical process of examining the Diary as a source on the Natal past.

At the time that the Oxford History was published, the Cape historian, P.R. Kirby, was carrying out similar investigations into the nineteenth-century context for the production of Isaacs' Travels and Adventures,²⁶⁵ and the late 1960s marked the beginning of a process of reassessment of both Isaacs and Fynn as sources. While he did hint at the problematic nature of Fynn's writing on events at Port Natal in the 1820s, Thompson did not follow this up with a detailed criticism - probably he viewed this as beyond the scope of his chapter for the Oxford History. As a result, his portrayal of Fynn was, like other contemporary accounts, based closely on the Diary and therefore conformed with the existing images. The Fynn who appeared in the Oxford History was no different from the Fynn in, for example, Ritter's Shaka Zulu, Brookes' and

²⁶¹Thompson, 'Co-operation and Conflict: the Zulu Kingdom and Natal', p. 337.

²⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 337.

²⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 336.

²⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 337; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. xi.

²⁶⁵P.R. Kirby, 'Unpublished Documents Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs, the Natal Pioneer', Africana Notes and News, vol. 18, no. 2 (June 1968), pp. 63-72; P.R. Kirby, 'John Centlivres Chase, Geographer and Cartographer', Africana Notes and News, vol. 18, no. 4 (December 1968), pp. 138-141.

Webb's History of Natal or Omer-Cooper's The Zulu Aftermath. Thompson depicted Fynn within the same set of circumstances at Port Natal, notably his doctoring of Shaka which ensured Farewell's land grant and Fynn's rescuing of refugees from 'fragments of chiefdoms'.²⁶⁶ Following Bryant, Thompson referred to Fynn's assimilation into indigenous society, commenting that 'Fynn... made the most effective adaptation to the environment ... he married Nguni women'.²⁶⁷ This last depiction provides a clearer idea of Thompson's perception of Fynn's role at Port Natal. For Thompson, the experiences of Farewell's party were part of a process of European interaction with the Zulu and Fynn was a specific individual who fulfilled this role. In the Oxford History, the existing images of Fynn were transplanted into a new context where two different societies interacted with each other. This was a highly significant development as it was the first instance of an attempt to break away from the old framework of contrasting individuals in the persons of Shaka and Fynn.

Thompson had pointed out that Fynn's writing as published in the Diary was not contemporary with the events of the 1820s and 1830s. It was several years before European academics followed up this issue, and it was an African historian, Felix Okoye, who, in 1969, took the initiative in the process of deconstructing the Fynn text.²⁶⁸ Okoye did not set out to reassess the Diary and his original intention was to provide an alternative biographical sketch on Dingane, whom he considered to have incurred the 'hatred of historians'.²⁶⁹ Like other historians trying to present an 'africanist' perspective on black leaders, Okoye aimed to undermine the negative images of Dingane which had developed during the period of colonial rule.²⁷⁰ In using

²⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 348-50.

²⁶⁷Ibid., p. 351.

²⁶⁸F. Okoye, 'Dingane: A Reappraisal', Journal of African History, vol. 10, no. 2 (1969), pp. 221-235.

²⁶⁹Ibid., p. 221.

²⁷⁰R. Smith, 'Explanation in African History: How and Why' in A. Asiwaju and M. Crowder, eds., Tarikh, vol. 6, no. 1, (1978), pp. 1-6.

the existing sources on Dingane, Okoye had to read Fynn's account, which stressed the 'treachery' in Dingane's dealings with Europeans. Okoye pointed out that it was this kind of emotive language which underlay the 'maliciousness' of European writing on African history.²⁷¹ Like his contemporaries, Okoye had to rely on the Diary, there being few alternative sources - oral accounts had not yet been afforded historical respectability.²⁷² His criticism of Fynn's text was in a sense superficial, but it was one of the first instances of a historian even acknowledging that the Diary might be in any way biased, and as such it marked the beginning of a process of textual analysis with regard to writing on the Natal past. Okoye's examination of the relationship between Dingane and the Europeans at Port Natal was also a crucial step in an emerging critical approach to this period in the Natal historical narrative, and to Fynn in particular. Earlier scholars had completely ignored the earliest settler relationships with indigenous society and Okoye's account served to place Fynn clearly as a member of a developing settler society, rather than in the romantic discourse suggested by his role as a 'pioneer'. Although the Diary text had been in circulation for nearly two decades, neither popular historians nor scholars had used this source to examine the Dingane period in Fynn's early career and the established ideas of him - as an individual who operated in a Shakan political context - had remained dominant. Okoye's was the first study to suggest that Fynn might have existed in a role outside that of the binary opposite of Shaka and that the traders evolved, by the 1830s, into a settler group with clearly defined land interests in the Port Natal area. The idea of Fynn as someone who adapted to specific economic and social circumstances was to be an important theme in the developing iconography of him during the decades from 1970.

The period from the 1950s to the late 1960s was one of great importance in the historiography of Fynn within the historical setting of the Natal region. The widespread use of the Diary text by both popular and academic historians served to entrench the

²⁷¹Okoye, 'Dingane: A Reappraisal', pp. 221-3.

²⁷²H. Trevor-Roper, The Rise of Christian Europe, London, Thames and Hudson, 1965, p. 9.

nineteenth- century images of Fynn, and on initial investigation it would appear that the character of Fynn had remained unchallenged since the publication of Bird's Annals. However, a closer analysis demonstrates that Fynn was used by successive historians in different roles and changing socio-political contexts, in line with the developments in the historiography of Natal. The work of scholars outside South Africa, specifically Thompsen and Okoye had, by the end of the 1960s, suggested a rethinking of the historical significance of Fynn's Diary and it was this particular image of Fynn - that of the eye-witness recorder - that was to be further challenged from the 1970s. Despite these crucial historiographical developments however, it was also clear that both Isaacs and Fynn were destined to be central sources during the following decades. Both Isaacs' Travels and Adventures and Fynn's Diary were republished at the end of the 1960s and they continued to be regarded as seminal texts on the Natal past.²⁷³

²⁷³Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, ed. P.R. Kirby, Cape Town, Struik, 1970; J. Stuart and D. Malcolm, eds., The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1969.

CHAPTER 8

MOVING BEYOND FYNN AND SHAKA:
CHANGING ACADEMIC TRENDS

1970s-1990s

By the early 1970s, following the publication of the two-volume Oxford History of South Africa, South African historians were concentrating increasingly on the pre-colonial past.¹ During the 1960s, this had been essentially a reaction against the colonial and settler ideas, which had denied the existence of a black past.² Of particular interest for a new generation of historians from the late 1960s was the history of the Natal region, which, in line with the trends of a wider African historiography, underwent a process of 'africanisation'.³ A dominant theme in this reconstruction of the pre-colonial Natal past was the portrayal of the Zulu leaders Shaka and Dingane as nation- or empire-builders,⁴ in contrast to earlier Eurocentric views which had presented them as pathological tyrants and agents of widespread destruction. However, despite these attempts at presenting positive images of black communities, historians were unable to contextualise personalities outside the established Natal historical setting of 'devastation', a stereotype which had originated in the early nineteenth century and had, by the 1960s, been clearly defined as the 'mfecane', a term which had become synonymous with chaos and upheaval.⁵

¹Smith, The Changing Past, pp. 138-9; Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, pp. 154-55.

²J. du Bruyn, 'The "Forgotten Factor" Sixteen Years Later: Some Trends in Historical Writing on Precolonial South Africa', Kleio, vol. 16 (1984), p. 35.

³Hamilton and Wright, 'Making PreColonial Histories in South Africa', p. 19.

⁴F. Okoye, 'Dingane: A Reappraisal', Journal of African History, vol. 10, no. 2 (1969), pp. 221-235.

⁵W.F. Lye, 'The Difaqane: the Mfecane in the Southern Sotho Area, 1822-1824', Journal of African History, vol. 8 (1967), pp. 107-131.

During the decades from 1970 these nineteenth century ideas of Natal, including the 'devastation' theme, were reassessed and reinterpreted.⁶ During this process, Fynn's Diary, which had been heavily utilised by both popular and academic writers since its publication in 1950, continued to be a vital source for historians. While Fynn's career in Port Natal during the 1820s and early 1830s underwent a process of reassessment in line with the developing historiography of the region, the ideas contained in the Diary text remained unchallenged at least until the late 1980s.⁷ At the beginning of the 1970s, Fynn's Diary remained a crucial source for the rewriting of the history of pre-colonial Natal.⁸

Felix Okoye had relied heavily on Fynn in his attempt to reconstruct the career of Dingane in a more positive light.⁹ He followed this up with a reassessment of Shaka, but instead of depicting an idealised, Africanised Shaka, as previous writers had done,¹⁰ he put forward an entirely new construction of black-white relations at Port Natal in the 1820s, a theme which was to some extent explored in Thompson's chapter in the Oxford History.¹¹ Thompson had provided a framework for black-white interaction by substituting the individuals Shaka and Fynn with whole groups and

⁶Duminy and Guest, Natal and Zululand, pp. xvii-xviii.

⁷The earliest criticisms of the Diary were in Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo', Journal of African History, vol. 29 (1988); Gewalt, 'A Faithful Circumstantial and Unvarnished Detail of Incidents': A Critical Reassessment of the Accounts Relating to the Shaka in The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn', unpubl. paper, Leiden State University, 1989.

⁸S. Marks, 'African and Afrikaner History', Journal of African History, vol. 11, no. 3 (1970), pp. 435-441; S. Marks and A. Atmore, 'The Problem of the Nguni: An Examination of the Ethnic and Linguistic Situation in South Africa before the Mfecane', in D. Dalby, ed., Language and History in Africa, London, Frank Cass, 1970, pp. 120-123.

⁹Okoye, 'Dingane: A Reappraisal', pp. 221-234.

¹⁰For example, Ritter, Shaka Zulu and Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath.

¹¹L. Thompson, 'Conflict and Co-operation: the Zulu Kingdom and Natal', in Wilson and Thompson, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. I, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 336-351.

communities - the indigenous people and the trading party.¹² Okoye also based his account around the concept of group interaction, while at the same time utilising the individual traits present in historical literature since the publication of Fynn's material in Bird's Annals. Okoye, utilising Fynn's Diary was unable to escape from the set idea that Fynn's supposed medical skills were illustrative of his 'humanity'.¹³ In line with earlier authors, Okoye imbued Fynn with positive individual qualities, stating for example that Fynn was 'discreet and courageous'.¹⁴ Like earlier historians, Okoye linked Farewell's 'land grant' to the Shaka-Fynn friendship, and repeated the idea that Fynn showed great 'humanity' in rescuing refugees from Shaka's atrocities.¹⁵

Despite his use of established characteristics in depicting Fynn, Okoye offered a new interpretation of the established idea of the Shaka-Fynn friendship. Almost all previous writers had suggested that the basis for this relationship was Fynn's medical care of Shaka. For Okoye however, the link between the two individuals was based on Shaka's belief that Fynn, through his use of macassar oil as a hair dye, could prevent Shaka's ageing. Although Fynn himself had made reference to this belief,¹⁶ the idea had only occurred in a few texts.¹⁷ Okoye went on to explain that this fear was a very real one, given Shaka's reputation as a military leader.¹⁸ Okoye's explanation of Fynn's 'medicine' gave a completely new insight into the exchange of goods between indigenous people and Farewell's party. From the 1820s, macassar oil had been listed

¹²Ibid., p. 339.

¹³F. Okoye, 'Tshaka and the British Traders', TransAfrican Journal of History, vol. 2, no. 1 (1972), pp. 14-15.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 14,16.

¹⁶Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 131.

¹⁷ Shooter, The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country, p. 281; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 606, 654; Mackeurtan, Cradle Days, pp. 144-5

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 17-21.

as a product brought to Port Natal by the European traders,¹⁹ but in the hundred and fifty years since authors had been describing the interactions between Shaka and Fynn as representatives of black and white respectively, no writer, including Fynn himself, had explained how the hair-dye had been utilised as a crucial ingredient of the European 'medical' treatment dispensed by Fynn to Shaka.²⁰ Okoye's analysis served to highlight the manner in which the Europeans had propagated the idea of superior white medicine.

Okoye's reappraisal of Shaka's relationship with Fynn was one of the first of a number of attempts to reinterpret the text provided by the Diary. Omer-Cooper, building on the work of Gluckman had, in his 1966 publication The Zulu Aftermath, provided a new material setting for Shaka's early career, but he had not reassessed Fynn's text in the light of this new framework. From the 1970s however, historians used the Diary in their attempts to provide materialist explanations for the development of the Zulu state into its later nineteenth century form. Okoye's reassessment of the traders' material exchanges at Port Natal was published at the same time as Jeff Guy's analysis of the economic impact of the firearm trade on the Zulu state from the 1820s. This examination, like Okoye's, necessitated a reinterpretation of evidence provided in the Diary.²¹

However, despite scholars' new explanations for the rise of the Zulu state, the 'mfecane' concept was still widely accepted as an all-embracing explanation for events in the Natal region from the 1780s to the 1820s. Scholars who attempted to reconstruct the concept of the 'mfecane' in economic or materialist terms remained firmly wedded to the concept itself, and it was clear that they were continuing to draw on the Diary to

¹⁹Campbell to Bell, 10 October 1828, in Leverton, ed., Records of Natal, vol. 2, p. 16.

²⁰For example, Shooter, The Kafirs of Natal, p. 281; Mackeurtan, Cradle Days, pp. 144-5; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 131.

²¹J. Guy, 'A Note on Firearms in the Zulu Kingdom with Special Reference to the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879', Journal of African History, vol. 12, no. 4 (1971), pp. 557-8.

illustrate their argument.²² The 'mfecane' was, by the early 1970s, an unquestioned paradigm, and the passive acceptance of the Diary as a reliable source on this issue was demonstrated by scholars like Colin Webb, who argued in an unpublished paper that Fynn's accounts were, by virtue of their provenance, 'more probable' than those of Shepstone.²³ Webb based this premise on the idea that Fynn had been at Port Natal some twenty years before Shepstone, and he did not qualify this chronology by dating Fynn's published writing from the date of Bird's Annals in 1888. Despite these oversights, Webb's paper was indicative of the developments in English-speaking 'liberal' historiography by the 1970s. Brookes and Webb had led this trend in the previous decade with their publication A History of Natal.

Those historians of the early 1970s who were seeking materialist explanations for what they perceived of as immense political and social change in eighteenth century Natal did not venture into new portrayals of European individuals like Fynn, who remained a 'pioneer' at Port Natal.²⁴ If the pre-colonial past was being reconstructed in a new framework, the images of individual Europeans remained, at this stage, unchallenged.

In 1974, the same year in which Webb presented the 'mfecane' as an accepted historical paradigm,²⁵ white Natalians commemorated one hundred and fifty years of European presence in the region. In much the same vein as the Natal Witness centenary publication in 1924, the Natal Education Department produced a special edition of its journal, Neon, on the significant role of the first white trader-settlers at Port

²² A. Smith, 'The Trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor in Nguni Politics: 1750-1830' in L. Thompson, ed., African Societies in Southern Africa, London, Heinemann, 1969, pp. 171-189; M. Gluckman, 'The Individual in a Social Framework: The Rise of King Shaka of Zululand' Journal of African History, vol. 2, no. 2 (1974), pp. 9-12; C. de B. Webb, 'Of Orthodoxy, Heresy and the Difaqane', unpublished paper, University of the Witwatersrand, May 1974, p. 6.

²³ Webb, 'Of Orthodoxy, Heresy and the Difaqane', p. 6.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

Natal.²⁶ Fynn, as a representative of this party, was described in this journal in much the same terms as he had been in the historical literature of the past century, being imbued with 'a great deal of courage' and endearing himself to Shaka who 'took an especial fancy as he (Fynn) had a healing knack which was impressive'.²⁷ This description was almost identical to the material which had been published for the Natal centenary in 1924. In official Natalian discourse, as stated for example by the Natal Education Department, it was the diplomatic actions of individuals like Fynn, which made possible a negotiated land grant with Shaka, thus justifying European presence in Natal from 1824.²⁸

In 1971, the Natal Society had celebrated its 120th anniversary by publishing the first issue of a journal, Natalia, which aimed to provide a semi-academic focus for the European history of the region.²⁹ In 1970, English-speaking Europeans all over South Africa had commemorated the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the 1820 settlers, and had stressed their English connections.³⁰ In 1974, in similar vein, the editorial committee of Natalia commemorated the 150th anniversary of European settlement at Port Natal by publishing an edition which provided biographical sketches of the members of Farewell's and King's trading parties.³¹ These short sketches aimed to give overviews of what Natal historians perceived as the very real contribution of these individuals to European settlement in Natal. At the same time, these articles, although brief, did show signs of more thoughtful insights into the personalities of the early

²⁶One Hundred Years of Progress, Pietermaritzburg, The Natal Witness, 1924; Neon, no. 14 (May 1974).

²⁷Neon, no. 14 (May 1974), p. 1.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 2-3.

²⁹Natalia, vol. 1 (December 1971).

³⁰N. Garson, 'English-speaking South Africans and the British connection: 1820-1961', in A. De Villiers, ed., English-Speaking South Africa Today: Proceedings of the National Conference, July 1974, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. 17-22.

³¹Natalia, vol. 4 (December 1974), pp. 8-41.

traders and were, in a sense, a departure from the traditional imagery of the 'pioneers' which had previously formed the basis for historical accounts of Port Natal in the 1820s.

John Wright's biographical sketch which appeared in this 1974 edition of Natalia was an attempt to present an alternative view of Fynn's role at Port Natal, in direct contrast to the established portrayals of Fynn, in particular the 'adventure book' quality of existing biographical accounts.³² Prior to Wright's sketch, almost all biographical material on Fynn had concentrated on his Port Natal career from 1824 to 1834 and, with the exception of Wright's 1971 publication, Bushman Raiders, there was very little secondary source material on Fynn's Cape career from 1834 to the early 1850s. Wright's material on Fynn in Bushman Raiders was hitherto unresearched, and this publication provided a detailed examination of Fynn's period as an official in the Cape colony.³³ The Natalia article was the first assessment of Fynn which examined the biased nature of earlier historians' views of Fynn as a 'courageous pioneer' and instigator of the 'civilising process' at Port Natal. By openly acknowledging the Diary as a subjective source with an 'adventure book quality' and by looking at alternative sources, such as Stuart's interviews with black informants, Wright was suggesting a re-examination of Fynn, both as recorder and trader.³⁴

Wright's analysis of Fynn's role in the Natal past remained however, an isolated attempt to examine the stereotyped images of Fynn. The writers of the other biographical sketches in Natalia retained the existing ideas, for example, the notion of Fynn as a reliable source was reiterated in Gadsen's article on Farewell. Other authors relied heavily on Fynn's Diary and Fynn's accounts in Bird's Annals for

³²J. Wright, 'Henry Francis Fynn', Natalia, vol. 4 (December 1974), p. 14.

³³Wright, Bushman Raiders, pp. 124-136; see chapter 3 above.

³⁴Ibid.

information for their articles on individual traders.³⁵

In 1974, the same year as this special issue of Natalia, the first comprehensive biography of Fynn appeared. The author, Marjory Davies was not a professional historian, but had a strong personal interest in the Fynn family as she was a great-granddaughter of Fynn's brother William.³⁶ Davies' aim was to provide a detailed list of Fynn's white descendants and, as far as possible, his immediate ancestors. Davies' publication was a combined project in that it also included the family history of another Natal family, the Southeys, to whom she was related through her mother.³⁷ This interest in Natal family history was a by-product of the 1970 and 1974 anniversaries of the English arrival in South Africa, and it demonstrated white Natalians' interest in their own family connections with the English settlers of the 1820s.³⁸

As a biographical account of Fynn, Twin Trails was a product of exhaustive research, and provided, for the first time, accurate material on Fynn's immediate predecessors and their Irish connections.³⁹ Davies' account also contained precise details of Fynn's early career and his education at Christ's Hospital School and as an apprentice to a surgeon in London from 1816 to 1818.⁴⁰ Unlike previous biographers, Davies also, like Wright, included information on Fynn's Cape career, though she did not attempt a contextualisation of this period in the light of earlier images of Fynn as a Natal 'pioneer'. Although Twin Trails did not contain any academic analysis of Fynn's role in South Africa, it was nevertheless a crucial text for historians in that it was the most

³⁵R.J. Gadsen, 'Francis Farewell', Natalia, vol. 4 (December 1974), pp. 10-12; B.J.T. Leverton, 'James Saunders King', Natalia, vol. 4, pp. 18-25; L. Herrman, 'Nathaniel Isaacs', Natalia, vol. 4, pp. 26-27.

³⁶M. Davies, Twin Trails, p. vi.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. vii.

³⁸Garson, 'English-speaking South Africans and the British connection', pp. 17-18.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 15.

accurate and well researched account of the various stages of Fynn's life to have appeared.

Despite her innovative research on Fynn's career, Davies, like previous writers, fell back on the traditional texts in order to piece together the events at Port Natal in the 1820s. She used Isaacs' publication, together with the Fynn Diary, for material on Fynn's medical treatment of Shaka, and did not attempt to qualify these accounts with the details she had uncovered on Fynn's extremely limited medical knowledge.⁴¹ For Davies, as for her predecessors, on the basis of his medical treatment, Fynn was 'a close personal friend of Shaka'.⁴² She adopted intact Malcolm's belief that Fynn, as a Zulu speaker, qualified for the status of an 'expert' in his reconstruction of an 'authentic historical record' of pre-colonial Natal,⁴³ and described the Diary as an 'accurate record of events and observations in Natal and Zululand'.⁴⁴

While the historiography of the pre-colonial Natal region remained to a large extent locked into traditional patterns which focused on established notions of an 'mfecane', in part witnessed by Isaacs and Fynn, the wider historiography of the African region was being challenged by African historians. These academics were concerned with re-writing the African past in ways which stressed African achievement and decried European influences.⁴⁵ Some South African historians were, at the same time, starting to re-examine concepts like industrialisation and class divisions in terms of a broadly

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 18-20.

⁴²Ibid., p. 23.

⁴³Ibid., p. 23; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. xi-xii.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁵S. Amin, 'Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa - Origin and Contemporary Forms', Journal of Modern African Studies, vol.x (1972); W. Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Washington, Howard University Press, 1981 (first publ. Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1972).

defined Marxist-structuralist paradigm.⁴⁶ Historians also started to reassess established themes like the impact of imperialism in the light of a materialist-based approach.⁴⁷ Although the idea of Shaka's 'devastation' of the region remained the dominant setting for early Natal, research on the region was to some extent influenced by changes in the historiography of pre-colonial South African societies.⁴⁸ Though not strictly materialist, approaches to the Natal past now included a closer examination of the physical setting, including the geographical and environmental background for human activities.⁴⁹

In their analyses of the formation of the Shakan state, both Omer-Cooper and Gluckman had drawn extensively on Fynn's writing to illustrate their arguments.⁵⁰ The historians who attempted new examinations of these theories were similarly dependent on Fynn's accounts, made easily accessible to researchers since the publication of the Diary. In this context, economic explanations for the still widely accepted notions of upheaval tended to entrench the use of Fynn as a valuable source, particularly his Diary text. The idea of Fynn as an authoritative source of evidence was applied uncritically to new theories. Gluckman, for example, in his 1974 article on the social context of Shaka's achievements, referred to Fynn's Diary for accounts to illustrate his new argument.⁵¹ The originality of Gluckman's materialist based theories on the early

⁴⁶Smith, The Changing Past, p. 188.

⁴⁷ A. Atmore and S. Marks, 'The Imperial Factor in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century: Towards a Reassessment', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, vol. 3, no. 1 (1974), pp. 105-133.

⁴⁸J. Wright and C. Hamilton, 'Making Pre-Colonial Histories in South Africa: Past Trends and Present Debates', unpubl. paper, Rhodes University, 1995, pp. 19-22.

⁴⁹C. de B. Webb, 'Environment and History: the Northern Nguni Example', unpubl. paper, Rhodes University, 1973.

⁵⁰Gluckman, 'The Kingdom of the Zulu in South Africa' in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systems, pp. 25-31; Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath, pp. 4-7.

⁵¹M. Gluckman, 'The Individual in a Social Framework: the Rise of King Shaka of Zululand', Journal of African Studies, vol. 1, no. 2 (1974), pp. 130-131.

Zulu state was compromised by his continued dependence on Fynn for source material.

The problems which historians faced in having to rely on Fynn as one of the few written sources on the Natal region was noted by Slater in his materialist thesis on the political economy of south-east Africa.⁵² His analysis of the role of the traders at Port Natal marked a new departure in the historiography of these Europeans and their activities in the region. Instead of stressing the traditional ideas of European civilisation and progress, Slater examined Farewell's and King's parties in terms of economic issues, pointing out that Fynn and his fellow-traders were, in the final analysis, far more interested in the profits to be gained from the ivory trade than from any moral imperative to influence the indigenous community.⁵³ In contrast to earlier biographical accounts of Fynn's life at Port Natal, Slater concentrated on Fynn's role as a trader and noted that Fynn had 'operated with a great deal of independence'.⁵⁴ Although this observation was gleaned from the Diary, Slater did not, like earlier writers, lay great stress on Fynn's medical activities and thus his success in securing a 'land grant' from Shaka. Instead, he simply pointed out that Fynn had 'enjoyed very good relations with the Zulu state'.⁵⁵

Slater's was the first study to move significantly beyond settler-based notions of the role of the early European traders in south east Africa. His study covered not only a reassessment of the supposed upheavals of Shaka's reign, but also of the black-white relations at Port Natal in changing economic circumstances. Slater's study was followed by David Hedges' thesis which also had a materialist approach, though Hedges tried to include an analysis of both the pre-colonial and early European periods

⁵²H. Slater, 'Transitions in the Political Economy of South-East Africa Before 1840', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex, 1976, pp. 270-271.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 339-395.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 377.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 386.

in a unified materialist assessment.⁵⁶ Unlike Slater, Hedges used traditional imagery in his description of Fynn's specific role at Port Natal, in particular the idea of him doctoring Shaka. However, this portrayal was not, as had been the case in earlier accounts, linked to Fynn's supposed influence over Shaka and his securing of a 'land grant'. Instead Hedges, following Okoye,⁵⁷ provided an alternative explanation for Shaka's interest in European medicine, suggesting that Fynn's 'medicine' had a central all-important ingredient - macassar hair oil - which served to convince Shaka, as well as his enemies that he enjoyed perfect health and was not subject to weakness through advancing age. For this reason, 'the white man's medicines ... also had to be controlled by the inkosi (Shaka) lest his enemies acquire them'.⁵⁸ Like Okoye and Slater, Hedges used information from Fynn's Diary, but by providing a pragmatic explanation which focused on the economic issue of increasing trade between Europeans and the interior, ensured that this source retained its significance within the new historiographical approach, as valuable information on Shakan Natal.⁵⁹

Slater's and Hedges' theses marked a turning-point for academic studies on pre-colonial and early colonial south east Africa, in that they were the first analyses to explain events in terms of a holistic regional political economy.⁶⁰ However, not all academic accounts moved beyond existing stereotypes of the Natal past to the same degree. Davies' Twin Trails was a detailed biography of Fynn but was more popular than scholarly, and, apart from the new glimpses of Fynn's role in Slater's and Hedges' work, it was not until 1977 that an academic study of Fynn's life appeared. Todd

⁵⁶D. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics in Southern Mocambique and Zululand in the Early Nineteenth Centuries', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1978.

⁵⁷Okoye, 'Tshaka and the British Traders', pp. 14-16.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 232-237.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 230-247.

⁶⁰E.A. Eldredge, 'The Delagoa Bay Hinterland' in E.A. Eldredge and F. Morton, eds., Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on the Dutch Frontier, Boulder, Westview Press, 1994, pp. 153-5. I am grateful to Betsy Eldredge for discussing this chapter with me immediately prior to publication.

Ellison's unpublished Honours thesis was not intended to be a full-length account of Fynn's career. Its scope covered Fynn's later Natal career from 1852 until his death in 1861.⁶¹ Todd Ellison's treatment of Fynn's early years at Port Natal used existing images, as was demonstrated by the fact that he drew directly on Malcolm's commentary in the Diary, to describe Fynn's early career as his 'Robinson Crusoe decade'.⁶² Disregarding Wright's point that Fynn's Cape colonial experiences must have had a strong influence on his later Natal period,⁶³ Todd Ellison stressed Fynn's 'legacy of friendly race relations' and argued that Fynn, instead of becoming part of the colonial order, 'opposed the attitudes ... of colonial society'.⁶⁴ Also in line with an established set of images of Fynn was Todd Ellison's conviction that Fynn's Diary was 'the earliest and most accurate account of the traders' initial contact with Shaka', and that Fynn was a recognised authority on 'the customs and history of Natal's black inhabitants'.⁶⁵

Despite these reiterations of long-established and originally settler attitudes regarding Fynn's role at Port Natal, Todd Ellison undertook valuable research on a hitherto neglected aspect of Fynn's career. His thesis was the first extended academic work which focused specifically on Fynn, and as such it served to establish his career as a serious topic for scholarship, separate from both the more popular biographical accounts, as well as the wider studies which only included Fynn as part of a broad survey of the events of the Shakan period in Natal. Although his analysis provided a unique account of Fynn, Todd Ellison, like other scholars, neglected to make full use of the oral material on Fynn contained in James Stuart's collection, despite the fact that

⁶¹J. Todd Ellison, "'In remembrance of your kindnesses to us": Henry F. Fynn's Other Decade in Natal, South Africa, 1852-1861', unpubl. Hons thesis, Middlebury College, 1977.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 2; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 117.

⁶³Wright, 'Henry Francis Fynn', Natalia, vol. 4 (December 1974), p. 16.

⁶⁴Todd Ellison, "'In remembrance of your kindnesses to us'", pp. 3-5.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

he worked extensively with these papers in the course of his research.⁶⁶ For example, he failed to use William Leathern's evidence, in which Fynn was depicted as a devoted colonial official, who meted out appropriate harsh treatment to the blacks under his jurisdiction.⁶⁷

Academic accounts of the Natal past continued to include biographical sketches of Fynn, which conformed with the established set of images. Following the 1970 commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the 1820 settlers' arrival, biographies of early colonists were popular, particularly those which dealt with English-speaking settlers. E.C. Tabler's 1977 publication on south-east African 'pioneers' was a collection of shortened biographies of individuals whom he considered to fit into the category of European 'pioneers' in the Natal region. Tabler selected Fynn as a member of this group and described him in traditional terms as a 'hunter, trader, explorer, settler and white chief', repeating once again the idea that Fynn had gained the 'confidence and affection' of Shaka by virtue of his medical treatment.⁶⁸ Tabler, a genealogist, also relied on Fynn's Diary for his recitation of events in the Shakan period, and quoted extracts from the text to illustrate what he described as the 'orgy of slaughter' instigated by Shaka.⁶⁹

Although academic historians had focused on pre-colonial Natal from the mid-1970s,⁷⁰ the region had also become an increasingly popular region of research for anthropologists. Anthropological studies, such as Gluckman's reassessment of Shaka's context, were significant contributions to the developing materialist

⁶⁶Information from Ms Jenny Duggan, Killie Campbell Africana Library, July 1990.

⁶⁷Webb and Wright, James Stuart Archive, vol. 1, evidence of William Leathern, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁸Tabler, Pioneers of Natal and South Eastern Africa, pp. 42-3.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 44-5; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 130-38.

⁷⁰Duminy and Guest, 'Natal Historical Writing During the Last Two Decades: A Conspectus', in Edgecombe, ed., The Debate on Zulu Origins, pp. 3-4.

historiography⁷¹ but, like historians, he had had to rely on existing texts like Fynn's Diary to illustrate his hypothesis. In terms of the evolving 'mfecane' concept, Fynn had become an accepted source for both historians and anthropologists, and scholarly reassessments from the mid-1970s still used the Fynn text as reliable source material.⁷²

In an important reassessment of Fynn as a source in this context, John Argyle, a social anthropologist at the University of Natal, made one of the earliest attempts to re-examine the nature of the Fynn texts in his 1978 article on Dingiswayo. Argyle aimed to analyse the nature of the specific elements that constituted the Dingiswayo mythical tradition.⁷³ A central observation in Argyle's approach was the crucial fact that Fynn had written these myths down many years after first hearing of them.⁷⁴ Thus, in line with anthropological research methods, these traditions needed to be examined like other myths obtained through oral methods.⁷⁵ For Argyle, the Fynn texts were the earliest set of records of these myths but at the same time they were only one in a set of different recordings of the same Dingiswayo tradition. Fynn had to be viewed alongside other sources, and his texts compared with those of other recorders like Shepstone and Bryant, in order to obtain an objective idea of his significance in the

⁷¹Gluckman, 'The Individual in a Social Framework: the Rise of King Shaka of Zululand'; Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu History: Max Gluckman and Shaka's Sexual Preferences', p. 14.

⁷²Webb, 'Of Orthodoxy, Heresy and the Difaqane', p. 6; Slater, 'Transitions in the Political Economy of South East Africa Before 1840', unpubl. thesis, pp. 339-350; Hedges, 'Trade and Politics in Southern Mocambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', unpubl. PhD thesis, pp. 232-237.

⁷³Argyle, 'Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of his Legendary Origins', pp. 3-4.

⁷⁴Interview with Professor Argyle, June 1994.

⁷⁵R. Finnegan, Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 107.

region's past.⁷⁶

This comparative approach was a completely new departure for assessment of the Fynn texts, though historians did not immediately take note of this. An article by Adrian Koopman, a Zulu scholar, appeared a year later in which he aimed to examine Fynn's accounts as one of a number of controversial written versions of the oral traditions on the pre-Shakan state. Koopman used Fynn's narrative, as published in Bird's *Annals* in 1888 as the starting point for the various written narratives on Dingiswayo's career. Fynn's version, for Koopman was the 'most reliable' of all the nineteenth-century literary accounts.⁷⁷ Koopman, as a Zulu linguist went on to compare Fynn's writing with other sources, including pieces of Zulu oral tradition and Dingiswayo's praise-poem.⁷⁸

Argyle's work was undertaken within the discipline of social anthropology, and was influenced by Ruth Finnegan's research on oral evidence.⁷⁹ Koopman was a Zulu language specialist, analysing Zulu oral traditions.⁸⁰ Neither of these analyses was formulated by historians, but they served to demonstrate the influence of other disciplines on the historiography of the pre-colonial Natal region, in particular the increasing emphasis by researchers on the value of Zulu oral tradition as alternative source material to narratives written by Europeans. Through the work of scholars like Argyle, Fynn had acquired a new kind of prominence - as a figure who collected oral

⁷⁶Argyle, 'Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of his Legendary Origins', pp. 11-12.

⁷⁷Koopman, 'Dingiswayo Rides Again', pp. 4-5.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁹Interview with Professor Argyle, June 1994.

⁸⁰I am grateful to both Ruth Finnegan and Adrian Koopman for discussing the Dingiswayo narratives with me at the Conference on Oral Tradition and Innovation, University of Natal, Durban, July 1991.

tradition and transcribed it into textual form.⁸¹ While Fynn was being projected in this innovative way, oral traditions on the Natal past were acquiring recognition on a wider platform through the publication in book form, as the James Stuart Archive.⁸² These volumes contained James Stuart's collection of evidence which he had obtained from African informants in Natal at the end of the nineteenth-century and in the early years of the twentieth-century.⁸³

Although Natal historians did not make significant use of the wealth of material provided by Stuart's informants until the mid-1980s, the issues raised in Argyle's work were crucial in suggesting a reassessment of the historical timing of Fynn's writing. Argyle had pointed out that Fynn's texts were a product of a considerable time-lapse between the actual events and the construction of the texts, which gave rise to the possibilities for extensive re-writing.⁸⁴ Although Stuart had pointed this out quite emphatically in his preface to the Diary, the issue seemed to have escaped the scrutiny of historians, many of whom stated or implied that the value of Fynn's writing lay in the fact that it was contemporary with the Shakan period. Argyle's second important premise was that Fynn was only a single version amongst a number of mythical accounts of Dingiswayo's career. Historians had, prior to this, generally accepted Fynn's writing as an accurate and valid account of pre-Shakan events.

A year after Argyle's analysis was published, an American historian, William Worger, compiled an article in which he attempted to dissect what he perceived of as

⁸¹J. Pridmore, 'Henry Fynn and the Construction of Natal's History: Oral Recorder or Myth Maker?' in E. Sienaert, N. Bell and M. Lewis, eds., Oral Tradition and Innovation. New Wine in Old Bottles?, Durban, University of Natal Press, 1991, pp. 22-30.

⁸²C.de B. Webb and J. Wright, eds., The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, vol. I, 1976; vol. II, 1979.

⁸³Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I., pp. xiii-xvi.

⁸⁴Argyle, 'Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of His Legendary Origins', p. 2.

the elements of the 'Shaka myth'.⁸⁵ Worger's re-assessment of the traditional elements of the career of Shaka was the first attempt by an historian to examine the pre-colonial past as a series of constructed narratives broadly defined as 'myths'. This was the earliest critical academic study on Shaka and as such provided the basis for further analysis.

Significantly, Worger was not a South African-based historian and his argument was written from a perspective which was at a distance from South African historians, whose knowledge of the Shakan period was saturated with myths, most of which had originated with the publication of Isaacs' Travels and Adventures in 1836.⁸⁶ While Argyle had raised the important questions of when Fynn was writing and which specific oral tradition he was recording, Worger was able to move beyond this and dissect the 'political nature' of Fynn's texts and suggest distinct social and political circumstances for Fynn's writing on Shaka.⁸⁷ Worger pointed out that Fynn's recording of the events in Shaka's reign were all based on accounts provided by individuals directly involved in the politics of the Shakan state, a fact which implied a fair degree of bias in Fynn's writing.⁸⁸

Another significant contribution to the analysis of the major themes in the historiography of Natal was Russell Martin's thesis on images of the Zulu during the nineteenth century.⁸⁹ Following up ideas suggested by Edward Said's influential work Orientalism,⁹⁰ Martin sought to examine the socio-political conditions which provided

⁸⁵W.Worger, 'Clothing Dry Bones: The Myth of Shaka', Journal of African Studies, vol. 6, no. 3 (1979), pp. 140-151.

⁸⁶Wylie, 'Language and Assassination', pp. 71-73.

⁸⁷Worger, 'Clothing Dry Bones: The Myth of Shaka', p. 145.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 146.

⁸⁹R. Martin, 'British Images of the Zulu, c. 1820-1879', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1982.

⁹⁰E.W. Said, Orientalism, London, Vintage Books, 1978.

the background for British notions of the 'Zulu' during a fifty- year period of rapid economic and political change. Said's work had set an important precedent for historians in that he had provided a thorough analysis of the intellectual, social and political implementation of a specific set of ideas and images.⁹¹ Martin attempted to reassess nineteenth-century images of the 'Zulu' in order to demonstrate the kind of one-sided discourse which had arisen as a result of black-white interaction in the Natal region.⁹²

While providing a detailed textual analysis of both Isaacs' and Fynn's imagery of the Zulu, Martin also placed the authors in their early colonial setting. Thus he described Isaacs' political background in the 1830s as his anxiety to encourage the British annexation of Natal, pointing out that Travels and Adventures, with its 'Gothic representation, conveyed with an arresting vividness and vigour', gave the early Victorian British reading public a version of Shaka and the Zulu which 'they both wanted and expected to hear'.⁹³ Martin asserted that in contrast to Isaacs' influential writing on indigenous society, the bulk of Fynn's texts remained unpublished until the appearance of Bird's Annals in 1888 and thus did not form a component of the mid-nineteenth century colonial discourse on the 'Zulu'.⁹⁴ A flaw in Martin's analysis was his failure to examine Fynn's indirect contributions to accounts of the Zulu by officials like Pine in the published proceedings of the 1852 commission,⁹⁵ in the Natal Mercury,⁹⁶ and in the works of contemporary authors, particularly Chase and Colenso.⁹⁷

⁹¹D. Porter, 'Orientalism and its Problems' in Barker, ed., The Politics of Theory, pp. 179-183.

⁹²Martin, 'British Images of the Zulu c. 1820-1879', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, pp. 6-8.

⁹³Ibid., p. 60.

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁹⁵Proceedings and Report, p. 6.

⁹⁶Natal Mercury, 21, 28 April, 5, 12, 19 May 1853.

⁹⁷Chase, The Natal Papers, vol. I, p. 20; Colenso, Ten Weeks in Natal, pp. vii-ix.

Martin made the original observation that although Fynn did not directly contribute to the developing set of written images of the Zulu, he was, through the writings of Isaacs and others, provided with a distinct set of images, specifically as a person with 'extensive knowledge drawn from intelligent inquiry, observations and first-hand experiences'.⁹⁸ Unfortunately, Martin followed this trend himself in his depiction of Fynn's writing in the Diary as 'bearing the mark of authentic portraiture of Shaka'.⁹⁹ At the same time he did not include the vital evidence, stated by Stuart and reiterated by Worger, that the Fynn manuscripts were written in the 1850s and were not contemporary with Fynn's visits to Shaka in the 1820s.¹⁰⁰ Martin's fairly heavy reliance on the Diary text was in direct contradiction to his stated aim of analysing the problems generated by particular images of the Zulu, and he did not include any commentary on the accuracy or otherwise of the edited Diary as a record. Martin appeared to overlook the crucial point that the first comprehensive published writings of Fynn appeared in Bird's Annals in 1888, nine years beyond the time span indicated in his thesis.

Unlike Worger, and in contrast to his excellent analysis of the conditions under which Isaacs' text was produced, Martin failed to state the crucial point that Fynn's accounts were a result of ideas as subjective as those of Isaacs. His lack of detailed analysis of Fynn's context was in direct contrast to his examination of the socio-political framework for Isaacs' writing. This served to demonstrate the continuing predominance of the specific image of Fynn as a reliable recorder, an image particularly emphasised in historical literature since the publication of the Diary in 1950. Martin's omission of a detailed contextual analysis of Fynn's writing was not unusual within the parameters of South African historiography in the early 1980s.

The historiography of early Natal, including the experiences of European individuals

⁹⁸Martin, 'British Images of the Zulu', p. 61.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. xi; Worger, 'Clothing Dry Bones: The Myth of Shaka', p. 145.

like Fynn, was, in the early 1980s, closely linked to established ideas of the 'mfecane'. English-speaking 'liberal' historians such as Davenport and Webb still described the events in early nineteenth-century Natal and its surrounding hinterland in terms of conflict and anarchy, and they used Fynn as evidence for these circumstances.¹⁰¹ Fynn's writing on the Shakan period, particularly in the form of the Diary, was also used extensively by authors attempting to view the 'mfecane' from a wider perspective, following Slater's and Hedges' materialist reassessments.¹⁰² Although historians were beginning to utilise written accounts of oral traditions,¹⁰³ particularly following the publication of the James Stuart Archive, the third volume of which appeared in 1982,¹⁰⁴ most researchers showed a marked preference for written texts by European authors, and viewed the Diary as one of the few literate accounts on Natal.

While existing ideas of the 'mfecane' projected a traditionally negative picture of black-white relations, historians were beginning to readdress this interaction within the paradigm of 'frontier studies'.¹⁰⁵ The notion of a frontier as an arena of violence

¹⁰¹T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History, Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1978, pp. 10-17; C. de B. Webb, 'The Mfecane' in 'Perspectives on the Southern African Past', unpubl. paper, University of Cape Town, 1979, pp. 134-144; N. Southey, 'T.R.H. Davenport: Liberal Historian of South Africa', South African Historical Journal, vol. 26 (May 1992), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰²J. Guy, 'Ecological Factors in the Rise of Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom' in Atmore and Marks, eds., Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, pp. 102-119; P. Bonner, 'The Dynamics of Late Eighteenth Century, Early Nineteenth Century Northern Nguni Society - Some Hypotheses' in J.B. Peires, ed., Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History, Grahamstown, Rhodes University Press, 1981, pp. 74-80.

¹⁰³J. Wright, 'Pre-Shakan Age Group Formation Among the Northern Nguni', Natalia, vol. 8 (1978), pp. 22-30; A. Temu and B. Swai, Historians and Africanist History: A Critique, London, Heinemann, 1981, pp. 99-100.

¹⁰⁴C.de B. Webb and J. Wright, eds., The James Stuart Archive, vol. III, Durban and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1982.

¹⁰⁵M. Legassick, 'The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography' in Marks and Atmore, eds., Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, pp. 45-79.

between opposing cultures had a long background in South African historiography.¹⁰⁶ From the 1970s, both local and overseas scholars working on South African historical research had started to reexamine the race relations of frontier societies in terms of cooperation and interaction.¹⁰⁷ These ideas had gradually emerged in United States frontier studies and focused on the idea of the emergence of multi-racial communities in areas of frontier contact between black and white groups.¹⁰⁸ Initially, scholars working in this immense field paid little attention to the Natal region,¹⁰⁹ but this changed in the early 1980s with the research of Charles Ballard, an American student working in South Africa. Ballard's doctoral thesis on the Natal hunter-trader John Dunn whom he described as a 'transfrontiersman', focused on the Natal-Zululand region and provided an innovative approach for an examination of the early years of black-white contact.¹¹⁰

Ballard followed up his work on John Dunn, as a single white 'transfrontiersman' with a detailed reassessment of events at Port Natal from the time of European arrival in 1824. An earlier study by another South African-based American scholar, Bill Freund, had highlighted the nature of assimilation in a frontier community in the absence of an established colonial government.¹¹¹ Ballard's research suggested that this scenario

¹⁰⁶ MacCrone, Race Attitudes in South Africa; S.D. Neumark, Economic Influences on the South African Frontier 1652-1836, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1957.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, The Changing Past, pp. 174-5.

¹⁰⁸ W. Freund, 'The Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony during the Batavian Period (1803-1806)' Journal of African History, vol. 13 (1972), pp. 631-645; M. Legassick, 'The Northern Frontier to 1820: The Emergence of the Griqua People' in Elphick and Giliomee, eds., The Shaping of South African Society 1652-1820, pp. 243-337.

¹⁰⁹ H. Lamar and L. Thompson, eds., The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981, pp. 155-7.

¹¹⁰ C.C. Ballard, 'The Transfrontiersman: The Career of John Dunn in Natal and Zululand, 1834-1895', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1980.

¹¹¹ W. Freund, 'Thoughts on the Study of the History of the Cape Eastern Frontier Zone' in Saunders and Derricourt, eds., Beyond the Cape Frontier, pp. 88-91.

was equally appropriate to the Port Natal hinterland in the period before the British annexation in 1843.¹¹² Within this framework, Fynn was, for Ballard, an individual who represented the type of assimilation into indigenous society which was characteristic of the co-operative nature of a frontier region. Fynn was typical of the 'acculturation of white frontiersmen' which occurred in such a multi-racial community.¹¹³ An American scholar, Howard Lamar, had, together with the South African historian Leonard Thompson, investigated the nature of co-operative relations in a frontier zone. They had suggested that, in the early period of frontier development, relationships of 'clientship' developed between less powerful clients and a dominant military, political or economic group.¹¹⁴ According to Ballard, this existed at Port Natal as a relationship between European clients and Zulu chiefs, illustrated by the traders' participation in Shaka's military expedition against the Ndwandwe in 1826. Fynn's and Farewell's submission to Shaka was in these terms, an indication of their adaptation to the 'political realities' of a frontier community.¹¹⁵

In his doctoral study on the Port Natal community, A.E. Cubbin, a South African historian, followed the trends set by Ballard in placing this racially and culturally mixed society within the context of early frontier dynamics where interaction between black and white groups was primarily co-operative. Cubbin, like Ballard, examined the relations between the multi-racial community based at Port Natal and indigenous hinterland groups. He similarly focused on Fynn as a specific example of European assimilation into pre-colonial society and also reiterated the notion of clientship

¹¹²C.C. Ballard, 'The Role of Trade and Hunter-Traders in the Political Economy of Natal and Zululand, 1824-1880', *African Economic History*, vol. 10 (1981), pp. 1-21; 'Natal 1824-1844: The Frontier Interregnum', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, vol. 5 (1982), pp. 49-61.

¹¹³Ballard, 'Natal 1824-1844: The Frontier Interregnum', p. 51.

¹¹⁴H. Lamar and L. Thompson, 'The North American and Southern African Frontiers' in Lamar and Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History*, pp. 38-39.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 49.

suggested by the traders' involvement in the Ndwandwe campaign.¹¹⁶ Ballard's and Cubbin's studies were significant contributions to the historiography of Natal in that they attempted to examine some of the economic forces which determined the functioning of the mixed race community at Port Natal. Their research illustrated the complexities of the traders' socio-economic relationship with the Shakan state and this served to show the potential for co-operative interaction between the two groups. This approach was in contrast to earlier studies which had stressed the differences and conflicts between black and white as personified by Shaka and Fynn. Slater's and Hedges' work, together with the research done by historians who followed up on the ideas in their theses, had highlighted the complex trading network between different economic groups in the Natal region,¹¹⁷ but these frontier-focused analyses provided a further breakdown of the relationships between two distinct economies, represented by broadly defined pre-colonial and colonial systems. Within these changing relationships, individuals like Shaka and Fynn were merely participants and not, as earlier historians had stressed, the juxtaposed embodiments of opposing cultures.

Ballard's and Cubbin's reassessments of race relations in the Port Natal area in the 1820s were placed within the paradigm of contemporary developments in frontier studies. At the same time, their approach was in direct contrast to the materialist approach favoured by some other scholars. Apart from their reiteration of nineteenth century images, both Ballard and Cubbin also followed the established late twentieth-century pattern of historical writing on Fynn by drawing heavily on his Diary for their evidence. Although Ballard utilised the oral sources published in the James Stuart Archive, he did not select material which in any way contradicted the existing versions of the pre-colonial past Natal.¹¹⁸ Ballard retained the existing concept of the 'mfecane'

¹¹⁶A.E. Cubbin, 'Origins of the British Settlement at Port Natal, May 1824-July 1842', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of the Orange Free State, 1983, pp. 38-9, 47-8.

¹¹⁷For example, P. Harries, 'Slavery and Social Incorporation and Surplus Extraction: The Nature of Free and Unfree Labour in South-East Africa', Journal of African History, vol. 22 (1981), pp. 309-330.

¹¹⁸Ballard, 'Natal 1824-1844: The Frontier Interregnum', pp. 49-53.

which had resulted from Shaka's destructive actions and, using the Diary text, commented on the large number of refugees who had to flee to European protection as a consequence of Shaka's violent actions.¹¹⁹ In reassessing the 'mfecane' in terms of an ecological explanation, Ballard, despite offering completely new geographical explanations for the early nineteenth century dislocations in south east Africa, still relied on Fynn's Diary for evidence of these upheavals.¹²⁰

From the early 1980s, the 'mfecane' concept, although still dominant in the majority of reconstructions of the Natal past,¹²¹ was entering a phase of reassessment particularly in terms of its established dominant position as a set of key myths on pre-colonial African historiography, with little or no basis in historical evidence.¹²² Although he traced the origins of the conceptualisation to the liberal writers of the 1920s, Cobbing did not, at this stage, note that substantial segments of the 'mfecane' mythology were based on the notion of Shaka's 'devastation' of the region, ideas which had evolved directly from the writing of Isaacs and Fynn.

However, as Cobbing's ideas developed, he began to recognise the crucial role played by Fynn's writing, particularly the published Diary, in the complicated discourse on the 'mfecane' issue by the 1980s.¹²³ By the late 1980s, Cobbing, together with John Wright, was analysing the 'mfecane' as a substantial historiographical and political

¹¹⁹Ballard, 'The Role of Trade and Hunter-Traders in the Political Economy of Natal and Zululand, 1824-1880', p. 4.

¹²⁰C. Ballard, 'Drought and Economic Distress: South Africa in the 1800s', Journal of Interdisciplinary History, vol. xvii, no. 2 (Autumn 1986), pp. 359-362.

¹²¹K. Carlean, 'Myths of the Mfecane and South African Educational Texts' in Edgecombe et.al. eds., The Debate on Zulu Origins, pp.7-8.

¹²²J. Cobbing, 'The Case Against the Mfecane', unpubl. paper, University of Cape Town, March 1983; 'The Case Against the Mfecane', unpubl. paper, University of the Witwatersrand, March 1984; 'The Myth of the Mfecane', unpubl. paper, University of Durban-Westville, June 1987.

¹²³The Weekly Mail, 7-13 November 1986.

discourse, emerging from and reflected in a wide variety of literature.¹²⁴ In 1988, Cobbing published an article in the Journal of African History in which he included a sharp attack on Fynn's Diary describing its editing as one of the 'major disasters of South African historical literature'. Following up on points made but not explored by Argyle and Worger, Cobbing stated that 'Fynn's Diary is not a Diary but a welding together of a number of later propaganda essays written by Fynn mainly in the late 1850s and 1860s. It contains interpolations by Stuart from the early twentieth century.'¹²⁵ Although Cobbing did not investigate the ramifications of this depiction of Fynn's writing, his brief assessment of the Diary provided scholars with a new framework for further analysis of European historiography of the Natal region.

In the early 1980s, historians like Russell Martin had undertaken a complete reassessment of the existing ideas of Zulu people. In her 1988 thesis in which she explored the process of 'construction and reconstruction' in Natal historiography, Daphna Golan, an Israeli scholar, took Martin's research as a starting-point for a detailed examination of the texts which had generated various versions of 'Zulu history' since the nineteenth century.¹²⁶ She pointed out that although Fynn's material as published in Bird was one of the dominant published accounts of the pre-Shakan and Shakan period, earlier texts by authors like Shepstone also contained similar narratives.¹²⁷ At the same time she made a new analysis of the ways in which mid-nineteenth century writers, for example Colenso, had used Fynn's unpublished manuscripts from the 1850s,¹²⁸ and, following Cobbing, queried the existence of any

¹²⁴J. Wright and J. Cobbing, 'The Mfecane: Beginning the Inquest', unpubl. paper, University of the Witwatersrand, September 1988; J. Wright, 'Political Mythology and the Making of Natal's "Mfecane"', Canadian Journal of African Studies, vol. 23, no. 2 (1989), pp. 272-291.

¹²⁵J. Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo', Journal of African History, vol. 29 (1988), p. 524.

¹²⁶ Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu History', p. 19.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 26-34.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 43-4.

Fynn papers prior to the 1850s.¹²⁹ For Golan, Fynn's role as an author in the reconstruction of the Zulu past was not as important as that of Isaacs, and she suggested that the image of Fynn as a valid source emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, following the utilisation of Bird's Annals by writers of 'Zulu history'.¹³⁰

In her reassessment of Fynn as an influential source, Golan took as a starting point the widespread use of the Diary text for the construction of 'Zulu history' since 1950. Following Worger, she pointed out that most historians examining the 'Zulu' past since the publication of the Diary had overlooked Stuart's crucial point in the preface that the contents of the Diary were written during the 1850s and were not contemporary to the events of Shaka's reign.¹³¹ Having placed the Diary text clearly in the socio-political setting of colonial Natal in the 1850s, Golan then concentrated on the contributions of the editors, Stuart and Malcolm. Cobbing had questioned the historiographical validity of Stuart and Malcolm's editing of the Fynn Diary¹³² and Golan maintained that given Stuart's intensive early twentieth century work in constructing images of the 'Zulu past', his editorial contributions should be subjected to textual scrutiny.¹³³ She illustrated the close similarity between the ideas contained in the Diary footnotes and Stuart's own notions of the 'Zulu past', noting that Malcolm had accepted Stuart's comments as valid commentary on Fynn's narrative.¹³⁴

Golan's work was one of the first attempts to examine Fynn's writing and the later construction of the Diary text within a specific set of social, intellectual and political circumstances. These conditions, as Golan had shown, had a direct impact on the

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 54.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 55.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 53; Worger, 'Clothing Dry Bones: The Myth of Shaka', p. 146.

¹³²Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo', p. 524.

¹³³Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu History', p. 53.

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 58-61.

way in which the original manuscript as well as the Diary were produced and in the case of the Diary, received by historians as particular constructions of 'Zulu history'. This complex interaction between context and text was a phenomenon which had been increasingly explored by literary scholars since the late 1970s, and during the 1980s these notions gradually influenced other disciplines.¹³⁵ By the late 1980s, this research had influenced historians to the extent that historical texts, like literary texts, were beginning to be viewed both as products of socio-political and intellectual discourse and as reflections of the ideological framework in which they were constructed.¹³⁶ Golan's work was an example of the way in which the 'Zulu' past could be analysed along these lines, particularly with regard to writers like Fynn and Stuart who had been regarded as authorities on that past. While Cobbing had illustrated the possibilities for the 'deconstruction' of an accepted historical mythology in the same way that scholars of literature had unpacked key texts, Golan's work on the dominant versions of 'Zulu history' had set a precedent for further dissection of hitherto authoritative texts like Fynn's Diary.

The potential for a detailed analysis of the Diary text was demonstrated to some extent in a research paper by a Namibian scholar, Gewalt.¹³⁷ Gewalt however, made the same chronological mistake as Martin when he stressed that 'all productions or perspectives of Shaka are ultimately based on the works of Fynn' without examining the nineteenth century uses of Fynn prior to the publication of Bird's Annals in 1888. By emphasising Fynn's role as a source, Gewalt overlooked the crucial contribution of Isaacs to the images of Shaka and did not explain the limited influence of Fynn's

¹³⁵ C.Norris, Deconstruction: Theory and Practice, London, Routledge, 1993 (1st publ. London, 1982), p. 9,19.

¹³⁶D. LaCapra, History and Criticism, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 18-19; B. Lincoln, Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies in Myth, Ritual and Classification, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 3-7.

¹³⁷J-B Gewalt, "A Faithful Circumstantial and Unvarnished Detail of Incidents". A Critical Reassessment of the Accounts Relating to the Shaka in The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn', unpubl. paper, Leiden State University, 1989.

Shakan imagery prior to Bird's publication.¹³⁸

Despite these flaws, Gewalt provided a well-researched analysis of the context of Fynn's writing and the motives which lay behind Fynn's production of particular images of Shaka. Gewalt clearly pointed out that Fynn's manuscript was not written during the 1820s, and suggested 1838 as the earliest possible date for Fynn's written account. He also suggested that Fynn had been assisted by other writers.¹³⁹ In accordance with Isaacs' suggestions to 'make the Zulu as bloodthirsty as you can', Fynn described the Zulu in terms of 'the cliched ... savage and untamed dark continent of Africa'.¹⁴⁰ Gewalt considered that Fynn's motive in emphasising his Robinson-Crusoe like isolation at Port Natal was a deliberate attempt to portray himself as the only individual with 'access to history', thus lending credibility to his image as the only literate and therefore reliable recorder.¹⁴¹ In the context of these specific motives, Fynn consistently depicted himself in the text of the Diary as the singular civilised European in the presence of the savage Shaka. For Gewalt, episodes like Fynn's medical treatment of Shaka were specifically included to justify the Shaka-Fynn 'friendship' which led to Farewell's 'land grant'.¹⁴²

Like Golan, Gewalt examined Stuart and Malcom's editing of the Diary text. Both editors, Gewalt noted, believed in the historical accuracy of Fynn's account and were not prepared to believe that Fynn was in any way exaggerating or biased in his accounts. Thus, the historical ideas of the editors served to provide a context for an unadulterated Diary text, this in turn entrenching the image of Fynn as the 'only

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 4.

¹³⁹Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 9-10.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 15.

historian' on the Shakan period.¹⁴³ Gewald's analysis demonstrated the intricate relationship between Fynn's socio-political context and the specific self-generated images which arose from these circumstances. He further highlighted the crucial issue that the editors of the Diary adopted these images as 'an unvarnished detail of incidents' as they were in accord with the dominant 'settler' focused historiography of Shaka's relations with Fynn, the two individuals representing the respective characteristics of black and white society.¹⁴⁴

Cobbing's comments on Fynn's Diary and Golan's and Gewald's detailed analysis of this text provided a new paradigm for the academic depiction of Fynn's role in nineteenth century South Africa. Above all, the work of these scholars indicated a new critical awareness of the utilisation of sources in reconstructing the Natal past. These developments are illustrated in John Wright's doctoral thesis, in which he demonstrated the ways in which a particular set of images - the 'devastation' stereotype - were used and appropriated.¹⁴⁵ In reassessing the role of the traders at Port Natal during the 1820s, Wright placed the traders' within the context of Zulu political development and noted that these individuals, including Fynn, were important to Shaka as sources of European manufactured goods and as potential allies for military conflict.¹⁴⁶

However, not all academic studies have reflected this critical awareness either of sources or of the traders' political role, to the same degree. In 1988, Shirron Bramdeow, a University of Natal student, presented a master's thesis which included a detailed biography of Fynn together with an historical narrative of the development

¹⁴³Ibid., p.17..

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁴⁵Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', pp. 60-95. A chapter based on Wright's thesis was recently published as J. Wright, 'Political Transformations in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 163-181.

¹⁴⁶Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', pp. 320-375.

of the community of mixed-race Fynns in the Natal region.¹⁴⁷ Bramdeow placed Fynn's writing accurately in the 1850s, during his career as a magistrate in the Natal colonial administration, and she pointed out that Fynn had to edit his text according to the moral values of the Victorian society in which he wrote.¹⁴⁸ Apart from this observation however, she did not move beyond Todd Ellison in her biography of Fynn, and, despite her acknowledgement of the limits imposed on Fynn's writing, she depended on the Diary text for the old ideas of Fynn's 'unique friendship with Shaka' and his rescue of numerous 'refugees'.¹⁴⁹ Like Todd Ellison, Bramdeow's biographical material on Fynn was based largely on the Diary which she considered 'a valuable source of information'.¹⁵⁰ In essence, Bramdeow's biographical account of Fynn was merely a reiteration of earlier works. Her thesis did contain a relatively new framework for Fynn in that she followed the ideas explored by her supervisor, Ballard, and placed Fynn firmly within the 'frontier' context, describing him as a 'transfrontiersman' and giving a detailed assessment of Fynn's role in a frontier exchange economy.¹⁵¹

Ballard's analysis of Port Natal as a 'frontier' society in which Fynn functioned as an individual who became assimilated into the indigenous community, appeared in the new history of Natal in 1989.¹⁵² This volume was intended to provide an updated version of Brookes' and Webb's A History of Natal published in 1965, and its contents were based on recent research by archaeologists and historians. Although Ballard's

¹⁴⁷S. Bramdeow, 'Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community, 1824-1988', unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1988.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 56-57.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 33-35, 57.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 14, 20.

¹⁵¹Ibid., pp. 39-40.

¹⁵²C. Ballard, 'Traders, Trekkers and Colonists' in Duminy and Guest, eds, Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, pp. 13-19.

chapter has been criticised as 'white colonial' history,¹⁵³ his conceptualisation of Port Natal in terms of frontier issues was an entirely new approach compared to the Fynn- and European-dominated material in A History of Natal. Fynn's Diary, was still quoted as an important source but in Ballard's chapter¹⁵⁴ this text was not cited to the same degree that it had been in Brookes' and Webb's publication.¹⁵⁵

It was clear by the late 1980s that the traders' role at Port Natal was undergoing historiographical revision. In an unpublished paper in 1989, Stephen Gray, a literary researcher and writer, had suggested that Farewell's party, of which Fynn was a prominent member, were, in addition to their ivory trading activities, possibly involved in the Portuguese-controlled slave-trade from Delagoa Bay.¹⁵⁶ Cobbing presented these ideas in the form of an unpublished paper at the Natal History Workshop in 1990. In this paper he viewed the European traders as the direct agents of a Port Natal-based slaving operation during the 1820s and early 1830s.¹⁵⁷

Cobbing's assessment included the notion that the izinkumbi or 'locusts' were derogatory terms for the black retainers of European traders whose slave-raiding was so severe that they destroyed the countryside like a swarm of locusts.¹⁵⁸ This was a new explanation for the term izinkumbi who were traditionally thought to be the black

¹⁵³W. Freund, Review of Natal and Zululand, South African Historical Journal, vol. 23 (December 1990), p. 225.

¹⁵⁴Ballard, 'Traders, Trekkers and Colonists', p. 17.

¹⁵⁵Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, Chapter 4.

¹⁵⁶S. Gray, 'John Ross and Slavery', unpubl. paper, University of Natal, Durban, September 1989, pp. 4,8. This paper was published as S. Gray, 'John Ross and Slavery', English in Africa, vol. 17, no. 1 (May 1990), pp. 82-93.

¹⁵⁷J. Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle: The Early Zulu and the Slave Trade', unpubl. paper, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, October 1990. This paper was published in 1992 in Edgecombe, ed., The Debate on Zulu Origins in which form it is cited in chapter 1 above.

¹⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 13.

and mixed race adherents of the Fynn family and whom Bryant had called 'wanderers' due to their lack of proper family ties in the region.¹⁵⁹ Cobbing portrayed Fynn in a particularly negative light in this context, pointing out that one interpretation of Fynn's Zulu name was Mbuyazwe (as opposed to Mbuyazi) which, he supposed, meant 'killer'.¹⁶⁰ For Cobbing, Fynn was an individual slaver in a party of slave-raiders or slave-traders and, in accordance with this idea, he presented Fynn as an unscrupulous mercenary, constantly in search of reward. Fynn's involvement in the Shaka's military campaigns for example, was portrayed as successful slave raids for which Fynn was rewarded with cattle.¹⁶¹

In contradiction to his earlier criticism of the Diary, Cobbing drew directly on Fynn's text for evidence to support this theory, for example using the Diary to illustrate the presence of foreign shipping at Port Natal, which, according to Cobbing, indicated the possibilities of slave trading.¹⁶² While recognising the limits of the Fynn Diary, Cobbing, like Golan had to rely on this text in the absence of alternative sources.¹⁶³ In his depiction of the European traders as slavers, Cobbing had drawn heavily on the oral sources made accessible through the publication of the James Stuart Archive.¹⁶⁴ In a similar vein to his criticism of the Diary text, Cobbing had, in an earlier article, dismissed this material as biased and distorted.¹⁶⁵ Cobbing's paper on the European slave-trade from Port Natal showed the necessity for historians to depend on sources

¹⁵⁹Bryant, Olden Times, p. 615.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶²Cobbing 'Grasping the Nettle', p. 3.

¹⁶³D. Golan, 'The Life Story of King Shaka and Gender Tensions in the Zulu State', History in Africa, vol. 17 (1990), pp. 95-110.

¹⁶⁴Cobbing, 'Grasping the Nettle', pp. 13-14.

¹⁶⁵J. Cobbing, 'A Tainted Well: The Objectives, Historical Fantasies and Working Methods of James Stuart with Counter-Argument', Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol. xi (1988), pp. 120-146.

like the Diary in conjunction with the oral evidence given in the James Stuart Archive volumes.

Initially, oral tradition had seemed an ideal alternative data base to fill the gaps left by 'settler' histories in reconstructing the pre-literate African past.¹⁶⁶ A return to 'orality' was, in the eyes of many scholars, a way of undermining the Eurocentric focus of western literacy with its inherent prejudices and presumptions.¹⁶⁷ However, in applying this idea to the Natal region, historians had soon realised the value of the limited number of existing texts and it was clear that a proper historical analysis required the use of both kinds of evidence.¹⁶⁸ In her rigorous investigation of oral traditions on the early Shakan state, for example, Carolyn Hamilton had acknowledged the importance of both Isaacs and Fynn as examples of the few written accounts on this period.¹⁶⁹ At the same time she recognised the limits imposed in utilising oral tradition as historical source material.¹⁷⁰ Research into the nature of oral tradition has revealed the subjective nature of this material¹⁷¹ and the fact that oral reconstructions of the past are, like written texts, products of a particular ideological discourse.¹⁷² At

¹⁶⁶D. Henige, 'African History and the Rule of Evidence: Is Declaring Victory Enough?', in Jewsiewicki and Newbury, eds., African Historiographies, pp. 91-103.

¹⁶⁷W.J. Ong, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, London, Methuen, 1982, pp. 89-95; H.J. Graff, The Legacies of Literacy in Western Culture and Society, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 261-263.

¹⁶⁸Vail and White, Power and the Praise Poem, pp. 40-83.

¹⁶⁹C.A. Hamilton, 'Ideology, Oral Tradition and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom', unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985, pp. 33-4.

¹⁷⁰C. Hamilton, 'Ideology and Oral Tradition: Listening to the Voices "From Below"', History in Africa, vol. 14 (1987), pp. 67-86.

¹⁷¹L. Passerini, 'Mythbiography in Oral History' in R. Samuel and P. Thompson, eds., The Myths We Live By, London, Routledge, 1993, pp. 59-60.

¹⁷²E. Gunner, 'Orality and Literacy: Dialogue and Silence' in K. Barber and P.F. de Moraes Farias, eds., Discourse and Its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts, Birmingham, Birmingham University Press, 1989, pp. 49-55; R. Finnegan, Oral Tradition and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices, London, Routledge, 1992, pp. 25-7; E. Tonkin, Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral

the same time, recent researchers have pointed out the dangers of a Eurocentric, or literacy-focused approach in regarding 'orality' as a separate body of knowledge, inherently inferior to literate material.¹⁷³

The problems involved in the use of oral tradition have recently led, historians to reassess the value of Fynn's Diary as a useful written text. However, in contrast to earlier research, scholars are now utilising the Diary as one of a number of sources, with all evidence, both textual and oral, being subjected to a process of intensive scrutiny and contextual and textual 'unpacking'. Carolyn Hamilton, in her contribution to the 'mfecane' debate has used the Diary to illustrate her arguments, but at the same time explained the circumstances which led to the production of the Diary as a text and the discrepancies within the Fynn text.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, an American scholar Elizabeth Eldredge, in her reply to Cobbing's argument, used the Diary only to illustrate issues like environmental change which could be correlated with other sources.¹⁷⁵

By the 1990s, it was clear that the Diary was under close scrutiny as the dominant source on the early history of the Natal region. The use of published versions of oral material, together with an examination of the discrepancies in Fynn's writing has resulted in an eradication of the image of Fynn the only reliable recorder of the pre-colonial past. In their work on the portrayals of Shaka, Carolyn Hamilton and Dan Wylie have provided a setting for a complete reappraisal of Fynn's writing, particularly

History, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 2-4.

¹⁷³H. Gilbert, 'De-Scribing Orality: Performance and the Recuperation of Voice' in C. Tiffin and A. Lawson, eds., De-Scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 110.

¹⁷⁴C.A. Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka": A Reconsideration of the Mfecane and the Making of Shaka as "Mfecane" Motor', Journal of African History, vol. 33 (1992), p. 41. This article was recently republished under the same title in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 183-212.

¹⁷⁵E.A. Eldredge, 'Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa c. 1800-1830: The "Mfecane" Reconsidered', Journal of African History, vol. 33 (1992), p. 12. This article was recently republished under the same title in Hamilton, ed., The Mfecane Aftermath, pp. 123-142.

the Diary as a source on the Shakan period.¹⁷⁶ These reassessments illustrate the possibilities for a further analysis of Fynn's Diary as both literature and historical text.

While scholars have started to re-examine the Diary and the concepts of Fynn as a specific source, there has also been a tendency, in for instance, the work of John Wright, to look for less Fynn-focused images of the European trading party and the interaction between this group and indigeneous society . Recently, historians have attempted to glean evidence from less prominent European individuals who had hitherto been perceived as the underclass in the community dominated by the leading traders, Farewell, King and Fynn. Hamilton's work on the traders' contributions to an evolving historical discourse on Shaka concentrated not on Fynn who had traditionally been viewed as a confidant of Shaka, but on the statements of John Cane, an employee of Farewell.¹⁷⁷ Another example of evidence 'from below' was Stephen Gray's edited publication of the 'John Ross' papers, focusing attention on J.S. King's apprentice, Charles Maclean, and relegating Fynn to a minor role.¹⁷⁸ In the realm of professional historical writing, Fynn, had, by the mid-1990s, been reassessed both as an individual character with specific traits, and as an author of a supposedly authentic source document.¹⁷⁹ By the mid-1990s, historians were viewing both Fynn and the Diary text from a critical stance, as evidenced by John Laband in his comprehensive work on the nineteenth-century Zulu state, Rope of Sand.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶C. Hamilton, 'Authoring Shaka: Models, Metaphors and Historiography', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1993; D. Wylie, "'Proprietor of Natal" Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka', History in Africa, vol. 22 (1995), pp. 409-436.

¹⁷⁷Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka", pp. 40-45.

¹⁷⁸ Gray, ed., The Natal Papers of 'John Ross', pp. 24-6.

¹⁷⁹J. Pridmore, 'H.F. Fynn and Oral Tradition: Debunking the Fynn Myths?', in E. Sienaert, et.al., eds., Oral Tradition and its Transmission: The Many Forms of the Message, Durban, University of Natal Press, 1994, pp. 188-199.

¹⁸⁰J. Laband, Rope of Sand: The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1995, pp. 31-35, 37-41.

Since the 1970s, historians have attempted to examine the Natal past from a variety of ideological perspectives. These developments have opened up debates on the region which have provided a succession of alternative historical contexts in which to conceptualise both Shaka and Fynn. While both individuals have, as a result, to some extent lost their earlier status as dominant personalities in constructions of the Natal past, academic debate has also prompted a fresh examination of the role of individuals. During the mid-1970s, historians adopting a materialist approach such as Slater and Hedges, viewed Fynn as a single trader within the broader socio-economic dynamics of long-distance trade in the Natal region. This was followed by Ballard's work within the 'frontier' paradigm, where Fynn was part of a whole process of interaction between European and indigenous societies. The deconstruction of the 'mfecane' concept from the late 1980s has prompted questions by Cobbing about Fynn's role as a white trader. The systematic unpacking of the 'mfecane' in the late 1980s and early 1990s has also raised fundamental problems about the Fynn Diary and an increasing critical awareness among historians of the complex issues involved in utilising this text.

The changing academic trends in historiography from the 1970s to the 1990s were a strong reflection of the changing political circumstances both within and outside of South Africa. From a position of rigid division between Afrikaner and English historians, English-speaking scholars were further split, by the 1970s, into clearly defined liberal and radical or materialist historiographical discourses. These paradigms have, like other historical parameters, only recently responded to academic and political change. The academic challenge of literary deconstruction has provided historians with a methodology for a closer examination of text and their contexts.¹⁸¹ At the same time, the political structures in which and from which materialist discourse operated have lost geographical space.¹⁸² In South Africa, and particularly in Natal from the 1990s, political demarcations have been constructed and reconstructed, assisted by a

¹⁸¹T. Bennett, Outside Literature, London, Routledge, 1990, p. 31.

¹⁸²P. Vilanova, 'Paradigms in Crisis' in P. Vilanova and C. Hartman, eds., Paradigms Lost: The Post Cold War Era, London, Pluto Press, 1992, p. 4.

widespread use of visual media, as Golan has noted in the published version of her thesis on the manipulation of the 'Zulu past'.¹⁸³

Strongly subjective views continued to characterise the images of Shaka and Fynn in the genres of popular history, fiction and visual media.¹⁸⁴ The widespread influence of these portrayals is evident, even in popular histories constructed by authors such as Stephen Taylor who shows a fair amount of knowledge of the current academic debates. Taylor, while he carefully explains the incorrect ideas that evolved from Farewell's supposed 'land-grant', gives an extremely subjective description of the traders.¹⁸⁵ Fynn, says Taylor was, like Ogle 'exceptional in finding admirable qualities in the native people'. Both traders 'abandoned European ways altogether and became natives'.¹⁸⁶ Taylor also used earlier imagery in depicting Port Natal as a 'Crusoe-like world'.¹⁸⁷ It is necessary to examine separately the popular productions of Fynn during the last two decades in order to fully understand the continued appeal of these nineteenth-century ideas.

¹⁸³D. Golan, Inventing Shaka: Using History in the Construction of Zulu Nationalism, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994.

¹⁸⁴D. Wylie, 'Shaka and the Modern Zulu State', History Today, (May 1994), pp. 8-11.

¹⁸⁵S. Taylor, Shaka's Children: A History of the Zulu People, London, Harper Collins, 1994, pp. 84-85.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p. 86.

CHAPTER 9
HERO OR VILLAIN?
PORTRAYALS IN LITERARY AND VISUAL TEXTS
1970s-1990s

During the 1960s, popular histories of the Natal region were widely-read forms of historical literature.¹ It was not until fairly recently that academic historians began to examine the the results of this intense and widespread influence over the reading public,² particularly in terms of the specific images which prevailed in popular accounts.³ Despite the immense changes in South African academic historiography by the late 1960s, popular histories, particularly biographies of African leaders, remained a widespread literary phenomenon. The immense popularity of Ritter's Shaka Zulu resulted in an increasing number of publications which focused on individual leaders in the Natal historical context. Fynn, although he did not have a separate biography, had consistently appeared in these novels as a central character.

In the period between 1950 and 1970, both popular and academic historians had, in the political context of Afrikaner Nationalist control, stressed Fynn's role at early Port

¹Popular history' here refers to accounts written for the general reading public, rather than the 'peoples' history' which has focused on labour issues in recent years. See G. Strauss, 'The Dilemma of Popular History', Past and Present, vol. 132 (August 1991), pp. 130-149; L. Callinicos, 'Popularising History in a Changing South Africa', South African Historical Journal, vol. 25 (November 1991), pp. 22-37.

²J. Wright, 'Beyond the Washing of the Spears', Reality (1979), pp. 1-2; D.R. Morris, 'Introduction' in D.R. Morris and I. Knight, eds., There Will Be An Awful Row at Home About This: The Zulu War, Shoreham-by-Sea, Victorian Military Society, 1987, p. 1.

³Wylie, 'A Dangerous Admiration', pp. 98.

Natal as an English-speaking settler.⁴ This theme was still evident in the popular histories of the early 1970s, for example Lugg's publication which focused on his own family's English origins and their history in colonial Natal.⁵ Lugg, who had earlier published Historic Natal and Zululand, was keenly aware of his own knowledge of the Natal-Zululand past gained during his career in the Natal Native Affairs Department since the early 1900s. In this book he had focused on Fynn's role as an influential negotiator with Shaka, thus securing a 'land grant' for Farewell's party.⁶ In A Natal Family Looks Back, Lugg repeated these depictions of Fynn as an individual with positive qualities, for example doctoring abilities which helped him to secure the confidence of Shaka.⁷ In his later book however, Lugg was anxious to stress that it was Fynn's role as the 'first colonist' that had precipitated English settlement in Natal, thus ensuring that English-speaking families, including Lugg's own, would have illustrious careers in colonial and later provincial Natal.⁸

In contrast to earlier popular accounts of Fynn's career, Lugg included the controversial issue of Fynn's relationships with indigenous women and the mixed- race children born from these unions. As he had grown up in the southern Natal district, Lugg would have had a wide knowledge of Fynn's descendants. Although he did not express outright approval of Fynn's behaviour, he did explain it by pointing out that the early traders were isolated and unable to resist the temptation of such liaisons.⁹ By the 1970s, the idea of white assimilation into indigenous society was more acceptable than in earlier

⁴Ritter, Shaka Zulu, pp. 255-269; Brookes and Webb, A History of Natal, pp. 14-16.

⁵H.C. Lugg, A Natal Family Looks Back, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1970.

⁶Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, p. 16.

⁷Lugg, A Natal Family Looks Back, pp. 41-2.

⁸Ibid., p. 39., 74.

⁹Ibid., p. 42.

literature¹⁰ but for Lugg, Fynn retained the imagery of a respectable colonial individual who had 'lapsed' by his intimate interactions with local women.¹¹ This depiction contained elements of the traditional popular imagery of the traders at Port Natal which had stressed an alien if not savage indigenous community, epitomised in the character of Shaka and an ongoing struggle for a civilised identity on the part of the Europeans, represented by Fynn.¹² Other writers attempted to provide popular accounts of the society at Port Natal as multi-racial, and stressed the co-operative nature of the interactions between white and black and the positive role played by Fynn as a communicator between groups.¹³

While they made some attempt to contextualise Fynn in a less hostile environment, popular writers followed academic trends in reiterating established images of Fynn as illustrated in the Diary text, and they relied heavily on this source for material which these traditional ideas. Lugg for example, quoted directly from the Diary in describing 'natives living in hiding in the bush and subsisting on shellfish'.¹⁴ McMenemy in her book Assegai expanded the violence implied by this title by describing 'desolation' resulting from the atrocities committed by Shaka in contrast to Fynn's nurturing qualities in assisting 'starving natives'.¹⁵ The writers of popular histories were, like academics at this time, still convinced that Fynn's writing was 'authentic and reliable'.¹⁶

¹⁰J.M. Coetzee, White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988, p. 8.

¹¹Lugg, A Natal Family Looks Back, p. 42.

¹²Bulpin, Natal and the Zulu Country, pp. 49-63; Watt, Febana, pp. 42-3.

¹³ K. Schroeder, Bravery in South Africa: Stories From Our Heroic Past, Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1973, pp. 11-20.

¹⁴Lugg, A Natal Family Looks Back, p. 40.

¹⁵ M. McMenemy, Assegai!, New York, Saturday Review Press, 1973, pp.89-90; D.P. Kunene, 'Nickie McMenemy's Assegai!' in D. Burness, ed., Shaka King of the Zulus in African Literature, Washington, 1976, p. 91.

¹⁶Lugg, A Natal Family Looks Back, p. 42.

The Diary was accepted by these writers as an authoritative history of pre-colonial Natal and was viewed as a comprehensive source on societies under the general definition 'Zulu'. For popular historians like John Selby, the Diary was a useful analysis of the 'nature of the Zulu kingdom', which he viewed as remaining more or less static since Shaka's time, hence his use of Fynn as a crucial source in a publication entitled Shaka's Heirs. Selby used incidents in the Diary such as Fynn's medical treatment, to illustrate his status as an individual who 'knew' the Zulu.¹⁷

Shaka's Heirs aimed to provide an analysis of the 'nature' of a loosely defined 'Zulu' society, an entity Selby perceived as fundamentally unchanged since the nineteenth century. This was a close reflection of the dominant political ideology of the early 1970s, which emphasised the separate historical identity of the 'Zulu' as a prerequisite for the 'independence' of 'KwaZulu' as a self-governing Bantustan within the framework of the 'Homelands' policy. As an essential pre-requisite for 'independence', Chief Gatsha Buthelezi was appointed chief executive officer of the newly established Executive Committee of the Territorial Authority of Zululand.¹⁸ In his introduction to Selby's book, the director of the Department of Bantu Administration, Bourquin pointed out that it was essential for the Zulu people to regain their historic 'national consciousness' through enriching their links with the past, a past available through writers like Selby who drew on Zulu 'experts' like Fynn.¹⁹

This political use of Fynn as a supposed authority on the 'Zulu' as they were presumed to exist in a social vacuum where past and present were fused was by no means a new development in the context of the Natal region. From the 1850s, Fynn's evidence on indigenous societies had been utilised by Natal officials like Pine and Shepstone in an

¹⁷J. Selby, Shaka's Heirs, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1971, pp. 54-66.

¹⁸G. Mare and G. Hamilton, An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and South Africa, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987, pp. 14-15.

¹⁹Selby, Shaka's Heirs, p. 5, Introduction by S. Bourquin.

attempt to justify their own policies for the government of the Natal black population.²⁰ The novelty of the modern manipulation of Fynn's version of the dynamics of pre-colonial society was that it presented this historical 'evidence' in a distinctly popular form. Up until the 1960s, political discourse had drawn largely on academic research, specifically that of anthropologists, to justify the implementation of segregationist legislation.²¹ Publications like Selby's brought the political ideology of apartheid, as represented by the Bantustan scheme, within the reach of the ordinary reading public, and in this way was able to market and justify governmental policies by referring to supposedly authoritative historical sources like Fynn's Diary.

In the context of the 1970s, Selby's work remained an isolated example of the ruling political ideology expressed in popular form. It was not until the mid-1980s that the politics of 'Zulu' identity were once again evident in popular historical literature intended for a wide reading public. Conceptualisations of a 'Zulu' culture with roots in the past were largely restricted to the political arena of the reconstituted Inkatha cultural organisation.²² The majority of popular histories which appeared from the early 1970s tended to focus on reconstructions of nineteenth century south-east Africa with little reference to the modern concept of a 'Zulu' people. A definitive example of this type of history was Brian Roberts' work The Zulu Kings, which was published in 1974.²³ Although written as a popular rather than an academic history, this book was one of the most comprehensive and well-researched accounts of the trader period at Port Natal.²⁴

Like most writers, Roberts relied heavily on Fynn's Diary for information on Port Natal during the 1820s. However he did point out that this material was not entirely reliable

²⁰Proceedings and Report, p. 6; T. Shepstone, 'The Early History of the Zulu Kafir Race of South-Eastern Africa', Journal of the Society of Arts, 29 January 1875.

²¹Kuper, 'Anthropology and Apartheid', p. 43.

²²Mare and Hamilton, An Appetite for Power, pp. 20-26.

²³B. Roberts, The Zulu Kings, London, Longman, 1974.

²⁴Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', p. 322.

and was often contradictory.²⁵ The Zulu Kings was one of the first popular histories to attempt any in-depth analysis of the problems involved in depending on the Diary text. Roberts noted the difficulties faced by historians in reconstructing the events of the 1820s, particularly in terms of the lack of suitable sources.²⁶ He pre-empted academic research into the nature of the established versions of the careers of Dingiswayo and Shaka by stressing that these histories were 'a simple narrative of myths', ultimately based on the writing of Shepstone and Fynn, and should be treated with extreme caution.²⁷ In the absence of suitable alternative material, Roberts, like his predecessors in the genre of popular history, had to use Fynn's Diary for his own portrayal of Fynn. However, in marked contrast to earlier writers like Ritter and Morris, he presented Fynn's supposed characteristics as depicted in the Diary within the framework of a text which he considered to be based largely on myth rather than accurate historical information. While Roberts described Fynn's writing as 'more honest, (and) less sensational' than Isaacs', he also pointed out that Fynn was to some extent 'covering up' the negative behaviour of the white traders when he rewrote his original material in the 1850s. Roberts suggested that Fynn's depictions of the positive influence of the traders which he included in the 1850s manuscript which formed the bulk of the Diary, were based closely on the images evident in Isaacs' 1836 publication Travels and Adventures. Isaacs' writing was clearly biased in favour of the European presence at Port Natal, as it was written with the motive of securing formal annexation of the Natal region.²⁸

In The Zulu Kings, Fynn's actions were examined within the network of images which he had lifted from Isaacs book for his reconstruction of events. Roberts explained how for example, Isaacs and Fynn had projected the 'myth of the white man's magic' in presenting Fynn as an individual with medical knowledge for 'every type of disease'.

²⁵Roberts, The Zulu Kings, pp. 20, 27, 150.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 33-40; Argyle, 'Dingiswayo Discovered', pp. 8-12.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 157-160.

Despite the fact that Fynn's medical experience was in fact quite elementary, this image of him as a healer was his 'greatest triumph' in paving the way for his successful reception in Zulu society.²⁹ Roberts demonstrated how Fynn had been able to utilise his limited medical skills to create the impression of himself as a 'miracle worker', an image which had secured him a position as an 'established favourite' in Shaka's court.³⁰ Fynn was then able to convince Shaka of his importance as a European and, through this, obtain a 'land grant' for Farewell's party.³¹

The Zulu Kings was one of the first publications to attempt a detailed investigation into the motives behind the established images of Fynn. At the same time however, the author at times fell back on the type of language used in traditional accounts of Fynn's role as a prominent European in an alien indigenous environment. For Roberts, Fynn's 'pioneering efforts' made him 'the most courageous (and), the most honest' of all the traders.³² This kind of imagery was a thread in the literary portrayals of Fynn that had remained basically unchanged since Thompson's publication in 1827,³³ and it seemed to be an essential ingredient in the ongoing appeal of popular works. Despite these reiterations of essentially Victorian images of a European in an African context,³⁴ Roberts' publication was, through its thorough analysis of Fynn's context, a valuable reference work for academic historians.

From the mid-1970s, academic research dominated the literature of the Natal past, following new trends in revising established historical explanations in terms of a

²⁹Ibid., p. 19, 25.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 61-63.

³¹Ibid., pp. 66-69.

³²Ibid., p. 108.

³³Thompson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, vol. II, p. 244.

³⁴ Street, The Savage in Literature, p. 34.

materialist paradigm. For the decade following the publication of The Zulu Kings, there was no significant popular history on the Shakan period. The mid-1970s marked the beginning of a substantial academic reassessment of Fynn's role in the Shakan context. In popular works, Fynn remained the intrepid explorer, pioneer and 'talented medical man', all of which qualities endeared him to Shaka who viewed Fynn as 'endowed with exceptional wisdom'.³⁵ From the mid-1980s however, there was a renewed focus on south east Africa by popular historians. To a large extent, this new wave of publications was a result of an awakening of public interest in the 'Zulu' past generated by the S.A.B.C. T.V. series Shaka Zulu.³⁶ Another explanation for a receptive reading public was the increasingly powerful political discourse emanating from the 'Zulu' focused Inkatha political movement in both regional and national politics.³⁷

While the visual production of Fynn tended towards a reiteration of established images,³⁸ political portrayals of Fynn within the historical setting of white penetration of the Natal region were controversial and often extremely negative.³⁹ Popular writers followed up both these sets of ideas and presented Fynn within a framework of discourse which included traditional and alternative imagery. As a result of the television series Shaka Zulu, Fynn had retained his long standing reputation as a representative of western progress, this rather all-encompassing quality being contained in his European medical knowledge. Fynn's status as an enlightened European was further entrenched in the series by his depiction as the only literate

³⁵ Becker, The Pathfinders, pp. 183-186.

³⁶G. Mersham, 'Mass Media Discourse and the Semiotics of Zulu Nationalism', Critical Arts, vol. 7, no. 1 (1993), p. 81.

³⁷T. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983, p. 351.

³⁸L. Du Buisson, 'An Open Letter to Bill Faure: The Remake of Shaka Zulu', Style, (February 1987), pp. 94-96.

³⁹D. Golan, 'Inkatha and Its Use of the Zulu Past', History in Africa, vol. 18 (1992), pp. 117-121.

recorder.⁴⁰ Fynn remained, in popular history, an individual imbued with positive qualities and was described as he had been in earlier literature as a 'brave', 'honest and reliable' person who gave medical treatment to Shaka and protection to 'hungry, desperate refugees'. Fynn's 'good education' enabled him to produce the Diary which could be seen as 'the written history of the Zulu people', providing reliable information about the early nineteenth century south-east African context.

A parallel development was the image of Fynn as a 'freebooter', who had 'lied, schemed and cheated (his way) into the confidence of the Zulu kings'. From the outset, the traders' dealings with Shaka were 'fraudulent' and their written accounts 'historically worthless'. Interestingly, these twin sets of opposite images often appeared in the same publications, indicating the dilemma of popular historians who were trying to compose a more realistic depiction of Fynn but were at the same time dependent on existing portrayals. At the centre of this problem was the Diary, which was one of the few written sources on the Shakan period and thus could not be discarded, despite its blatantly subjective viewpoint. Some popular historians by the mid-1980s although caught between two extreme sets of ideas about Fynn, nevertheless showed an awareness of the mythologies that had arisen as a result of the traditional images and suggested a new framework for Fynn as an individual with both negative and positive traits.⁴¹ In this context, it was possible for Fynn to be at one and the same time a 'bigoted white historian'⁴² and a reliable recorder of the Zulu past.⁴³

In presenting Fynn as a character capable of both moral and deplorable acts, the creators of popular history utilised the broader contemporary academic conceptualisation of Fynn and his Port Natal context. Charles Ballard for example, who

⁴⁰L. Du Buisson, 'Heroes or Villains of Shaka's Time', Sunday Times Magazine, 26 October 1986.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

⁴²Du Buisson, 'An Open Letter to Bill Faure', p. 95.

⁴³Du Buisson, The White Man Cometh, pp. 55-57.

had provided a 'frontier' framework for Fynn in his academic research, used these ideas in a popular version . Thus Fynn was, in purely traditional terms, a 'hunter, trader and adventurer' who had opened up 'negotiations' with Shaka for trading rights and the 'land grant', and had also given 'sanctuary' for 'Zulu refugees' at Port Natal.⁴⁴ Fynn's Diary was quoted for evidence on the 'mass hysteria' of indigenous communities, Shaka's 'wanton savagery and tyrannical rule' and Fynn's participation in military expeditions.⁴⁵ Fynn did not, however, enjoy these qualities unchallenged, and Ballard in the same account, pointed out that Fynn's 'negotiations' and mercenary activities were a result of his frontier-type clientship relations with Shaka, while his Diary was at best 'sensationalised' and 'distorted'⁴⁶.

The multiple facets of Fynn's character were further explored in the popular-focused Readers' Digest Illustrated History . Once again, the Diary was placed at the centre of a number of conflicting views of Fynn, and his narrative was at the same time questioned as to its 'reliability' and utilised as source material on Fynn's relations with Shaka.⁴⁷ Traditional positive conceptualisations of Fynn as a 'determined adventurer' and 'white pioneer' were juxtaposed with negative qualities like lying and cheating motivated by greed for wealth. In the same sentence, Fynn was described as the person who 'saved' Shaka's life through his medical skills, and treated with scepticism as to his real contribution in this sphere.⁴⁸ The Readers' Digest publication aimed to provide an alternative view of the impact of whites in early colonial South Africa, and to this end stressed issues like 'conquest and dispossession' in place of the

⁴⁴C. Ballard, The House of Shaka: The Zulu Monarchy, Durban, Emoyeni Books, 1988, pp. 14,20,29.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 21, 29.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* , pp. 21,29.

⁴⁷D. Oakes, ed., Readers' Digest Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story, Cape Town, Readers' Digest Publications, 1988, pp. 85-6.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 86.

conventional 'pioneering' notions of earlier texts.⁴⁹ Academic researchers cautioned against such drastic polarisation, and acknowledged that while Fynn's 'heroic' qualities juxtaposed against Shaka's 'savagery' were largely a result of the myths contained in Eurocentric history and literature,⁵⁰ a simple 'reversal of villains' was not a sufficiently all-embracing alternative presentation of the south east African past.⁵¹

Investigations of the complexity of Fynn as an individual capable of a whole range of behaviours were used in popular histories in an attempt to present him in a more human and less romanticised manner. Just as academic writers had reassessed early nineteenth century Port Natal in a wider geographical, political and socio-economic paradigm, popular historians were by the late 1980s, attempting a more holistic view of Fynn within his context. By the 1990s, the simple juxtaposition of traditional heroic and revisionist villainous Fynns had given way in popular writing to a more realistic assessment in which Fynn was described fairly accurately as an inexperienced youngster who lived in the crudest of circumstances. Despite this acknowledgement of Fynn's lack of knowledge, the Diary is still utilised as a reliable source, and Fynn retained his traditionally subjective romantic setting of a Crusoe-like world.⁵²

The popularising of Natal history during the decades from 1970 to the 1990s had illustrated the extent of the subjectivity involved in viewing this past. Even authors who were familiar with the latest academic research wrote restricted descriptions of Fynn, and continued to rely on the Diary even while acknowledging the text's serious

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 77.

⁵⁰C. Hamilton, "'An Appetite for the Past': The Re-Creation of Shaka and the Crisis in Popular Historical Consciousness', South African Historical Journal, vol. 22 (November 1990), p. 141.

⁵¹L. Witz and C. Hamilton, 'Reaping the Whirlwind: The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa and changing popular perceptions of history', South African Historical Journal, vol. 24 (May 1991), pp. 189-202.

⁵² Taylor, Shaka's Children, pp. 85-87.

shortcomings.⁵³ Popular history had, in its images of Fynn, demonstrated the scope for a wide variety of character traits to be ascribed to one individual. These variations were even more evident in the genre of fictional writing. While fictional versions of Fynn can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, he was at no stage used in as many different representations as he has been since 1970, and by the 1990s there were references to Fynn in every kind of literature from Mazisi Kunene's epic poetry based on oral tradition⁵⁴ to James McClure's popular detective fiction⁵⁵.

Prior to 1970, Fynn had not appeared in any fictional account as a central character. During the 1960s, Fynn had been included as a secondary character in novels like E.P. Watt's Febana and plays like Mulikita's Chaka, but there had been no separate piece of fiction which focused entirely on Fynn. From the 1970s however, writers of English South African fiction began to re-examine the role of early white colonists, particularly their impact on 'race relations' during the colonial period.⁵⁶ As had been the case since the 1950s, fiction writers relied heavily on Fynn's Diary for their information on Fynn and his social, political and economic setting at Port Natal,⁵⁷ and in doing so adopted not only Fynn's self-representations but Stuart's and Malcolm's images. As a result, Fynn became once again a 'Robinson Crusoe' figure, the representative of civilisation in an alien environment, and, in Jenny Seed's 1970 novel, The Prince of the Bay was described as the first white person 'to explore this part of Africa'.⁵⁸ This publication was written specifically for young readers, and in depictions that had originated with Thompson's and Isaacs' early nineteenth century publications, Seed portrayed Fynn as a hero with qualities of 'courage' in 'rescuing' refugees from

⁵³Ibid., p. 70.

⁵⁴M. Kunene, Emperor Shaka the Great, London, Heinemann, 1979, p. 390.

⁵⁵J. McClure, The Song Dog, London, Faber and Faber, 1991, p. 23.

⁵⁶Coetzee, White Writing, p. 8.

⁵⁷J. Seed, The Prince of the Bay, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1970, pp. 46-9, 53, 73, 99-104.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 159-60.

Shaka.⁵⁹ In similar vein, she juxtaposed Fynn, as a 'brave and tactful' individual with Shaka, a 'cruel and capricious tyrant'.⁶⁰ She developed these motifs further and represented Fynn and his adopted refugee Bongisani as Robinson Crusoe and his Man Friday.⁶¹

At one level, the Crusoe imagery of Fynn, present since the early nineteenth century, was representative of a particular ideology - that of white domination over black subject peoples.⁶² Fynn, for Seed, had a heroic role as the forerunner of white colonisation, and used his 'humanity' to influence the savage Shaka and 'paved the way for the entry of white settlers'.⁶³ However, in the fiction of the 1970s, it was also used to demonstrate Europeans' ability to adapt to indigenous culture and become assimilated as part of a wider South African society.⁶⁴ Thus, in Seed's writing, Fynn, in adopting Bongisani 'became more and more like one of the people' and 'he did not only dress like the people, but he soon spoke as they did and had no need for an interpreter'.⁶⁵

The straightforward adoption of images which originated in nineteenth century texts and had been entrenched by the publication of the Diary, was a common thread in fictional accounts of Fynn. Writers extracted whole sections from the Diary and used these to illustrate their own portrayals of Fynn. Seed for example, included a copy of Fynn's praise poem as printed in the front of the Diary and pointed out that this was

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 94.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 6.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 7-23, 34-40.

⁶²M.L. Pratt, 'Conventions of Representation: Where Discourse and Ideology Meet', in Van Peer, ed., The Taming of the Text, pp. 15-16.

⁶³Seed, Prince of the Bay, p. 6.

⁶⁴Coetzee, White Writing, p. 8.

⁶⁵Seed, The Prince of the Bay, p. 95.

an account of Fynn's positive reception by the Zulu people.⁶⁶ The adaptability of the Diary text to fiction was clearly demonstrated by Michael Kirkwood's poem, 'Henry Fynn and the Wreck of the Grosvenor', in which he reproduced Fynn's account of his discovery of the remains of the East Indian vessel Grosvenor in the Mpondo region in 1825.⁶⁷ Despite the availability of other well-researched accounts of this wreck,⁶⁸ Kirkwood specifically chose Fynn's material as most suitable to his poetic purpose. The 'Crusoe' theme is again evident in this material where Fynn, as a European, is placed in an alien landscape and among unknown indigenous people. Malvern Van Wyk Smith, a literary scholar, has termed this 'a moving meditation on the conflict between spirit of place and the imperative of survival.'⁶⁹ Kirkwood used images contained in the Diary text to highlight these ideas. The desolation of Fynn's surroundings is emphasised by the presence of destitute 'refugees' from Shaka's wars, while Fynn as a single white man is juxtaposed with a large impi.⁷⁰ Fynn's isolation in these surroundings is further stressed by the desertion of his two mixed-race retainers.⁷¹

Fynn's isolation and singularity in the indigenous environment, although a much overworked image in terms of the historical literature depicting him, provided fiction

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 160.

⁶⁷M.Kirkwood, 'Henry Fynn and the Wreck of the Grosvenor', in L. Abrahams, et.al., Bateleur Poets, Johannesburg, Bateleur Press, 1975, pp. 68-70.

⁶⁸ For instance, G. Carter, ed., The Wreck of the Grosvenor, Containing a Narrative of the Loss of the Grosvenor East Indiaman, Cape Town, 1927; P.R. Kirby, ed., A Source Book on the Wreck of the Grosvenor, EastIndiaman, Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1953.

⁶⁹M. Van Wyk Smith, Grounds of Contest: A Survey of South African English Literature, Kenwyn, Juta, 1990, p. 131.

⁷⁰Kirkwood, 'Henry Fynn and the Wreck of the Grosvenor', verses 9-12; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 82,117.

⁷¹Kirkwood, 'Henry Fynn and the Blacksmith of the Grosvenor', verse 12; Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 83.

writers with a powerful set of motifs.⁷² Kirkwood's poem especially is profoundly evocative in its description of the almost tangible silence that surrounds Fynn and his awe and sense of discovery in stumbling upon the remains of the wreck.⁷³ Fynn's Crusoe-like estrangement from European society is also utilised in fiction to illustrate his relationships with indigenous people, though the existence of Fynn's mixed-blood offspring is only hinted at and never discussed outright.⁷⁴ This utilisation of Crusoe-based images from the Diary, together with an avoidance of the inevitable result of Fynn's assimilation process into African society, are indicative of the extent to which white South African writers were dependent on traditional literary images and unable to successfully grapple with politically unacceptable social issues.⁷⁵ Thus, the meeting between white and black culture suggested by Kirkwood's poem remains a psychological issue, and does not move into the arena of political possibility.⁷⁶ Vernon February has pointed out that the complete erasure of the stereotypical literary divisions between white and black can only be overcome in an 'open situation', a context made possible by political freedom.⁷⁷ In this sense, the fictional use of the Diary was an instance of dependence on a purportedly authoritative text and at the same time reflective of an ideological hegemony.⁷⁸

⁷²Informal interview with Malvern van Wyk Smith, September 1995.

⁷³Kirkwood, 'Henry Fynn and the Blacksmith of the Grosvenor', verse 11.

⁷⁴Kirkwood, 'Henry Fynn and the Blacksmith of the Grosvenor', verse 4; Seed, The Prince of the Bay, p. 95.

⁷⁵B. Ashcroft and G. Griffiths, eds., The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature, London, Routledge, 1989, p. 85.

⁷⁶I.A. Glenn, 'The Wreck of the Grosvenor and the Making of South African Literature', English in Africa, vol. 22, no. 2 (October 1995), p. 17.

⁷⁷V.A. February, 'The Stereotype in South African English Literature' in M. Chapman, et.al., eds., Perspectives on South African English Literature, Parklands, A.D. Donker, 1992, p. 324.

⁷⁸P. Humm, P. Skigant and P. Widdowson, eds., Popular Fictions: Essays in Literature and History, London, Routledge, 1986, pp. 3-4.

Analysts of South African fiction were, until recently, unable to separate the Diary from what they perceived as 'real' events.⁷⁹ Stephen Gray's fictional representations of Fynn in his 1987 novel, John Ross: The True Story were based in part on material from the Diary; for example he described Fynn's doctoring activities as 'surgery' (which saved the throne).⁸⁰ Although Gray's Fynn was still a type of Crusoe figure in his isolation and pragmatism, he was at the same time a more realistic representative of early colonial society, being a 'hard nosed' mercenary who 'mixed freely with indigenous society' and 'indulged in war dances ... of great intensity'.⁸¹ Coetzee defended his free interpretation of Fynn by pointing out that the fiction novel was a highly significant genre as this kind of writing could 'show up the mythic status of the paradigms of history'.⁸² A similar depiction has been provided more recently by the popular novelist, James McClure, in his detective novel on the Natal region entitled The Song Dog. For McClure, Fynn was not only a 'rough frontiersman' but also a 'mad Irishman' whose eccentricity included liaisons with indigenous women.⁸³ Richard Peck has pointed out that popular South African fiction in English has, since the 1980s, reflected a concern with portraying South African society as multi-racial, in contrast to the highly racist stereotypes found in earlier literature.⁸⁴ Both Gray and McClure seem to reflect this trend in their straightforward descriptions of Fynn's willingness to 'go native', a topic completely overlooked or deliberately omitted in earlier fictional accounts of Fynn's Port Natal career.

⁷⁹S. Gray, Southern African Literature: An Introduction, Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1979, pp. 80-84.

⁸⁰S. Gray, John Ross: The True Story, London, Penguin Books, 1987, p. 57.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, pp. 52-4; 85.

⁸²Weekly Mail, 13-19 November 1987.

⁸³ McClure, The Song Dog, p. 23.

⁸⁴R. Peck, 'Beware Wilbur Smith's Gaboon Adder: Purple Prose, Propaganda and Politics in South Africa', Journal of Contemporary African Studies, vol. 12, no. 2 (1994), p. 151.

White fictional writers, like white historians, used Fynn's Diary for material which best illustrated their own perceptions of Fynn as a European faced with a set of different social, economic and cultural norms. There had been however, since the 1930s, minority discourses represented by the writing of black authors inside and outside South Africa. The narratives present in these accounts, were, in contrast to fiction by white authors, Afrocentric and reflected attempts to write fiction from an indigenous standpoint.⁸⁵ African novelists and poets in the period up to 1970 had deliberately often omitted Fynn from their narratives, and this absence of the European 'hero' was part of an attempt to emphasise 'blackness' in their accounts.⁸⁶ From the 1970s, however, black writers showed a specific response to the white authors who had focused on Fynn as the heroic figure in their narratives and placed him in contrast to the villain Shaka. African authors like the West African writer Leopold Senghor, reversed this traditional juxtaposition and placed the blame for the desolation in Natal in the hands of the Europeans instead of Shaka. Like earlier African writers, Senghor also stressed this role reversal by omitting any depiction of Fynn as an individual. Like the 'Zulu' in European accounts, the white traders in Senghor's poem 'Chaka' were an anonymous group simply labelled with the insulting title 'the Pink Ears'.⁸⁷ Senghor's work can be viewed as primarily a political reaction to colonial rule and an assertion of the indigenous literary presence on the African continent.⁸⁸ His depersonalisation of Fynn, a prominent individual in European accounts, was part of this process of downplaying European influences while at the same time providing an African version of an African hero, Shaka.

⁸⁵P.V. Shava, Black South African Writing in the Twentieth Century, London, Zed Books, 1989.

⁸⁶T. Couzens and E. Patel, The Return of the Amasi Bird: Black South African Poetry 1891-1981, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1982, p. 12.

⁸⁷L.S. Senghor, 'Chaka' in J. Reed and C. Wake, eds., Senghor: Prose and Poetry, London, 1976, pp. 142-149.

⁸⁸D.B. Ntuli and C.F.Swanepoel, Southern African Literature in African Languages: A Concise Historical Perspective, Pretoria, Acacia Books, 1993, p. 75.

Not all black writers removed Fynn's identity from their work. In Kunene's epic poem on Shaka, Fynn was singled out as an individual but was depersonalised into a creature 'like a monkey ... ever peering into forbidden places'.⁸⁹ In a sense this was another instance of the 'reversal of villains' theme evident in other literature, and was a response to the Eurocentric dehumanising of Shaka.⁹⁰ Kunene, was however, also writing from the standpoint of conscious political protest.⁹¹ His use of the epic form and African oral techniques was a deliberate attempt to impart African consciousness and pride,⁹² as well as being a vehicle for ideas on African society.⁹³ Kunene has recently maintained that his depictions were representative of the oral tradition of a wider community,⁹⁴ with himself as the poet fulfilling the role of 'democratic agent'.⁹⁵ His negative portrayal of Fynn is not necessarily a result of ideas generated by a group consensus present in oral tradition,⁹⁶ but it is an illustration of the downplaying of Fynn by black writers who sought to elevate the character of Shaka.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Kunene, Emperor Shaka the Great, p. 390.

⁹⁰M.V. Mzamane, 'The Uses of Traditional Oral Forms in Black South African Literature' in Couzens and White, eds., Literature and Society in South Africa, p. 147.

⁹¹J. Van Wyk, et.al., eds., S.A. in Poesie: S.A. in Poetry, Pinetown, Owen Burgess Publishers, 1988, p. 721.

⁹²Golan, 'Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu History', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, p. 153.

⁹³M. Kunene, 'Poetry and Society in South Africa', in R. Gibbons, ed., Writers From South Africa: Culture, Politics and Literary Theory and Activity in South Africa Today, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1989, p. 50.

⁹⁴M. Kunene, 'The African Epic', Seminar held at the Centre for Literature and Languages, University of Durban-Westville, October 1993.

⁹⁵Kunene, Emperor Shaka the Great, pp. xxv-xxvi.

⁹⁶Hamilton, 'Ideology and Oral Tradition: Listening to the Voices "From Below"', History in Africa, vol. 14 (1987), p. 78; Vail and White, Power and the Praise Poem, pp. 55-56.

⁹⁷D.P. Kunene, 'Shaka in the Literature of Southern Africa' in Burness, ed., Shaka, King of the Zulus in African Literature, p.190.

By the 1980s, black writers had presented a serious challenge to the European-dominated mainstream of South African literature in English.⁹⁸ At the same time, however, literary scholars like Stephen Gray still regarded Fynn as 'one of the main sources of contact history in Natal in the 1820s', not only as diarist, but also as a poet.⁹⁹ Similarly, Jeff Opland, a researcher on oral poetry, described Fynn as a valuable recorder of Zulu traditional poetry.¹⁰⁰ Both scholars provided new commentaries on Fynn's praise-poem, as printed at the front of the Diary and depicted Fynn as an individual who had bridged the gap between European and indigenous society by his 'influence' over Shaka.¹⁰¹ These analyses served to demonstrate the security of the earlier images of Fynn in the South African white English-medium literary tradition, despite the considerable developments in historical research.

By the mid-1980s writers in a variety of spheres - academic, popular and literary - were challenging the existing images of early nineteenth-century Port Natal. These trends were not matched however, by changes in the visual imagery of this historical scenario. Most authors had relied on nineteenth century pictures of Fynn for illustrative material.¹⁰² The earliest drawing of Fynn was done by Frederick l'Ons in about 1835, shortly after Fynn's return to the Cape colony. A second painting was Charles Bell's, drawn when Fynn was resident in the Cape colony in 1844. As both these portraits were undertaken during his Cape period, they showed Fynn as a colonial official in European clothing. A photograph of Fynn taken in about 1860, after his return to Natal also showed him in Victorian colonial dress. All three of these portrayals demonstrated Fynn's respectability as an employee in the colonial service, and most authors writing

⁹⁸Chapman, et.al., eds., Perspectives on South African English Literature, p.xii.

⁹⁹S. Gray, Penguin Book of South African Verse, London, Penguin Books, 1989, pp. 57, 379.

¹⁰⁰Opland, Words that Circle Words, pp. 132-133.

¹⁰¹Gray, Penguin Book of South African Verse, p.57; Opland, Words That Circle Words, p. 190.

¹⁰²See for instance, Mackeurtan, Cradle Days.

on Fynn chose to use these depictions as the illustrations for their publications. The overall impression of these Victorian portraits was that of a respectable, and therefore authoritative middle-class European, someone who was a trustworthy representative of colonial Natal. As such the paintings were in a sense a reflection of the artistic trends of the period, when artists tried to fulfil the needs of a particular historical discourse.¹⁰³ A fourth visual image of Fynn was Richard Caton- Woodville's painting 'The Birth of Natal', painted in 1902.¹⁰⁴ Caton-Woodville was a war artist, and, although he never visited South Africa, he painted several pictures on the Anglo-Boer War. In this work, Woodville illustrated Fynn and Farewell as ivory traders, bargaining with an impressive Zulu figure, probably meant to be Shaka. This depiction is in contrast to the earlier pictures of Fynn, as it shows him as a scruffily dressed trader rather than as a tidy, well-dressed official. It is possible that Caton-Woodville obtained his ideas about Fynn from Isaacs' description of him as a disreputable individual. At the same time, the painting is an expression of what Hemstedt has termed a set piece of historical narrative.¹⁰⁵ The title 'The Birth of Natal' is clearly a reflection of the early twentieth century Natal iconography, where the colony's historical beginning is marked from the arrival of Fynn and the other European traders. This painting was not reproduced in any work on Fynn until Roberts' The Zulu Kings in 1974 and it was a sharp break with earlier authors' use of the Fynn portraits. Apart from these illustrations, there were, prior to the 1980s, no other visual images of Fynn .

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the medium of television became an extremely powerful influence in South Africa.¹⁰⁶ The portrayal of both black and white people on the screen had, from the origins of cinema in South Africa, been racist, and the different groups were usually depicted as culturally divided and opposed to each

¹⁰³G. Hemstedt, 'Painting and Illustration' in Lerner, ed., The Victorians, p. 139.

¹⁰⁴J.A. Verbeek, 'Natal Art Before Union', unpubl. pamphlet, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Library, 1974, p. 9.

¹⁰⁵Hemstedt, 'Painting and Illustration', p. 152.

¹⁰⁶G. Mersham, 'Television: A Fascinating Window on an Unfolding World' in A.S. de Beer, ed., Mass Media for the Nineties, pp. 175-177.

other.¹⁰⁷ Although these ideas had been challenged to some extent during the 1980s,¹⁰⁸ the genre of film was, by the mid-1980s, largely reflective of existing power relationships between white and black South Africans.¹⁰⁹ Most television research has been carried out by British and American scholars, who have explored for instance, the ideological dominance of particular 'metadiscourses'¹¹⁰ the semiotics of television text¹¹¹ and the relationship between viewer and text as illustrated by particular ideologies such as those of violence and racism.¹¹² While it is possible to use all these theories in examining South African television, it is also crucial to focus on the specific political context in which the media developed.

In 1986, the television series Shaka Zulu was released in South Africa. While the ideas contained in this series were a reflection of the broad trends in South African cinema discussed above, they were also a result of specific socio-political circumstances. Golan has pointed out that the series was an 'instrument of propaganda' of both the apartheid regime and the Inkatha leadership.¹¹³ Hamilton has provided a more specific analysis of the context of political violence in South Africa

¹⁰⁷K. Tomaselli, et.al., eds., Myth, Race and Power: South Africans Imaged on Film and T.V., Bellville, Anthropos Publishers, 1986, pp. 45-48.

¹⁰⁸ Tomaselli, The Cinema of Apartheid, pp. 226-7.

¹⁰⁹K. Tomaselli, "African" Cinema: Theoretical Perspectives on Some Unresolved Questions', Critical Arts, vol. 7, nos 1-2 (1993), pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁰J. Fiske, Television Culture, London, Routledge, 1994 (1st publ. London, 1987), p. 25.

¹¹¹J. Fiske and J. Hartley, Reading Television, London, Routledge, 1988, pp. 37-42.

¹¹²HJ. Hartley, 'Encouraging Signs: Television and the Power of Dirt' in W. Rowland and B. Watkins, eds., Interpreting Television: Current Research Perspectives, London, Sage Publications, 1984, pp. 120-121; H. Jenkins, Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture, London, Routledge, 1992, pp. 62-3.

¹¹³Golan, Inventing Shaka, pp. 102-104.

during the state-declared state of emergency during 1985 and 1986.¹¹⁴ She also examined the close link between contemporary racial conflicts in South African politics and the kind of 'history' presented in the television series, which stressed the threat of black violence against the white minority.¹¹⁵ It is perhaps also crucial here to bear in mind the film background of the director, William Faure, who had, for many years had a developing interest in the potential of cinema to depict unsolicited violence.¹¹⁶

Within these broadly defined ideological parameters, the character of Fynn was used in Shaka Zulu to represent a number of myths, in the same sense that individual central characters have been perceived as the embodiment of 'cinemyths' contained in the visual medium of film.¹¹⁷ From the outset, Faure stressed that Shaka Zulu was to present a version of history which moved beyond the established images presented by what he termed 'bigoted white historians'.¹¹⁸ However, in contrast to Faure's stated objectives, Fynn appeared, from the beginning of the third episode of the series, as the literate European narrator of events, with his experiences being re-told to the audience ostensibly from his written journal.¹¹⁹ Fynn's image as a person with specific access to the past is further highlighted when he is presented from the outset as an individual with knowledge of Shaka over and above that of his fellow Europeans.¹²⁰ Further reinforcement of Fynn as an authority is provided in the episodes relating to Shaka's early career in which the entire sequence of events is narrated by Fynn as if from the

¹¹⁴C.A. Hamilton, 'A Positional Gambit: Shaka Zulu and the conflict in South Africa', Radical History Review, vol. 44 (Spring 1989), pp. 5-7.

¹¹⁵Hamilton, 'Authoring Shaka', pp. 484-490.

¹¹⁶W. Faure, Images of Violence, London, Studio Vista, 1973, p. 7.

¹¹⁷G. Hill, Illuminating Shadows: The Mythic Power of Film. London, McGraw Hill, 1992, pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁸Shaka Zulu, Official Souvenir Brochure, Johannesburg, S.A.B.C., 1986, p. 3.

¹¹⁹Du Buisson, 'An Open Letter to Bill Faure', Style (February 1987), p. 94.

¹²⁰Shaka Zulu, Episode One.

vantage point of an eye-witness.¹²¹ Faure's intensive use of Fynn's Diary was twofold in that it was not only a central thread in the characterisation of Fynn as narrator, but at the same time provided the basis for much of the screenplay.¹²² The result of these depictions was a script that was subjective and Eurocentric, the exact focus that Faure had aimed to eliminate.¹²³

The screenplay for Shaka Zulu was closely linked to the text of Fynn's Diary, but at the same time, it sought to present events in ways suited to the ideological motives of the series. Thus, an episode involving Fynn's medical treatment of a woman contained the basic elements of the account in the Diary, but was also distorted to convey a particularly negative image of Shaka.¹²⁴ In similar vein, Fynn's medical treatment of Shaka was presented in a manner which emphasised Fynn's qualities of humanity and kindness, a precedent already set by Fynn's ministrations to captive slaves in the first episode. The script writers selected the ideas of Fynn's doctoring abilities, clearly evident in the Diary text, and used these to depict him in a particularly positive light.¹²⁵ Fynn's activities as a 'para medical practitioner' were a major thread in the series¹²⁶ and were part of the underlying association in Shaka Zulu between Fynn and the voice of western liberal reason, ultimately represented by European technology imaged in concepts from medicine to firearms.¹²⁷ At one level this was a personification of

¹²¹Du Buisson, 'Heroes or Villains of Shaka's Time?', Sunday Times Magazine, 26 October 1986, p. 21.

¹²²T. Msimang, 'The Reception of Shaka Zulu: An Evaluation of its Cultural and Historical Context' in R. Hill, et.al., eds., African Studies Forum, vol. 1, Pretoria, H.S.R.C., 1991, p. 249.

¹²³The Star, 4 October 1986; Weekly Mail, 9-16 October 1986.

¹²⁴ Msimang, 'The Reception of Shaka Zulu', pp. 249-50.

¹²⁵G. Mersham, 'The Discourse of the Historical Television Drama: The Case of Shaka Zulu', South African Journal of Cultural History, vol. 5, no. 2 (1991), p. 73.

¹²⁶Msimang, 'The Reception of Shaka Zulu', p. 239.

¹²⁷G. Mersham, 'Mass Media Discourse and the Semiotics of Zulu Nationalism', Critical Arts, vol. 7, no. 1 (1993), pp. 104-6.

Faure's own notion of a European 'conscience' in the face of uncontrolled African savagery,¹²⁸ film being a particularly suitable medium for reflecting the values and beliefs of its 'author' or director.¹²⁹ At the same time, Shaka Zulu, like other historical film, was based on existing images as they were contained in literary and historical texts.¹³⁰ Fynn's medical image, which associated him directly or indirectly with western notions of 'progress'¹³¹ had been a recurrent theme in literary and historical texts since the publication of Bird's Annals of Natal.

In Shaka Zulu, Fynn was not only the representative of western technology, but also of enlightened diplomacy, which quality was stressed by his success as a negotiator with Shaka. Fynn was the individual who played a crucial role in bringing together the 'two powers' of British imperialism, represented by Farewell, and the 'Zulu nation', represented by Shaka.¹³² As with the medical imagery, these ideas were based on the Diary, where Farewell's land grant was secured as a result of Fynn's medical attention and diplomacy.¹³³ Fynn's role as a person imbued with the positive qualities of Western civilisation was further demonstrated by Faure's depiction of the European traders as mercenaries in Shaka's campaign against the Ndwandwe in 1826. This episode, like Fynn's doctoring and the land-grant deal, was based directly on accounts in the Diary, notwithstanding the fact that academic historians were seriously questioning the nature of the traders' involvement.¹³⁴ As with the medical imagery,

¹²⁸Hamilton, 'A Positional Gambit: Shaka Zulu and the Conflict in South Africa', pp. 22-8.

¹²⁹W. Rothman, The "I" of the Camera: Essays in Film Criticism, History and Aesthetics, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 85.

¹³⁰M. Ferro, Cinema and History, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1988, p. 158.

¹³¹ Macleod and Lewis, eds., Disease, Medicine and Empire, pp. 3-4.

¹³²The Star, 4 October 1986.

¹³³Stuart and Malcolm, eds. Diary, pp. 83-88; Shaka Zulu, Episode Four.

¹³⁴Wright, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict', p. 339.

Faure extracted material from the Diary to suit his purpose in presenting the traders' participation, particularly their firepower, as the determining factor in Shaka's victory over Zwide,¹³⁵ despite Fynn's comment in the Diary text that the traders were in fact short of gunpowder for their cannon.¹³⁶ In line with Faure's intention in portraying Fynn as the representative of diplomacy, the screenplay included Fynn's protests at Farewell's use of violence and his supposed reluctance to be involved in the conflict, in this way emphasising ideas only hinted at in the Diary text.

While depending on Fynn's Diary for a large portion of the screenplay, Shaka Zulu also drew on popular accounts, notably Ritter's book Shaka Zulu, which provided the title of the series.¹³⁷ In the sequence of events preceding the death of Nandi, Faure utilised Ritter's fictional creation Shaka's lover, Pampatha and adapted this material to provide a framework for Shaka's supposed ill-treatment of Nandi.¹³⁸ For these episodes, the Diary account was overlooked, specifically Fynn's report that Nandi had died of dysentery and not of physical abuse.¹³⁹ At the same time, extracts from Fynn's account, in which he described his attempts to provide medical treatment for Nandi, were retained and used in the script to reiterate the idea of Fynn as a person with doctoring abilities and qualities of kindness and sympathy.¹⁴⁰ This was followed by a close adherence to the Diary text in visual depiction of the events following Nandi's death, where Shaka is perceived to have 'gone mad' and indulged in a spate of destructive behaviour, including mass executions.¹⁴¹ Fynn is consistently presented as the

¹³⁵Shaka Zulu, Episode Six.

¹³⁶Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 97.

¹³⁷Mersham, 'History, Television and Shaka Zulu', South African Journal of Cultural History, vol. 5, no. 1 (1991), p. 15.

¹³⁸Shaka Zulu, Episode Eight.

¹³⁹Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, p. 130.

¹⁴⁰Shaka Zulu, Episode Nine.

¹⁴¹Stuart and Malcolm, eds., Diary, pp. 132-136; Shaka Zulu, Episodes Nine and Ten.

narrator of these events, supposedly quoting from his 'own' journal, and any bias is overlain by Fynn's characterisation as a representative of humane and reasonable behaviour.¹⁴²

Fynn's supposed qualities of humanity and diplomacy were used in the television series to set him apart from Farewell and the rest of the trading party, who were presented as being concerned primarily with agreements over trading rights, financial profit and a safe return to the Cape Colony. Fynn's individuality was further highlighted by his being presented as an independent Irishman within a group of Englishmen.¹⁴³ Fynn's ethnic identity was at one level indistinguishable from his other traits. Thus he was a 'gentle Irish physician' whose 'concern with suffering' made him unique in a group essentially motivated by materialist aims.¹⁴⁴ The screenplay also infers that Fynn, as an 'Irishman', is immune to the ambitions of English imperialism which motivate and inspire Farewell. While his separateness enables Fynn to be empathetic and understanding towards the plight of the indigenous people, he is at the same time, portrayed as the pragmatic and logical reasoner within Farewell's party. It is Fynn who consistently notices that Shaka is 'far too intelligent' to be manipulated by the Europeans, and that his 'Irish pessimism' is a more realistic approach to the traders' situation at Port Natal than Farewell's English confidence.¹⁴⁵ Fynn's 'Irish' characteristics were entirely subjective and were created specifically by Faure for his own ideological representation of Fynn in Shaka Zulu. Robin West, commenting on the political background for the series, has noted that Faure, as an Afrikaner, identified with Fynn as an Irishman, and shared with him 'an atavistic hostility to the British

¹⁴²Hamilton, 'A Positional Gambit: Shaka Zulu and the Conflict in South Africa', p. 13.

¹⁴³Shaka Zulu, Episode Four.

¹⁴⁴West, The Diamonds and the Necklace, p. 118; Shaka Zulu Official Souvenir Brochure, p. 11.

¹⁴⁵Shaka Zulu, Episode Three.

Crown and Empire'.¹⁴⁶

Though the television series contains a particularly powerful visual presentation of individual characters like Shaka and Fynn,¹⁴⁷ it is not the only medium for visual imagery. Historical monuments, alongside the visual depictions provided in museums, have recently been reassessed in terms of the meanings which they convey as specific reconstructions of the past.¹⁴⁸ Monuments and museum displays can be just as subjective as other visual media and are similarly produced from socio-political sets of circumstances.¹⁴⁹ Museums in Natal have been described as presenting 'not a set of facts about the past (but) a set of ideas about the past held in the present'.¹⁵⁰ The physical model of Fynn in the Durban Local History Museum is a combination of established images, which date back to Isaacs' publication, and recent research, for example Ballard's ideas on Fynn as a member of a 'frontier' society.¹⁵¹ The resulting depiction shows Fynn as a fairly disreputable-looking individual outside a home made from indigenous materials, and aims to illustrate Isaacs' point about Fynn 'going native' in a realistic context.¹⁵² A wider framework for Isaacs' description is provided in the accompanying literature by references to oral accounts which refer to Fynn's numerous

¹⁴⁶West, The Diamonds and the Necklace, p. 118.

¹⁴⁷Mersham, 'The Discourse of the Historical Television Drama- The Case of Shaka Zulu', South African Journal of Cultural History, vol. 5, no. 2 (1991), p. 71.

¹⁴⁸L. Witz and C. Rassool, 'The Dog, the Rabbit and the Reluctant Historians', South African Historical Journal, vol. 27 (November 1992), pp. 238-242.

¹⁴⁹Lincoln, Discourse and the Construction of Society, pp. 15-19; C. Hamilton, 'The Poetics and Politics of Public History', South African Historical Journal, vol. 27 (November 1992), pp. 234-6.

¹⁵⁰J. Wright and A. Mazel, 'Controlling the Past in the Museums of Natal and KwaZulu', Critical Arts: A Journal for Cultural Studies, vol. 5, no. 3 (1991), p. 61.

¹⁵¹G. Berning, Henry Francis Fynn's Cottage, Durban, Local History Museum, 1990. I am grateful to Gillian Berning for her information on the making of the Fynn model.

¹⁵²Private information from interviews with Gillian Berning, July 1990 and Siphon Khumalo, March 1994.

imizi in the southern Natal region.¹⁵³

The Fynn model could be termed 'Eurocentric' in that it portrays Fynn in isolation as a significant individual and there is no framework of the indigenous society in which he operated. Fynn's black women and mixed race children are also conspicuously absent from the display.¹⁵⁴ The literature which the museum provides with this model draws on established accounts, particularly the Diary, in depicting Fynn as a 'pioneer' and a dispenser of medical treatment.¹⁵⁵ However, the model has drawn on the work of contemporary researchers in order to present Fynn in a reasonably realistic setting, and in these terms it is a successful alternative to other visual portrayals, particularly those projected by the television series. The museum display does not, in contrast to the television series, make any reference to Fynn as a 'doctor' or philanthropist, and is an unvarnished picture of Fynn as an ordinary European 'frontiersman' who has to some extent adapted to his environment.

Visual images of Fynn, ranging from the media of television to museum display, have portrayed him in a variety of roles from saintly physician to rough trader. These changing images are in a sense a reflection of the different ideas which have appeared in written texts over the past one hundred and seventy years. While visual media undoubtedly contain and express their own specific discourse, they are by no means isolated from literary presentations.¹⁵⁶ At the same time, the visual depictions of Fynn and his context have, perhaps because of their unprecedented public reception,

¹⁵³Webb and Wright, eds., James Stuart Archive, vol. I, pp. 111-113, Evidence of Dinya ka Zokozwayo; vol. II, p. 269, Evidence of Maziyana ka Mhlabeni.

¹⁵⁴I am grateful to Siphon Khumalo for discussing these aspects of the model with me.

¹⁵⁵Berning, 'Henry Francis Fynn's Cottage', p.3.

¹⁵⁶C. MacCabe, Tracking the Signifier: Theoretical Essays: Film, Linguistics, Literature, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1985, pp. 82-96.

generated powerful images which are difficult to challenge.¹⁵⁷

Faure's portrayal of Fynn's supposed 'Irishness' had a specific political and ideological purpose. The problematic nature of this type of ethnocentric approach to the past, which stressed particular national or ethnic characteristics was, by the 1980s, being addressed by historians.¹⁵⁸ A simultaneous development was the increased stress on ethnicity in international politics, and this had acquired particular meanings in South Africa, and specifically in the Natal region.¹⁵⁹ Much of the political conceptualisation of 'Zulu' ethnicity was associated with the revived Zulu cultural organisation, Inkatha, which, from the late 1980s was increasingly militant in its involvement in the political conflict in Natal.¹⁶⁰ Particular images of the 'Zulu' and their adversaries in the region were projected in public speeches by the Inkatha leader Chief Buthelezi.¹⁶¹ Buthelezi viewed the 'Zulu ethnic minority' as surrounded by political opponents both in the present and the past, and he drew on various periods in the 'Zulu past' to illustrate their constant fight for recognition and survival.¹⁶²

For Buthelezi, the Europeans in Natal were, in historical times, responsible for a biased version of the Zulu past, Fynn being the obvious culprit through the writing of his

¹⁵⁷Mersham, 'Mass Media Discourse and the Semiotics of Zulu Nationalism', pp. 110-113.

¹⁵⁸P. van den Berghe, The Ethnic Phenomenon, New York, Elsevier Press, 1981; E. Tonkin, et. al. eds., History and Ethnicity, London, Routledge, 1989.

¹⁵⁹S. Bekker, Ethnicity in Focus: The South African Case, Pietermaritzburg, The Natal Witness, 1993, pp. 68-71.

¹⁶⁰G. Mare, Brothers Born of Warrior Blood: Politics and Ethnicity in South Africa, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1992.

¹⁶¹P. Forsyth, 'The Past in the Service of the Present: The Political Use of History by Chief A.N.M.G. Buthelezi 1951-1991', South African Historical Journal, vol. 26 (May 1992), pp. 81-4.

¹⁶²Financial Mail, 23 October 1992, pp. 24-5.

Diary.¹⁶³ On a more fundamental level, Fynn and his fellow traders were irresponsible ruffians who did nothing more constructive than 'scattering their semen all over Zululand'.¹⁶⁴ This is in direct contrast to his view of Shaka as the 'founder of the Zulu nation'.¹⁶⁵ In a sense this is a political use of the trend in popular history towards 'reversing the villains' in order to create a reconstruction of the past which appeals to a substantial public audience.¹⁶⁶ Fynn is used in political discourse as a representative of the unacceptable behaviour of early whites in Natal. Fynn's negative qualities are carefully juxtaposed with Shaka's supposedly glorious achievements in order to demonstrate the 'Zulu' superiority over the intruding race.

At another level, but still within the sphere of politics, coloured descendants of Fynn have recently drawn on what they perceive as Fynn's 'closer relationship' with Shaka, through which the Fynns acquired 'chieftaincies' and thereby land rights in southern Natal.¹⁶⁷ This group identity has developed into notions of a Fynn 'clan' in contemporary Natal with political legitimacy to a land claim in post-apartheid South Africa.¹⁶⁸ Michael Allen has pointed out that group identity has taken on important meanings in contemporary South African society, as group interests are solidified around specific notions of ethnic identity.¹⁶⁹ Clearly the economic incentive of obtaining land-rights in southern Natal has acted as a unifying element for the

¹⁶³D. Golan, 'Inkatha and its use of the Zulu Past', History in Africa, vol. 18 (1991), pp. 117-121.

¹⁶⁴Extract from a speech by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi, Annual King Shaka Day Celebrations, 21 September 1991, Passages, vol. 4 (1992), pp. 8-9.

¹⁶⁵Shaka Zulu, Official Souvenir Brochure, p. 5.

¹⁶⁶Golan, 'Inkatha and its use of the Zulu Past', p.116.

¹⁶⁷Sunday Tribune, 3 July 1994; 7 May 1995.

¹⁶⁸Sunday Tribune, 16 July 1995.

¹⁶⁹M. Allen, 'Bargaining Environments of a Post-Apartheid State: Market, Class and Ethnic Dimensions', in P. Rich, ed., The Dynamics of Change in Southern Africa, New York, St Martin's Press, 1994, p. 75.

'coloured' Fynns . This group identity is also a probable result of the loss of both political rights and land which occurred during the years under the apartheid government.¹⁷⁰

The Fynns, said the Natal press, were the representatives of racial harmony and the negotiating parties between black and white in Natal.¹⁷¹ In this context, Fynn has been seen by the Natal press as 'the embodiment of the New South Africa, a man before his time'. Fynn's multi-racial approach to early Natal was illustrated by the fact that he drifted happily between colonial society mores and the African culture which he adopted'.¹⁷²

The visual projection of Shaka in the television series Shaka Zulu prompted writer Kaiser Ngwenya to ask 'Whose Shaka is this?'¹⁷³ Images of Fynn in various media since the 1970s prompt inquiries into 'Whose Fynn is this?' Wylie has referred to the extent to which a number of fictions have contributed to a 'cumulative image' of Shaka.¹⁷⁴ A similar 'cumulative image' of Fynn has emerged from a variety of media since the 1970s. Fynn, like Shaka, has been adopted or rejected by particular social, economic and political interest groups. The manipulation of both Fynn and Shaka as the representatives of a wide cross-section of human qualities - from heroism to villainy -

¹⁷⁰R.H. du Pre, Separate but Unequal: The "Coloured" People of South Africa - A Political History, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1994, pp. 251-254.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Sunday Tribune, 3 July 1994.

¹⁷³K. Ngwenya, 'Whose Shaka is this?', Drum (January 1987), p. 14.

¹⁷⁴Wylie, 'Shaka and the Modern Zulu State', p. 11.

is most obvious in the different media which constitute contemporary popular culture.

G.B. Smith, in a reply to Francis Fukuyama's controversial book The End of History, has suggested that poetic articulation in the contemporary world is expressed through the popular media.¹⁷⁵ In similar vein, Gertrude Himmelfarb has pointed out that a dialectic between 'hero' and 'villain' has all but disappeared from academic history.¹⁷⁶ In this chapter I have attempted to illustrate the wide variety of images of Fynn that have developed in popular media during the last few decades. While many authors have reproduced the old images of Fynn, for instance in his role as a reasonable European doctor in the television series, there has also been a trend towards depicting him in a realistic setting. The model in the Durban Local History Museum is one example of this imagery, as is Du Buisson's description in The White Man Cometh. Fictional writers like Michael Kirkwood, although relying on the Diary text, have provided Fynn with an image that is a result of a careful examination of the historical circumstances in which he operated. At the same time, both black and white writers have presented extremely subjective portrayals in that they have simply reversed the roles of Shaka and Fynn as the representatives of savagery and progress. Masizi Kunene's Emperor Shaka the Great and the Readers' Digest Illustrated History are instances of this process, which Carolyn Hamilton has accurately called a 'reversal of villains'. This use of the roles of Fynn and Shaka has been particularly evident in political discourse where Fynn has been condemned by Buthelezi as the instigator of white conquest of the Zulu - and revered as a new hero of multi-racialism by the

¹⁷⁵G.B. Smith, 'The "End of History" or a Portal to the Future: Does Anything Lie Beyond Late Modernity?', in T. Burns, ed., After History? Francis Fukuyama and His Critics, London, Littlefield Publishers, 1994, p. 17.

¹⁷⁶G. Himmelfarb, On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society, New York, Vintage, 1994, pp. 27-49.

coloured Fynn community.

The proliferation of ideas about both Fynn and Shaka in the decades since 1970 has been partly a result of the immense political changes in South Africa. As noted at the end of the last chapter, the struggle for political control in the Natal region generated a number of conflicting images, particularly evident in popular culture since the mid-1980s and following the release of the television series Shaka Zulu. At the time these developments were taking place in South Africa, overseas scholars were beginning a serious engagement with issues of media and popular culture.¹⁷⁷ The rapidly changing iconography of Fynn during these decades is clear evidence of the dramatic impact of a variety of media on public consciousness.

¹⁷⁷J. Braudillard, 'The Ecstasy of Communication' in H. Foster, ed., Postmodern Culture, London, Pluto Press, 1985, p. 130; S. Hall, 'Popular Culture and the State' in T. Bennett, et.al., eds., Popular Culture and Social Relations, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1986, pp. 22-26.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Henry Francis Fynn spent most of his career in South Africa as a colonial official in the British colonies of the Cape and Natal from 1834 to 1861. During this period, he did not occupy a prominent position in the colonial government and his career was not marked by any main diplomatic or political achievements. Nevertheless, by the time of his death in Natal in 1861, Fynn had gained a significant reputation in colonial society as an individual who had particular knowledge of indigeneous communities, both present and past, in the Natal region.

These ideas about Fynn's understanding of African society arose from the narratives of colonial writers in the first half of the nineteenth century. Robert Godlonton and J.C. Chase in the Cape and J.W. Colenso in Natal obtained information from Fynn on the Natal interior and in order to lend validity to their accounts they stressed Fynn's close contact with indigeneous societies in the region. During the course of the nineteenth century, these ideas developed into particular sets of images, centering around the notion that Fynn's significance lay in his outstanding positive qualities as a European amongst inherently savage African peoples. This thesis has aimed to examine the evolution of these ideas through the nineteenth and twentieth century, and to explain why particular images developed at specific junctures.

In the first three chapters of this thesis, I examined Fynn's career within the historical context of the Cape colony during the early years of British rule. I then attempted to contextualise his experiences against the background of expanding commercial interests in Port Natal, culminating in the British annexation of Natal in 1843. In the second and third chapters I assessed Fynn's role as a colonial official on the border of the Cape colony and then in the newly-established colony of Natal. As part of my biographical examination, I attempted to identify the particular ideas about Fynn which were presented in the emergent historical literature of Natal by the 1860s.

From the fourth chapter of the thesis I began to construct a detailed analysis of the

construction of a literary iconography of Fynn, in an attempt to determine the reasons for his central position in the early historiography of the Natal region from the 1830s. As a starting-point I suggested that the earliest ideas about Fynn were part of the discourse of travel literature which had developed in the Cape colony from the late eighteenth century. During the 1830s and 1840s, Cape writers, like Godlonton and Chase, prompted by what they perceived as Fynn's intimate knowledge of the Natal interior, used information from him for their own narratives on Natal. These texts were motivated by the authors' own commercial interests in Port Natal and their desire to persuade the British government to formally annex Natal as a colony for white settlement.

Nathaniel Isaacs, who had been Fynn's trading acquaintance at Port Natal during the 1820s, was similarly prompted by economic and political motives to publish his Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa in 1836. Although Isaacs wrote this text while absent from the Cape, the narrative was constructed with the ultimate aim of achieving British annexation of Natal. Isaacs' central motif was the juxtaposition of Fynn as a civilised European with the Zulu leader Shaka, whom he portrayed in lurid terms as a savage tyrant. As Natal historiography developed during the 1840s, this technique of binary opposition became significant as it provided white Natalians' with a sense of their own difference from the African people in the region. As Collits has suggested, the idea of racial identity became 'a linchpin of colonial authority, sustaining the cohesiveness of the ruling group'.¹

From the 1850s, Fynn's intimate contact with black people, particularly black women, was carefully omitted from historical narratives as the concept of 'going native' became unacceptable for colonial Natal society. I noted that this trend was not unique to writing on Natal and was a fairly widespread phenomenon in nineteenth century imperial literature. Racism and filth and thus was avoided as a topic of colonial discourse. I also suggested that Fynn was, by the 1850s, perceived as a respectable member of Natal

¹T. Collits, 'Theorizing Racism' in Tiffin and Lawson, eds., De-Scribing Empire, p. 66.

European society and that his earlier assimilation had become unacceptable behaviour for a colonial official.

By the 1870s it is possible to identify a clearly emerging Natal historical narrative which served to justify white settlement in the region. Portrayals of Fynn, as the civilised binary opposite to Shaka as a savage provided Natalians with a precedent for their own presence amongst indigenous people. Superimposed on this early imagery was the idea of Fynn as a literate recorder and authoritative source of information on black societies in Natal. As such, he could be utilised by the Natal government to lend credibility to their official land policy as he represented an informed source on the past settlement patterns of Africans in Natal. As a contributor to the 1852 commission, Fynn became part of the official discourse of colonial Natal. I then examined how, during the 1870s, Fynn was gradually superseded by Shepstone as the unrivalled authority on the early history of Natal, a process which was largely a result of Shepstone's involvement in Zulu politics during the period leading up to the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879.

In the next chapter I suggested that the Anglo-Zulu War marked a turning-point for the development of a colonial Natal identity, and I examined how the later British Victorian period provided the literary and historical background for the entrenchment of an historical narrative which served to underpin this identity. This narrative developed from the earlier histories which had, at their centre, the idea of white civilisers juxtaposed with black savagery. Natal writers during this period, for instance, John Bird, who published his two-volume Annals of Natal in 1888, viewed Fynn, not only as an example of a civilised European but also as the first literate recorder of the pre-European history of Natal. I suggested that Bird's use of Fynn's manuscripts marked the beginning of a new set of images, centering on Fynn's supposed access to the pre-colonial past and his unique position as an early recorder. Linked to Fynn's role as the first literate person was the idea, already apparent in earlier literature, but entrenched by Bird, that Fynn was the proponent of European technology in Natal, as demonstrated by his effective medical treatment of Shaka in 1824. I examined these ideas within the literary context of British imperial expansion in Africa from the 1880s,

and identified the images of Fynn, as the enlightened representative of western medicine, as part of the wider discourse which linked the European presence in Africa to the onset of technological and scientific progress on the continent.

In the second half of this chapter I looked at the development of Natal historiography in the period from the early 1900s to around 1930. Narratives by writers like James Stuart in the early twentieth century, reiterated the established nineteenth-century ideas, and it was clear that by the time of political union in 1910, Natalians were satisfied with their established history which emphasised their civilising presence in the region. I suggested that another dimension of this acceptance of a static narrative of the Natal past was the growing trend towards packaging research on indigenous people as the prerogative of anthropologists. In this academic context, Fynn was given significance as an early European recorder of the politics and history of Natal's pre-colonial population. A.T. Bryant's substantial and influential work, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, published in 1929, contained detailed examples of the way in which Fynn was viewed as a literate recorder on the 'ethnography' of the Zulu people in the Natal region.

In chapter 6 I examined further the academic division between history and anthropology as separate and distinct disciplines. This was particularly evident in the historiography of Natal where professional historians examined the history of white Natalians and anthropologists concentrated on the African past. I then assessed Fynn's dual role for researchers in both fields. For anthropologists, he was a crucial source on the pre-colonial past. As one of the first Europeans in Natal, he became a pivotal figure for amateur historians like G.M. Mackeurtan, whose book, Cradle Days of Natal came to be viewed as an authoritative text on the white Natal past. At the same time, Fynn was also portrayed as a prominent individual by professional historians, particularly A.F. Hattersley at the University of Natal, who instigated the academic history of the region from the 1930s. I noted that both Mackeurtan and Hattersley, while producing widely-read and respected texts, were unable to break with the late nineteenth-century images of Fynn, particularly the ideas of him as a medical

doctor. Thus, the Natal historical narrative, which had been constructed in the political and economic context of a nineteenth-century colony, had remained essentially unchanged for the first half of the twentieth century. Fynn's role, as the representative of white civilisation and medical technology had been barely rewritten in the one hundred years since his earliest literary depictions. The strongly-defined iconography of Fynn as binary opposite to Shaka, continued to serve the needs of white Natalians.

My analysis of the division between the more or less static 'history' of Europeans and the 'ethnology' of Africans in Natal provided an academic framework for a discussion of the editorial process which preceded the publication of the Diary of Henry Francis Fynn in 1950. In chapter 7 I examined the work done by James Stuart on Fynn's manuscripts until his death in 1942, and then looked at the final editing task undertaken by Douglas Malcolm. As a Zulu linguist and expert on what was then termed 'Bantu studies', Malcolm had not received training as an historian. The editing of Fynn's papers, professional historians felt, was not a task for them, but rather for someone with expertise in ethnology and 'Bantu' matters. As a result, Malcolm accepted Stuart's editing of the manuscripts, including the use of nineteenth-century sources like Isaacs' Travels and Adventures. The Diary, when published, contained little historical criticism and, by including the older texts as references, served to entrench the existing images of Fynn.

In the second part of this chapter I looked at the process in which, after 1950, the Diary of Henry Francis Fynn came to be widely used as a source document by historians. English-speaking academic historians had, from the 1920s, attempted to present a liberal perspective of the past. In terms of the historiography of Natal, this trend took on a new significance after the Afrikaner Nationalist political victory in 1948. Liberal historians stressed the identity of English-speakers in Natal and used Fynn as an example of the English presence at Port Natal, a presence which pre-dated the arrival of the Voortrekkers by several years. These ideas were prominent up to the 1960s and appeared in the influential academic texts like Brookes' and Webb's A History of Natal. During the same time period, from the 1950s to the 1960s, ideas on the Natal past

were more widely projected both within South Africa and abroad, through the medium of popular history. Although texts like E.A. Ritter's Shaka Zulu were essentially a reiteration of nineteenth-century ideas, for instance those expressed by Isaacs, popular histories were important in helping to disseminate the idea that the Diary was a reliable record of events in early Natal. As popular writers, these authors were able to reach a wide readership, and so were crucial in projecting the Diary as a valuable historical document. However, a decade after the publication of Ritter's book, Donald Morris' immensely popular 1966 publication, The Washing of the Spears illustrated the possibility for new ideas about Fynn in popular literature. Morris' conceptualisation of Fynn as a pragmatic 'freebooter' was the first instance of a challenge to the established images of Fynn, and as such it provided the impetus for a rigorous questioning of Fynn's role in early Natal in the decades which followed.

In chapter 8, I examined the challenges to the existing historiography of Natal which occurred from the 1970s. Many scholars during this period adopted a clearly defined materialist approach to the early history of Natal. They presented Fynn within this framework and portrayed him as an individual trader, motivated by the economic incentives of the trading potential of the region. During the 1980s, the materialist debates remained influential although they were to some extent challenged by the ideas of social interaction present in 'frontier' studies at this time.

I concluded this chapter by an examination of the attempts to unpack the 'mfecane' paradigm from the late 1980s. I suggested that the investigative studies of this concept by scholars like Julian Cobbing and John Wright provided a fundamental challenge to the old idea of binary opposition which still dominated many historical texts, where Fynn and Shaka were juxtaposed as Manichean opposites. I also put forward the view that the 'mfecane' debate had, in recent years, stimulated a questioning of the early Natal texts and their status as reliable sources. I noted in particular the work done by Carolyn Hamilton, Elizabeth Eldredge and Dan Wylie on the textual problems posed by scholars using The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn. I also assessed the work done by these and other scholars on the validity of oral tradition as an alternative source to

supposedly authoritative written texts. I suggested also that the challenges presented by the literary deconstructionist academic package, together with the unprecedented changes in the political sphere from the 1990s, provided the base for a proliferation of historical interpretations.

In my final chapter I looked at the variety of images of Fynn presented by different media in recent years. This included an examination of popular history, fiction, visual media and political constructs. Many of the ideas used in these genres were reconstructions of nineteenth-century ideas. This was particularly evident in the South African Broadcasting Corporation television series Shaka Zulu, which drew on the earliest texts in its depiction of Fynn as a benevolent European doctor amidst a threatening and savage African society. I also looked at the process which Carolyn Hamilton has termed a 'reversal of villains', and which has been particularly prominent in popular history since the 1980s.² I found that this motif was fairly common in African literature and also in political rhetoric where Fynn, instead of Shaka, is decried as an evil influence on those around him.

In the mid-1990s, Fynn remains a controversial figure in the historiography of Natal. He is still significant enough to feature in accounts of Natal's history in the early nineteenth-century. I have argued that this Fynn can be viewed as an individual who provided written narratives for the earliest histories of Natal. By making his material available to Godlonton and Chase, and later to Pine's commission in 1852, Fynn played a vital role as an informant for the evolving official discourse on the Natal past. In this way, he was not unlike Donald Moodie, whom Ross has suggested played a crucial role in the development of Cape historiography.³ Fynn's accounts as published in Godlonton's newspaper, The Grahamstown Journal, in the early 1830s were printed within the Cape literary context where emphasis was placed on the differences

²Hamilton and Witz, 'Reaping the Whirlwind', pp. 190-191.

³Ross, Beyond the Pale, pp. 192-4.

between white and black society.⁴ This marked the beginning of Natal historiography, firmly rooted in a discourse of racism and intolerance.

In a post-colonial historiographical context, professional historians need to critically examine the assumptions of colonial historiography that still inhabit our academic and popular discourses.⁵ There is a need to continually engage with these colonial discourses and to unpack them, as they have influenced the western literary inheritance.⁶ The crisis in representation that has dominated the field of 'cultural studies' in the past few years has only recently impacted on the historical discipline.⁷ Fynn is a central thread in the historiography of Natal but images of him have continually reappeared in over a century and a half of literary and visual iconography on the region. There is a need to assess the impact of these wholesale influences as they make up the collective identity of both black and white Natalians. Undoubtedly, it is the visual media that have been the most potent. The visual have been the most potent if as post modernist scholars have suggested, that the media has become the principle vehicle for culture production⁸ and television a metaphor for the contemporary world's expression of culture.⁹

In a post-apartheid political setting historians also need to investigate the colonial images which influence contemporary political rhetoric. Both Inkatha's appropriation of Fynn as the original villain in white Natal, and the 'coloured' Fynns' demands for a

⁴Crais, The Making of the Colonial Order, pp. 125-131.

⁵R. Young, 'Colonialism and the Desiring-Machine', in T. D'haen and H. Bertens, eds., Liminal Postmodernisms: The Postmodern, the Post-Colonial, and the Post-Feminist, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1994, pp. 16-17.

⁶R. Young, White Mythologies: Writing History and the West, London, Routledge, 1990, p. 19.

⁷N. Etherington, 'Po-mo and S.A. History', Southern African Review of Books (July-August 1996), pp. 10-11.

⁸Z. Bauman, Limitations of Post-Modernity, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 31.

⁹B. McHale, Constructing Postmodernism, London, Routledge, 1995, p. 125.

land-grant and positions as traditional leaders in the Natal legislature are significant reminders of the power of images from the past. Patrick Brantlinger has suggested that scholars cannot escape the established iconography of particular narratives,¹⁰ and Ioan Davies, like Robert Young has noted that the process of deconstructing Western paradigms like colonialism has been carried out by agents who reflect the values of old 'empires', albeit in fragmented form.¹¹ As I worked on this thesis, plans were tabled for a further cinema portrayal of Shaka¹² and it will be interesting to see what kinds of iconography emerge from this film, and whether in fact, they reflect the earlier discourses.

¹⁰P. Brantlinger, Crusoe's Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America, London, Routledge, 1990, pp. 2-3.

¹¹I. Davies, Cultural Studies and Beyond: Fragments of Empire, London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 98-101.

¹²Daily News, 11 March 1996.

NOTE ON SOURCES

The collection of documents on Natal published in Leverton's four-volume Records of Natal, provided a starting point for this research by enabling me to reconstruct Fynn's early experiences at Port Natal. The Fynn Papers in the Natal Archives depot, together with documentary sources in the Cape Archives depot, gave me a considerable body of material for an examination of Fynn's career as an official in the Cape Colony from 1834 to 1852, and in Natal from 1852 to 1861. The Fynn Papers in the Natal Archives depot consist of some twenty-four individually numbered files of manuscripts. Only two of these, File 9, entitled 'Notes and Memoranda on Early Natal' and File 16, entitled 'The Diary of H.F. Fynn' have thusfar been published. A careful scrutiny of these manuscripts enabled me to isolate which parts of Fynn's narrative had been included in the works of R. Godlonton, J.C. Chase, and J.W. Colenso and which had been published in the report of the Proceedings and Report following Pine's Commission in 1852. The first four files consist of letters to and from Fynn during his career in the Cape and later in Natal and are dated up to the 1850s. These letter files were essential sources for chapters 2 and 3. File 14, entitled the 'Diary of Christina Fynn', had fascinating information written by Fynn's second wife Christina, and was particularly useful in reconstructing their life together from 1841. File 15, containing the diary of Fynn's brother, William McDowall, from 1849 to 1853 also shed light on the Fynn family during this period.

Three manuscript collections in the Killie Campbell Africana Library formed the basis of my research. The Stuart Papers were invaluable in examining Stuart's work on the Fynn manuscripts over the lengthy period from 1905 to 1942. In addition, the file labelled 'Fynn Family Folder' included Stuart's interviews with Fynn's son and other manuscript sources on the Fynn family. Stuart's typescripts of Fynn's manuscripts are filed in a collection called 'Fynn Diary Folder'. This collection formed the basis of my research for chapter 7 where I examined Stuart's and Malcolm's editing of the Fynn 'Diary'. These typescripts consisted of annotated copies of Files 9 and 16 of the Fynn Papers, Natal Archives. The 'Fynn Diary Folder' also contained other information on the editorial process of the 1950 publication The Diary of H.F. Fynn, including

correspondence between Douglas Malcolm and Killie Campbell. Another useful set of files were the Killie Campbell Correspondence files which also yielded material on the work done by Douglas Malcolm, and Killie Campbell's efforts to secure a publisher for the Diary.

This thesis also required a detailed reading of secondary texts over a lengthy time period - from the 1820s to the 1990s. I relied on the Don Africana Library in Durban for many of the nineteenth-century works. The University of Natal library in Pietermaritzburg also contained copies of essential Africana. The E.G. Malherbe library at the University of Natal in Durban provided a variety of secondary works, including many publications on historiography, literary theory and general biography. Recently published works on the Cape colony such as Crais' The Making of the Colonial Order, Mostert's immense volume, Frontiers, and Stapleton's fascinating book Maqoma gave me a framework for the first part of the thesis. During the period that I worked on this research, the debate on the 'mfecane' paradigm has yielded an astonishing number of texts on Natal history, and provided invaluable assistance for my historiographical contextualisation of Fynn. Particularly useful were John Wright's 1990 Ph.D. thesis, 'The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction', and Carolyn Hamilton's 1993 Ph.D. thesis, 'Authoring Shaka: Models, Metaphors and Historiography'. Dan Wylie's excellent journal articles on Nathaniel Isaacs and Fynn have also proved valuable contributions towards this thesis. Towards the end of my research, three new texts appeared: Stephen Taylor's Shaka's Children, John Laband's Rope of Sand and Carolyn Hamilton's carefully edited and long-awaited The Mfecane Aftermath. These volumes were crucial in increasing my awareness of the variety of popular and academic approaches to Natal historiography. As I was unable to attend the 'mfecane' colloquium in 1991, The Mfecane Aftermath has been an extremely important secondary source for my research as it has presented an excellent overview of the recent debate.

LIST OF SOURCES

1. Unpublished Manuscript Sources
2. Published Compilations of Manuscript Sources
3. Official Publications
4. Newspapers and Periodicals
5. Published Books, Essays and Articles
6. Unpublished Theses and Conference papers

1. UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

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(Eastern Cape)

Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban

Fynn Family Papers

Fynn Diary Folder

James Stuart Papers

Killie Campbell Correspondence Files

Natal Archives . Pietermaritzburg**(i) Private Papers**

Bird Papers: **Box 5, Evidence from chiefs, 1890-1896.**

Fynn Papers: **File 1, Letters Despatched**
File 2, Letters Received
File 3, Letters Received
File 8, Messages to and from Native Chiefs, 1835-1857
File 9, Notes and Memoranda on Early Natal
File 10, Notes on the Eastern Frontier, 1834-1848
File 11, Notes on Faku, 1848-1852
File 12, Correspondence about the Bushmen, 1849
File 13, Natal correspondence, 1852-1861
File 14, Diary of Christina Fynn, 1841-1868
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